

The budget...almost there

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

It is a widely-accepted fact that Carroll County is out of money for 2007. The reason there is no money is that it seems the county spent \$2 million dollars more in 2006 than it received in revenue. The 2007 budget was based on the same flawed logic from which the 2006 budget was developed, and the outcome is expected to be somewhat similar at the end of 2007.

Published reports in the *Comet* indicated that as of Dec. 31, 2001, the general fund cash balance was

\$5,283,630.70. The general fund cash balance as of Dec. 31, 2006 was \$524,364.64. According to the monthly financial report for Aug. 31, 2007, the general fund balance was -\$1,027,328.

The county had several million dollars in reserve in the past to act as a cushion for overspending. That reserve is depleted. That safety net no longer exists for the county.

It was with this knowledge county council members began developing the 2008 budget. And it was with the knowledge that to correct the situation, they would have to significantly pare down department heads' spend-

ing requests for next year. Some of their decisions, although not absolutely final until today, Wednesday morning, startled and shocked department heads, employees and community members.

It has been well publicized the county museum's budget was put at zero. However, the same decision was made for the caretaker positions at Deer Creek Park and the county's animal control officer.

Most department heads appeared before the council Tuesday morning to ask questions, answer questions, clarify requests, make concessions in one line item of their budget for an-

other line in their budgets and sometimes to offer understanding of the job council members are now facing.

Before they had the opportunity to speak, council president Rob Baker addressed the audience.

"I welcome the department heads here today," he said. "We want to thank you for working with us."

He also issued a message from the council and from the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance. He said the DLGF requested that county spending be curtailed for the remainder of the year.

"Even if you have money in your budgets," he said, "the DLGF said

to not spend it."

Council member Steve Ashby announced as of Aug. 31, 2007, the county has spent approximately \$1,027,000 more than income received.

"We're all going to have to work together," he said. "We're off track. I wore a red shirt today because the county is in the red."

Carroll County Park Board President Bob Burton wanted an explanation of what he was supposed to do with Deer Creek Park.

"Want versus need comes to the forefront," council member Jerry
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Animal control service future in question

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

Given Carroll County's financial situation, the future of the Carroll County Animal Control was on everyone's mind at a recent animal control commission meeting.

Council member Ann Brown said the commission should not count on funding from the county for help with animal control. She explained approximately 75 percent of the county's general fund is used to pay employees. To avoid eliminating positions, other services would have to be reduced or deleted entirely to reverse years of spending above the income levels.

"Anything you would get from the county would be a bonus," she said.

However current shelter operator Doctor Lawrence Stauffer said the county had a

system to handle stray and unwanted animals prior to the decision to turn the operation over to county government control in 2004.

"We used to make it work," Stauffer said. "I'm more than willing to continue in any capacity."

Commission members decided to approach each municipality and governmental entity about the need for, and the amount of funding each could provide, for animal control.

"All townships need to have a meeting," Washington Township Trustee Lois Wallace said. "Whatever we do, we need to do the same thing."

Local resident Shawn Draper presented plans for a private shelter operation and said it would take significant money.

Camden Clerk-Treasurer Pat Casserly recommended com-
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Voter reminder

Comet staff report

The towns of Burlington and Camden, as well as the City of Delphi, will hold a general municipal election Nov. 6.

The deadline to register to vote, update addresses or submit name changes for the election is Oct. 9.

According to county clerk Laura Sterrett, voters should make sure their address is correct if they have moved. Residents may register or confirm their registration in person at the clerk's office on the second floor of the courthouse.

Absentee voting for the elections will begin Oct. 9. Voters wishing to vote in person may do so in the clerk's office Mondays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesdays 8 a.m. to noon and Fridays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. as well as on two Saturdays, Oct. 27 and Nov. 3 from 8 a.m. to noon. In-office voting will end Nov. 5 at noon. Voters must provide a valid driver's license or state issued ID if voting in person at the clerk's office.

Voters wishing to vote absentee by mail may do so by requesting an absentee application from the clerk's office at (765) 564-6795 or by picking up an application in person. Applications must be received no later than midnight, Oct. 29.

Voters wishing to vote absentee by traveling board may do so by requesting an application from the clerk's office as well. Applications must be received no later than Nov. 5 at noon.

Absentee applications and change of address or name change forms can also be obtained at <http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/candidates/index.html>.

Family Fun Night



Parents learned how to prepare their preschool-age children for kindergarten, and their children just had fun at a Family Fun Night Monday and Tuesday evenings. The two locations for the event were the Camden Early Education Center and Carroll Elementary School. Children listened to an interactive story, made a graph of paper apples, walked a balance beam, and got an apple to take home. Preschool and kindergarten teachers led the activities. Parents were given a take-home packet. The event was sponsored by Purdue Extension-Carroll County and the Education Task Force of Carroll County at the Crossroads/Focus on the Future. Comet photos by Jennifer Archibald

Brainstorming meeting is set to preserve county's rich heritage

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

How does a community protect its historic resources, make them accessible and attract tourists? How does a community develop funding streams to sustain the resources and at the same time educate each historic entity about granting assistance and other services available to them?

All are good questions for Carroll County historic groups. And all will begin to be addressed at a meeting hosted by Carroll County Focus on the Future Historic Resources Planning Committee, Oct. 10 at 7 p.m. at the Wabash & Erie

Canal Interpretive Center.

Group members Bonnie Maxwell, Anita Werling and Janet Ayers want to ensure Carroll County history, and all that involves, is managed in a manner which would allow for ample volunteer efforts and offer efficient accessibility by the public, both native to the county and those who might happen by.

From the Adams Mill to the Burnett's Creek Arch, from the Mullin Schoolhouse to Slate Bluffs and historic markers such as the Trail of Death the county is rich with history. The historic resources meeting is designed to bring those interested together to develop a long-range plan to in-

tegrate the goals of all groups to set objectives, discuss fundraising, develop action plans and establish benchmarks for progress.

"It's very confusing to people," county historical and preservation society member Maxwell told the *Comet* Sept. 11. "There are things falling through the cracks. We think there is a lot of room for improvement with this."

"There is no specific group that manages all of these resources," Werling added.

Issues to be addressed at the meeting include:

- The number of museums and historical groups a county should have;

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Alone in the country

The Lewis Mullin Schoolhouse on CR750 near Burrows is one county resource the Carroll County Focus on the Future sub-committee, Carroll County Historic Resources, wants to ensure is preserved. Comet photo by Debbie Lowe

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