

CARROLL COUNTY COMET

Consolidation of the Delphi Journal-Citizen (Est. 1839) and the Flora Hoosier Democrat (Est. 1897).

Published each Wednesday at 114 East Franklin St., Delphi IN 46923
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Delphi IN 46923 and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to Carroll County Comet, PO Box 26, Flora IN 46929-0026 USPS 285-840

Published by CARROLL PAPERS, Inc. PO Box 26, Flora IN 46929-0026
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MAIL SUBSCRIPTION RATES in Advance - Per Year
Carroll County, Service People and Counties which border Carroll - \$30.00.
All other Indiana counties - \$36.00; All other states - \$40.00.
Addresses changed for seasonal residences - Add \$3.00
Address changes - subs@carrollcountycomet.com

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Guest commentary

An explanation of Carroll County taxes

Editor's Note: The following article was written by the Carroll County Economic Development Corporation to help explain the county's tax structure. This is the first of a two-part series.

Carroll County citizens have heard a lot about the county's serious financial situation. That situation is causing drastic reductions in all areas of county government, particularly police, jail, and emergency services. Added to that is the news that 150 people will be out of work due to the loss of manufacturing at Peters-Revington furniture plant.

There are a number of reasons why the county is struggling financially. A review of the existing tax structure helps to explain why Carroll County is in worse shape than its neighbors.

Property tax

The largest source of revenue for the county, townships, towns, schools, and libraries in Carroll County is property tax. That tax is collected on homes, land, business real estate, and other personal property. In 2007, Carroll County's property tax total was over \$23 million. However, that revenue is very low compared to surrounding counties. White County is the next lowest to Carroll County with \$34.4 million while Tippecanoe County is the highest with \$184.4 million.

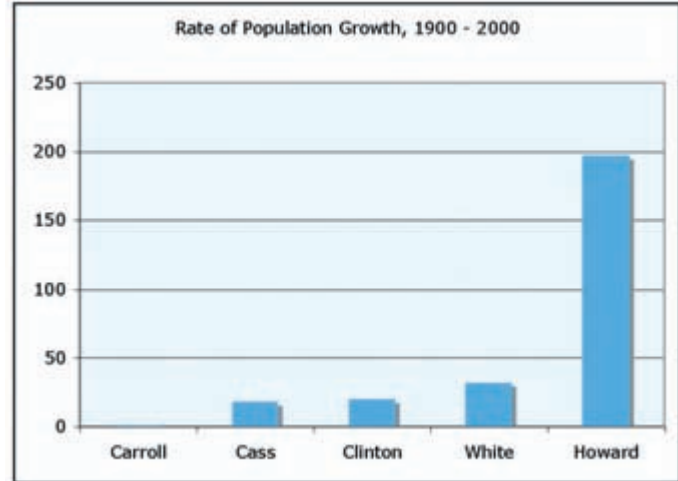
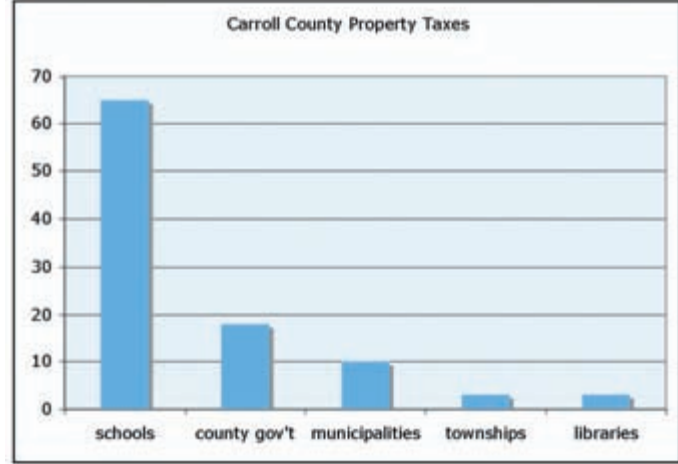
Assessed value forms the basis for property tax. Carroll County's assessed value is 56% residential, 30% agricultural, and less than 8% commercial or industrial. (6% is tax exempt). The percent of assessed value for commercial/industrial is higher in all other counties than Carroll (13-28%) and their agricultural percentages are lower (5-26%).

Carroll County's relative lack of business and industry puts the county at a distinct disadvantage for generating property tax revenue. Of property tax collected for Carroll County, 65% goes to schools; 18% to the county government for county-wide services; 10% to the municipalities of Delphi, Flora, Camden, Burlington and Yeoman; 3% to townships; and 3% to libraries.

County Adjusted Gross Income Tax (CAGIT)

The second largest source of general funding is the County Adjusted Gross Income Tax (CAGIT). This tax is collected at the rate of 1% from people who live in Carroll County, regardless of where they work. Carroll County's 2007 revenue was \$3.3 million.

The CAGIT revenue goes to the same entities as listed above



Good listeners can be a hard bunch to find. That's especially true at election time.

Let's say a candidate utters something candid and revealing about his or her own personal view of the U.S. or our citizenry. That candid moment can represent real value to the voter, if the voter is listening.

A candid moment can be the time when the voter either puts a star next to the candidate's name, or scratches that name off the list.

If you follow the reporting of the Clinton-Obama race for the Democratic nomination for president it seems to me that folks are looking to identify with a candidate, rather than learn about them.

Rather than listening, many voters seem to want to find the candidate that mirrors them, the candidate that "gets" them.

After hearing Michelle Obama speak in York, Pa., resident Ann Collier summed up her reaction to Mrs. Obama's speech this way: "she just has a better understanding of where I come from."

Ms. Collier is not alone in her criteria for picking the leader of the free world.

"I want someone who gets me!" - they chant.

My criteria for who wins the keys to the residence at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue doesn't involve my personal situation. For surely, I don't give a hoot if the next President "gets" me. I certainly don't want a President who feels my pain or has the time or interest to learn "where

Midwest Memo

by Alan Shultz



Good listeners

I come from." The job description is a tad more complex.

Note to Ms. Collier's support group: in case you haven't heard, there's a bit of trouble in the Middle East and our economy seems to be in a squeeze. It's not all about you.

The 1979 movie "Being There" stars Peter Sellers as an innocent, albeit dim fellow, who gains influence in D.C. politics simply by - being there. An Internet site devoted to the movie calls it the "greatest movie you've never seen - a double edged satire about politics."

In "Being There" the main character is a blank slate who shares little but mirrors back much to the folks with whom he interacts. Those same folks all find him fascinating and wise because of his unusual mirror effect.

Even though the word candid can be found in the word candidate, you rarely get that situation in real life. In seems voters want to hear precisely what they want to hear and the candidates are all too happy to deliver. It's called pandering and it seems to work.

Honey, what was that?

The earthquake last week rattled our house out in Adams

Township. The windows shattered and plates on the wall vibrated and the racket woke up both my wife and me. Debbie sat up and said "that was an earthquake."

I rolled over and declared that it was cats fighting on the screened-in porch below our bedroom.

Turns out - she was right.

I fared better on my diagnosis of the earthquake than a chap in Brookston who we know. When his wife told him there had been an earthquake, his reply set him up for a night on the couch.

"Oh, I just thought it was you getting out of bed," he said.

Across the state line...

I am an enthusiastic cheerleader for the work of the Purdue Extension Office here in Carroll County and for the system across the state. The Extension network serves as a resource and moving force behind programming, teaching, outreach and volunteers in countless communities large and small.

Across the state line into Illinois the Extension system there has become the unlikely victim of state government that won't honor its own commitments. Illinois is withholding operating funds due their Extension system due to fiscal ineptitude and a Governor and Legislature that don't get along.

I wonder about those Illinois officials who don't deliver on their promises. Do they "get" their constituents?

Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Smith

Superior Court judgments are gathered from public records on file in the Carroll County Clerk's office on the second floor of the courthouse, Delphi.

New Filings

Jason T. Marcum was charged with criminal mischief.

Donna L. Wilson was charged with public intoxication and disorderly conduct.

Caleb J. Brubaker was charged with visiting a common nuisance.

Ricardo A. Rosario was charged with operating a motor vehicle without ever receiving a license.

Marriage Licenses

Bradley Curtis Farrer, 29, of Royal Center, and Brandi Rae Nichols, 25, of Delphi.

Because the public has a right to know...

In an effort to help our readers understand what government meetings are happening when and where, the Comet will now print upcoming meetings on a weekly basis.

Friday, April 25

✓ County Council special meeting: 8:30 a.m.

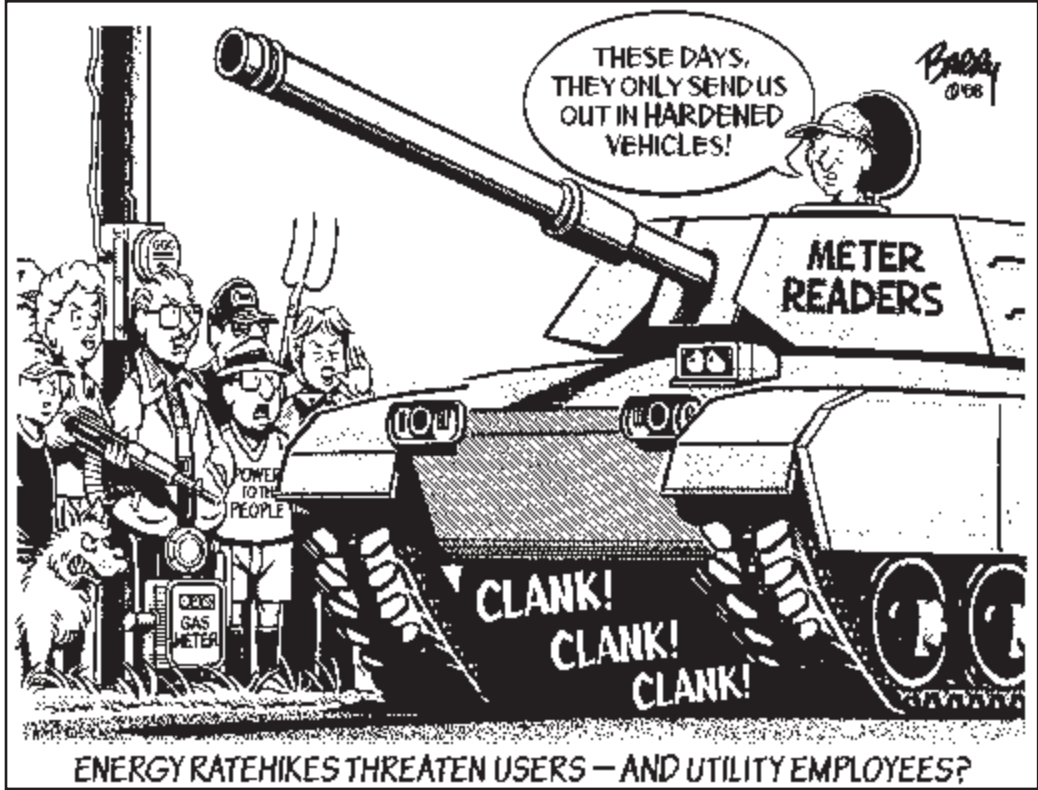
Tuesday, April 29

✓ County Council: 8:30 a.m.

Public Notices appearing in this issue of the Comet:

Sheriff Sale-Price	5B
Sheriff Sale-Cade	5B
Sheriff Sale-Baker	5B
Sheriff Sale-Lyke	6B
Sheriff Sale-Maloy	5B
Sheriff Sale-Funkhouser	6B
Sheriff Sale-Johnson	6B
Sheriff Sale-Denton	6B
Sheriff Sale-Brooks	5B
Camden-Not of Bids	6B
Jackson TWP-Ann Report ...	4B
Camden-Bid Instructions ...	4B
CC Financial Report	5B
Isom Name Change	6B
Voting Places	4B
Lowry Estate	6B
Storey Estate	5B

Questions concerning Indiana's Open Door and Public Access Laws may be directed to the state's public access office, at 1-800-228-6013.



Letters to the Editor

The Comet welcomes letters to the editor responding to articles and events in the news. They must include the author's name, address and telephone number. The letter writer's name and address will appear in the paper - no exceptions. Letters must be 400 words or less in length. Please send your letters to: editor@carrollcountycomet.com; Letters to the Editor, Comet, P.O. Box 26, Flora, IN 46929 or P.O. Box 179, Delphi, IN 46923; or fax 574-967-3384 or 765-564-2010. By submitting a letter or opinion article, the author grants the Comet the right to publish, distribute, archive or use the work in print, electronic, on-line or other format.

Let's get inspired

Our county is experiencing some tough times - the loss of homes due to the floods, loss of industries and several retail businesses, the county's financial situation. It is easy to be overwhelmed and become discouraged. In such times of stress, not knowing exactly what to do, it is easy to point fingers and blame others for the situation. However, this is not a useful choice as it spirals us downward even further. Our character, as a community, is being tested. Are we up for the challenge?

Our community's situation reminds me of the film, *Apollo 13*, one of my favorite films because of the inspirational lessons it teaches us. Based on a true story of the 1970 trip to the moon, the doomed flight met with one disaster after another. Shortly after lift-off, an explosion (which led to the famous line, "Houston, we have a problem!") caused major malfunctions of the spaceship, putting the lives of the three men on board in serious jeopardy. Most of the film focuses on resolving one problem after another to get the men home safely. With great discipline and competence, both the flight and ground crews solve the almost insurmountable problems, demonstrating the power of human abilities and teamwork.

In time, however, the limits of human endurance are met and even the best-trained people in the world become tired and grumpy. When the ground crew starts to squabble with each other, Gene Krantz, Chief of Operations (played by Ed Harris), reprimands them to "work the problem." (Not a bad reminder for all of us.) But perhaps the greatest lesson is toward the end of the film when, after all the other problems have been solved, they learn

there is a severe weather report for the area where they are to splash down. An engineer at NASA, pacing back and forth and rubbing his crew cut head, laments, "This is a disaster - this will be the worst disaster in NASA's history." Gene Krantz looks him straight in the eye and says, "Ah, I think this will be our finest hour!"

So, what can we do in Carroll County? First, go rent *Apollo 13* and get inspired. Second, come to the "Community Connections" meeting sponsored by Carroll County Focus on the Future Inc. on April 30 at 7 p.m. at the Community Senior Center in Flora. The purpose of the forum is to bring people together who are leading new, exciting and positive efforts in Carroll County. Everyone is welcome, but all negative comments will be checked at the door. Come and be a part of building a better community.

Let this be our finest hour!

Janet Ayres
Carroll County Focus on the Future, Inc.

Invite to DCSC patrons

The members of the Delphi Community School Corporation Board of Trustees, The superintendent, building administrators and teachers are constantly striving to improve the education opportunities for our children. We are also committed to the goal of making the Delphi Community School Corporation one of the Top 10 school corporations in the state within the next ten years.

To do so, the board of trustees has in the last four years and particularly in the last two years, since the arrival of our new superintendent, approved a number of initiatives to make this happen.

We invite you to visit our web site at www.delphi.k12.in.us to view the entire web site and particularly the area entitled Educational Initiatives. As you will see this corporation is taking many bold strides to improve and add to the educational opportunities for the children of the Delphi Community

School Corporation.

Feel free at any time to visit our schools and to meet with the superintendent, building administrators or our teachers. As always the members of the board of trustees welcomes your thoughts and comments.

Robert R. Resler, president
Delphi Community School Corporation Board of Trustees

Time for change

Who, what, when, where and why these are all good questions, however now is the time to act and stop pointing fingers. If we do not - how can we breathe new life into our county - its cities and towns? It is all too easy to point fingers and pass the blame but that will not solve our problems. We now need people who are willing to step out of their box. We all need to work at making our county, cities and towns a place where people want to build a home or start a business. No improvement will be had until passing the blame has stopped and we all start working to make things better for all of us. Our home values are dropping and businesses

are closing. Our young citizens are moving away to follow their dreams. We need to work toward having a county where our children desire to live and raise their children.

We can have growth and create new jobs, but it will take us all to make it work. You can do something as simple as becoming familiar with the many opportunities this county offers - visiting our historical resources, shopping our stores - speaking with the business owners then going out and promoting our county to others.

I was surprised and impressed when I started to get involved with the local organizations and their leaders. I stepped out of my box. Attending the Leadership Carroll County Course opened my eyes to all the good work that many of our citizens are doing for this county. The work will continue, however goals would be accomplished much faster with a greater number of citizens working toward them. I hope that everyone would agree it is time we stop reading about ourselves in the newspaper and being the butt of surrounding

Letters Cont'd. next page

Web poll

Tell us starting Wednesday at our web site, carrollcountycomet.com

Each week the Comet polls its readers on a different topic. Vote online at carrollcountycomet.com starting each Thursday, and then click the Comments link to send us an email voicing your opinion. The best responses will be printed the following week.

If you felt the earth quake last Friday, did you immediately know what it was?

Yes
No
I thought that's what it was, but I didn't believe it!

Last Weeks results

Would you be willing to mail your property tax payment instead of making the payment in person to alleviate the need to hire extra workers in the treasurer's office?

81% You bet! Anything to help!
06% No, the county should hire enough people so I can pay my taxes in person.
13% No, but I don't mind standing in line until I can get waited on.

Total responses: 154

Reader's comments:

I am happy to send it by mail, but I have never had to wait in line before anyway. There always seems to be more than enough help, generally there is no one ahead of me and I usually wait until the last couple of days before deadline.