

No replacement for Awwad slated

Francis to be named highway head

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

Carroll County Commissioners' president Loren Hylton revealed a revised staffing plan for the county highway department at the Friday morning council meeting. The plan included the elimination of the position currently held by highway supervisor Ramzi Awwad, who has resigned, putting current highway superintendent Ron Francis in charge and establishing three foremen positions. Two current employees would be promoted to foreman and the third would be a new hire.

"We've seen some great strides in the highway department," Hylton said. "We want to see these things continue."

Hylton and Francis explained the new employee would be paid from the highway supervisor salary. Money not used for the foreman position would be divided equally between the two foremen positions. No foreman will be given compensatory time or county-owned vehicles for their off-duty use. Francis will stay at his current rate of pay.

"I think it's a good idea," Nancy Cripe said.

"I appreciate the creativity," Jerry

Hendress said.

However, some council members expressed caution about the re-alignment plan. Hylton did not provide a written proposal with monetary figures to support the possible cost-saving plan.

Ann Brown noted that although the measure would eliminate one take-home vehicle to support, it would most likely lead to an increase in overtime pay for the foremen as well as the potential to inherit costly additional medical family benefits not planned for in the budget.

"I would have like to have seen some figures before we did this,"

Steve Ashby concurred. "We are not going to save a bunch of money," he added after taking time to do a rudimentary mathematical calculation while Hylton and Francis made their presentation.

A motion to approve the hire of one new employee for the county highway department was unanimously approved. However, Francis was directed to provide a written document with budgetary figures to support the plan.

Additional appropriations

A request by Carroll Circuit Court Judge Donald Currie for \$6,000 was denied. The request was for money to

pay the county to produce court transcripts for public defenders who are progressing through an appeals process after the defendant is found guilty.

Currie explained due to the volume of recent jury trials and the conviction rate, the budget line item for the task was exhausted. The judge said he understood the county was in a potential financial crisis and offered to transfer money from other accounts to support the fund if needed.

"However, I can assure you that I will be down here asking to replace those items," Currie predicted.

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Council finance committee gives numbers

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

On behalf of the Carroll County Council-established finance committee, Ann Brown presented a written report to her fellow council members at the Friday morning meeting. The document listed bank accounts with current figures and a historical perspective.

"With much thought and cooperation from everyone involved, we consider the state of Carroll County finances to be serious but not insurmountable," the report read.

"We (committee members Brown, Steve Ashby and Ron Slavens) don't feel like we can do any more until the commissioners act on our recommendations," Brown explained.

She said the county spent \$2.23 more than it took in last year. However, \$400,000 less was spent than was budgeted.

"...If we do not control our spending, and if our income is a repeat disappointment of year 2006, we will be forced into operating on our restricted funds," the report continued. "If we are forced into that situation, we must reimburse the

restricted funds by year end. It is possible that we might not be in a position to repay."

(Restricted funds include cumulative capital projects, cumulative bridge, tax increment financing, etc.)

According to figures supplied to the committee by county treasurer Jane Brewington, the year-end balance for 2004 was \$15,668,095, for 2005 it was \$11,000,143 and for 2006 it was \$8,628,668. The balance numbers mean there was a reduction of the cash balance, or the amount of cash available to pay county bills, of \$7,039,427 in three years.

"I'm as much at fault as anyone here," Ashby said. "I kept looking at expenses when I should have been looking at income."

"We can no longer go on what we expect to collect," Slavens added. "We have to look at what we've received in the past."

"This has happened over a period of time," Brown said, "and it's going to take a period of time to fix it."

"We have to turn this into a

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Delphi Art Show opens Sunday

By Kevin Schnepf
Staff writer

Delphi Community High School Commons will undergo the annual transformation from cafeteria to temporary art museum for the Jack Sanders' Delphi Art Show May 6 through 10.

Members of the public will have the opportunity to peruse displays May 6 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. and May 7 through 10 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission to the event is free.

Creations by Delphi students participating in art, professional artists from Indiana including the Lafayette area, local artists and Delphi Art Club members will be on display. Types of art include charcoal, pottery, photography, jewelry, handmade paper, oil and watercolor.

Opening day visitors can enjoy a tea and artistic demon-

strations by elementary art students. An auction will also be held opening day at 3 p.m. in the little theatre, led by Delphi superintendent Ralph Walker.

Concrete pigs decorated by 42 area businesses and organizations will be on the auction block. The hand-painted cast sculptures coincide with the "Pig-casso" theme of this year's show. Proceeds will support Delphi Fine Arts Council.

Kappa Kappa Kappa sorority and Delphi Community School Corporation provide support for the event.

Delphi Pitch-in Preparation for action

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

By the time the nine o'clock ending time rolled around for the "Pitch In" meeting Monday night in Delphi, the group of 80 community members in attendance had identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the future of Delphi. The group then voted on the most critical of the perceived critical issues summarized in the final exercise.

The meeting was organized and sponsored by Delphi Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Association and Delphi City Council. Held at the Wabash & Erie Canal Interpretive Center, it was facilitated by local resident Janet Ayres and lasted three hours.

Ayres initially explained the

Out in force to make a point

Local police participate in saturation patrol

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

Last Friday night many residents became aware of an abnormal number of police cars on county roads. The explanation is county, city and other community police departments participated in an "interdiction" exercise organized by the Indiana State Police. The purpose of the operation was to send a message that criminal activity would not be tolerated Carroll County.

Approximately 38 officers from 12 law enforcement agencies including Burlington, Flora and Delphi participated in stopping cars who appeared to violate traffic laws. Carroll County Prosecutor Tricia Thompson and deputy prosecutor Christine Smith also participated.

When cause to suspect drugs arose, K-9 units were called to the scene to assist in the investigation.

"I'm excited about this interdiction," sheriff Tony Burns said as he was driving on county roads near Burlington. "It's a good way for us to be pro-active rather than being reactive about crime."

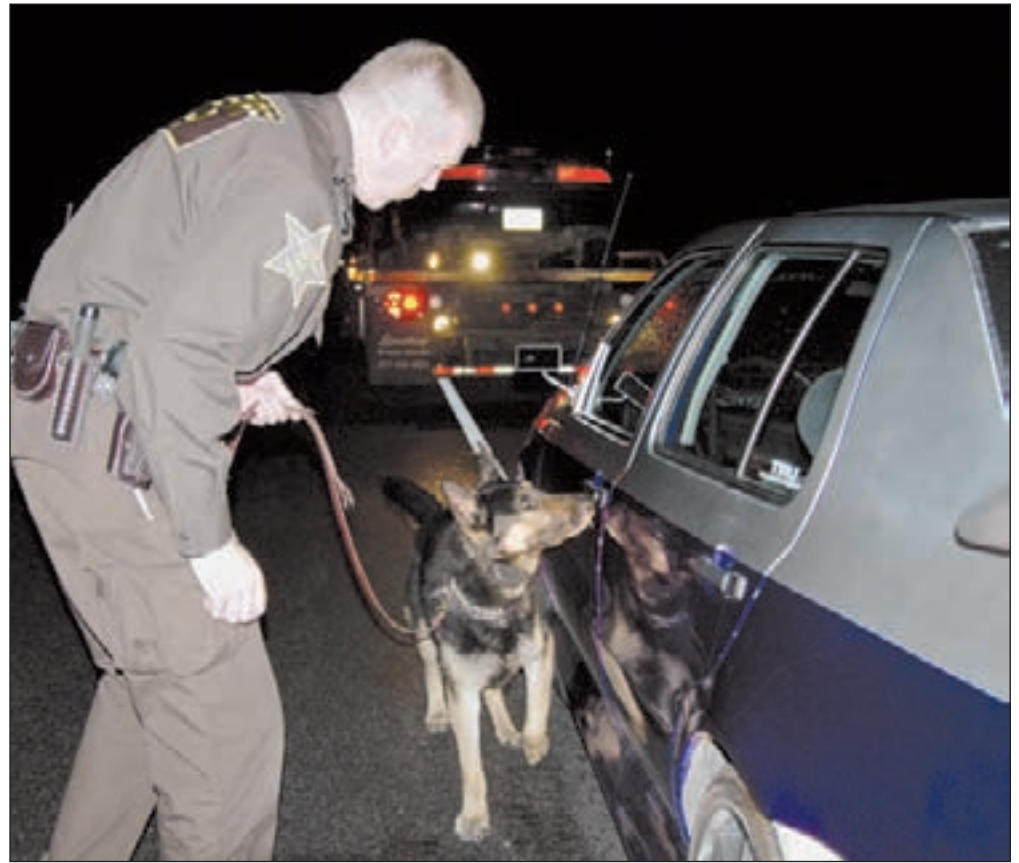
Tippecanoe County K-9 Handler Rob Hainje said he was "glad to participate" in a neighboring county's interdiction. He said other agencies assisted Tippecanoe County recently for the same reason.

Hainje said it was enjoyable to work saturation patrols because the increased visibility in the community makes such an impact upon the citizens.

Officers in the six-hour enforcement period wrote 88 traffic citations and issued 236 warning tickets.

Six individuals were arrested for operating while intoxicated and 10 for driving while suspended. Four arrests for possession and one warrant arrest was made by participating officers.

A total of 11 felony and eight misdemeanor arrests were made and 13 suspects were jailed.



Sniffing out the drugs

Tippecanoe County K-9 Dag, helps handler Deputy Rob Hainje look for possible drugs in a car during Friday night's saturation patrol. The driver of the car was found to be in possession of marijuana after being stopped for and excessively loud exhaust system. The car was towed from the scene. Comet photo by Debbie Lowe

Those arrested were:

- Shawn O'Brien, 18, Delphi;
- Joshua Stout, 23, Monticello;
- Kevin Hammel, 23, Delphi;
- Dustin Bowers, 25, Monticello;
- Timothy Mounts, 40, Monticello;
- Athur Biro, 54, Logansport;
- Saul Franco, 28, Logansport;
- Ronny Hunt, 20, Monticello;
- Jason Miller, 34, Burlington;
- Christina Nicolas, 29, Mulberry;
- Aaron Jones, 32, Bringhurst;
- Kathleen Coughlin, 52;
- Molly Isom, 35, Camden; a
- Gary Smith, 50, Mulberry.

"This was a very visible operation and people got to see police out enforcing our laws," prosecutor Thompson said. "The message to criminals in the area is that the police are watching."

"On any given Friday night, there is approximately the same amount of criminal activity," she added. "If we find



Calling all cars!

The Burlington-area team of ISP officer Buckley, Burlington Deputy Jill Hammond, Carroll County Sheriff Deputy Mike Peters and sheriff Tony Burns synchronized radio frequencies before hitting the roads around Burlington for Friday's interdiction operation. Comet photo by Debbie Lowe

that much crime in one night imagine what goes on that we by using that many officers, don't catch."

Enjoying the show



Stoan Brubaker, pictured, was at the Carroll County Flower and Garden Fair Saturday from start to finish. That's because his parents, Reuben and Becky Brubaker, had a flower booth there. They own Carroll County Crops. Comet photo by Jennifer Archibald