

Six-county byways/bikeways workshop held in Delphi



Comet staff report

Seventy-five representatives from six counties gathered recently at the Canal Center in Delphi.

They came to mutually work toward linking communities and

natural/scenic attractions. A Purdue landscape architecture class is coordinating these efforts under the direction of Professor Bernie Dahl. The process involved a local meeting in each county and then the full day session called a "charrette."

Enthusiasm prevailed among the representatives from outlying counties: White, Cass, Howard, Clinton, Tippecanoe, and Carroll (in the middle).

This effort started in Carroll County several years ago when the first Tourist Guide was printed. Brian Stirn had obtained permission from the County Commissioners to place colorful road signs on the county posts that directed the traveler to scenic and historic spots in the county.

Many of the participants declared that this Central Wabash Greenways charrette was great. One participant, David McCain, said the attendees "caught the spirit and enthusiasm of the potential for trails all over the six-county region."

Rory Robinson from the National Park Service chaired the charrette. He specifically encouraged river and stream trail systems in the many things that participants were to identify and record on maps.

Another form of surface connecting comes from blacktop byways that already exist in all counties. The big challenge is to select blacktop low use roads that lead to scenic, historic attractions and are safe and enjoyable for motorists, bikers and hikers.

Long term and possibly more

difficult to establish is a network of hiking/biking trails using abandoned railbeds or other corridors to connect attractions. More involvement by landowners would be required with this form of transit.

Initially the county roadways might be marked for connecting Delphi Historic Trails to Prophetstown State Park.

Charette participants were involved all day and were treated to a meal sponsored by the Monticello/White County Chamber of Commerce.

The noon speaker was Ray Irwin, new Greenways and Bikeways Director at INDOT. Irwin was the former trail development director in Indianapolis. He left popular marks on the landscape, such as the Monon Trail from Fall Creek past Broadripple and north to Carmel.

The Purdue class is working on a semester project, and the outcome will be reported back to the six counties later in April.

This spring the Carroll County Tourism group is releasing a revised tour guide that will contain already marked byways that take bikers and motorists on back roads to Lockport/Georgetown, Cutler, and many points east, west, north and south. Watch for a copy of the new guide in about six-eight weeks.

The Board of Directors of the newly organized



wish to invite all businesses & interested individuals to meet your Executive Director Keith Chandler at an informal, after hours Open House Thursday, April 6 in the 4-H Building at the Flora Park, 5 - 7 p.m. Refreshments & Door Prizes.



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Taylor chosen to direct Kokomo Rescue Mission

Flora resident Van C. Taylor is the new executive director of the Kokomo Rescue Mission. He assumed the leadership of the mission on March 1 following the retirement of Bob Cox.

In 2003, Taylor received recognition in Kokomo nonprofit circles when he was director of the Howard County Flood Recovery Team.

At a press conference last week, Taylor said, "My desire is to build on the foundation left by Bob Cox. I want to continue to allocate the resources of the mission in an effective and Godly way, maximizing the impact of this ministry on the hurting and homeless people in our community. As poverty in our country becomes more generational than situational, our challenge is to offer deeper, more long-term

programs that include educational and vocational assistance.

"Lives that are transformed through the programs of Kokomo Rescue Mission are evidence that God is alive and working in the hearts of the men, women and children we serve daily through our shelters and outreach programs."

Taylor is the former owner of Kirk's Popcorn in Flora and Yoder's Popcorn in Shipshewana. He is a member of the Carroll County Extension Board of Directors and the Monroe Township Advisory Board.

A graduate of Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Taylor became a United Methodist Certified Lay Speaker/Servant in 2000. He is a member of Flora United Methodist Church, currently serving on the church's missions board.

Taylor and wife, Becky, are the parents of Susanna, 13, and Will, 10, both students in the Carroll Consolidated School Corporation.

Debt assistance available

CCCS of Lafayette, a division of Family Services, Inc., echoes the concern recently expressed by The National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC) and the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

"A \$3.3 billion increase in consumer debt during December is an unhappy reminder that holiday spending can signal financial danger if shoppers get carried away," was the comment made by the NFCC after the Federal Reserve reported that consumer debt climbed 1.9 percent to \$2.16 trillion during the final month of 2005," said Susan Smith, president and CEO of Family Services, Inc.

The Federal Reserve's new consumer debt numbers cover levels reached through the end of December 2005 and the \$2.16 trillion figure represents a noteworthy increase over the previous month.

"While there are a number of explanations for these increased numbers - holiday shopping, higher fuel and heating costs, rising interest rates and minimum payments, and potentially unforeseen situations such as illness or loss of jobs - there is no doubt that American consumers are amassing more debt than ever with little thought towards how they will repay it," said NFCC president and CEO Susan C. Keating. "This is why the services of accredited community-based credit counseling agencies are so critically impor-

tant for the millions of consumers in need of assistance and financial education."

CCCS of Lafayette is nationally accredited and has trained, certified credit counselors who offer low-cost and free educational information, management advice and debt reduction services. To schedule a confidential appointment with CCCS of Lafayette, call Family Services, Inc. at (765) 423-5361 or visit www.fsilafayette.org.

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