

## Council to play 'Let's Make A Deal' with commissioners

By Debbie Lowe  
Staff writer

Carroll County Council has succeeded in reducing the 2008 advertised budget by more than \$1.65 million but still has farther to go to achieve bottom-line budget appropriation reductions strongly recommended by the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance. After a several-hour work session that followed a standard council meeting Monday afternoon, they decided commissioners should be allowed to weigh in about where to look for the next round of decreases.

Faced with reductions in personnel to help satisfy decreases needed, commissioners will be asked to liquidate

county assets, i.e. excess land around Carroll Manor, ambulance buildings and Deer Creek Park, and apply that money toward salaries and benefits.

News of the failure of commissioners to raise Carroll Manor rates sufficiently to pay expenses at the commissioners' morning meeting ruffled council members. Vowing to not close the facility, council members determined by consensus facility expenses would have to be lowered to match income.

"We have to make it (the facility) cash flow," council president Nancy Cripe said. "We can't justify cutting EMS and the sheriff's department when we're subsidizing Carroll Manor residents."

"When you are in the hole, the first

thing you need to do is stop digging," Jerry Hendress said. "How can we jeopardize the health and safety of our residents?"

"We cannot continue," Steve Ashby said. "I see no other way. If we continue to deficit spend, we're never going to get out of this."

Council decided to allow commissioners one last opportunity to increase income to balance expenses with income at the home. Manor superintendent Martha Lewis was directed to request a special commissioners meeting to address the issue. They will meet in special session March 20 at 5 p.m. to make decisions.

Council members also decided to request commissioners forgive a por-

tion of the \$675,000 loan from the cumulative bridge fund made at the beginning of the year. It was noted that a decision made by the council several years ago to contribute \$500,000 out of the general fund for highway department wages was ill advised.

Council decided to pursue a financial arrangement with the governing board of the tax increment financing district, which collects property taxes for 62 acres where Indiana Packers Corporation is located.

During the regularly scheduled council meeting, members tabled an economic development income tax increase vote.

Auditor Beth Myers was directed to pay payroll from \$200,000 out of Riverboat Gambling. She is to pay

claims from the remainder, plus the current balance in county general and any income received into the fund.

A request from commissioners to transfer \$6,142.09 from building structures and liability to compensation time was tabled. The money would have been used to pay former county employee and historical museum director Phyllis Moore for an amended claim for hours worked more than she was paid while employed by the county.

Council member Ron Slavens said the expense was not a legitimate one because some of the hours claimed were for work done after hours and on weekends during Old Settlers. He said the festival was hosted by the Delphi

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## Commissioners reject council recommendation

*No huge rate increase for Carroll Manor*

By Debbie Lowe  
Staff writer

Carroll County Commissioners did not agree with the need expressed by the county council to increase residents' rates to a level that would make Carroll Manor self-sustaining. Instead, they did some math of their own, listened to residents' family members speak about the goodness of the facility and then rejected the council recommendation at the Monday morning meeting.

Carroll Manor Superintendent Martha Lewis said the council directed rates to increase to \$56/day for residents at the facility. However, Lewis added she thought the increase should be "temporary" and cautioned commissioners to not "lose sight about what Carroll Manor is all about."

"If we don't operate in the black, or (make expenses) even (with income), it won't be there," she said.

Lewis presented a rate structure which included a spend-down program for residents who could not readily pay the proposed \$56 each day.

Although Delphi business owner Ron Christie reported an assisted living facility in Lafayette was charging \$97/day and he believed people from outside of Carroll County would want to live at the Manor if they were aware of it, commissioners hesitated to follow the council recommendation.

"We don't want to price our-

selves out of the market," commissioner president Loren Hylton said.

Council member Ann Brown advised the county did not have enough money in the budget to maintain the current level of services.

**"This is another situation we have to do something about, we didn't start."**  
Commissioner Bill Brown

When questioned by commissioner George Mears, she explained the council divided the cost of doing business at the Manor by the number of residents to determine what cost-per-day would be sufficient for cash flow.

Commissioner Bill Brown asked council member Brown what the council intended to do with residents who were unable to pay the increased amount. She replied the facility would not close.

"But right now, we can't afford it," she told Brown. "Everyday you argue you're wasting time."

"We aren't doing ourselves any favors by arguing about this," she added.

Lewis said in retrospect she realized rates should have been increased over the years as income-producing activities, such as food gardening, were discontinued.

"This is another situation we have to do something about we didn't start," Bill Brown said.

Commissioners approved a

rate increase of \$36/day for county residents and \$56/day for non-residents effective in 45 days. When questioned about admitting criteria, Lewis said anyone with a familial tie to Carroll County, such as a son or daughter who resides in the county, is considered a resident. She said there are no residents who do not fit that description currently residing at the Manor.

Lewis also announced that the general contractor for the elevator project has still not completed the elevator work. She requested commissioners step in to encourage the contractor to fulfill his obligation to the county and satisfy the state grant of approximately \$500,000.

Commissioner attorney Barry Emerson was directed to write a letter to the contractor stipulating a completion date.

**EDC**  
Commissioners unanimously adopted a resolution to use additional economic development income tax funds, if council raised the tax rate, for economic development projects.

"If there is an increase, the money will be used exclusively and entirely for economic development projects," was Brown's proposal.

The discussion leading to resolution adopted was heated and involved various economic development corporation issues.

"We know that economic development is the way to move the county forward," EDC director

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## 'Egg'citing time



More than 200 children turned out for the Easter egg hunt Saturday in Flora, despite the cold, damp weather. Tricycle winners were Ella Burkle and Peyton Rodgers. Bicycle winners were Olivia Hiler, Ethan Ratcliff, Victoria Leazenby, and Dylan Ponder. The trikes and bikes were purchased with donations from Flora area businesses. Flora Community Club's KICK team sponsored the hunt. Other egg hunts around the county are planned for this Saturday. Comet photo by Jennifer Archibald

## Personal property tax time is here again

Comet staff report

It is once again time for personal property owners to fill out tax forms.

Carroll County Assessor Doris McLeland announced the filing date for this year's forms is May 15.

Campers, RVs and man-powered boats will be assessed. An-

tique tractors, three-wheelers, four-wheelers and pop-up campers will not be assessed.

McLeland said all inventory must be listed and calculated on the forms, but residents will not pay tax based on those amounts.

A penalty will be charged for forms not returned by the deadline. Those who need help to complete the form should contact their township trustee or call the assessor's office at (765) 564-3444.

## Delphi art show down but not out

*Scaled back show causes formation of second event*

By Kevin Schnepf  
Staff writer

The upcoming Jack Sanders Delphi Art Show, a popular 51-year tradition known for bringing together community and student artists, has been significantly scaled back by organizers this year.

In the past, the show was held in and around the high school commons and adjoining classrooms. Space concerns brought on by block scheduling led to adjusted room assignments according to Delphi Community School Corporation officials. There was also a change in show organizers.

High school art teacher Judi Brummett said former show planner Sherri Cripe added more to the event year after year. Due to reorganization, Cripe was no longer able to fill her role as show organizer. Unprepared for the extra workload, art teachers were not able to host the show in the same fashion. She said art teachers and administrators decided not to host a 2008 show at all. However, senior students said they would help make one happen, which made a difference.

Brummett said little time to organize the event remained when the decision was reversed. She said staff committed to do what they could to produce a show for the high school artists, along with a handful of professionals. However, no middle school or elementary students would be able to show pieces this year.

"We have to make the show manageable for the staff," she said. "We plan to revamp it so we can handle it and keep it alive for next year."

"Space concerns at the high school will not go away," she explained. "There are rooms we used for the art show that are occupied now due to block scheduling. We have to downsize (to stay at the high school) or move to another place."

DCSC Superintendent Ralph Walker said he was saddened to learn the show had to be cut back. He said he enjoyed and supported the show and hoped the staff could keep it successful. He routinely exhibits students' art on the walls of his office on a monthly rotation and was auctioneer for last year's show fundraiser.

"In my short experience with the

show I have seen what a great event it has been for the students and community," he said Monday. "It is a great show for the young children who get to bring their art up with the high schoolers. I hope we can be better organized to do so again next spring."

Delphi mayor Randy Strasser expressed disappointment that the full-scale version would not be held. He said the show was a great attraction for the school and city.

"This is not a positive thing for art or the community," he said.

Brummett added that the 2008 Delphi Art Show will be April 25 from 6 to 9 p.m., April 26 from 4 to 9 p.m., and during school hours until 9 p.m. on April 28 and 29. The final day of the show will coincide with the high school poetry slam event to be held that evening in the Little Theatre.

Brummett said the school has secured a reservation to use the Wabash & Erie Canal Interpretive Center as a possible venue for the 2009 show.

**Split produces second show**

Carolyn Wood, who chaired Delphi Tri Kappa's involvement in the Delphi Art Show for more than a decade, said

the club heard the news about this year's show "through the grapevine." She explained club members were not upset or angry.

"We are not angry," she said. "We are hurt and disappointed to be honest. We offered volunteer work, money and insurance for the show. Not to be included in conversations about the changes did not make us feel appreciated."

Wood said the art show's downturn presented an opportunity for the club. She explained Tri Kappa's members voted last week to host an art show at the Wabash & Erie Canal Interpretive Center in autumn. The club will try to coordinate with Hoosier Salon, a statewide organization that offers a variety of support and venues for artists. She said she did not know if a show could be put together for this year, but they would work hard to try.

"We're doing what we can to host an art show this year," she said. "We are excited about hosting a show on our own. Either way, we will host one in 2009."



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