

SBOA audit completed...

county finance committee left out of loop

By **Debbie Lowe**
Staff writer

The Carroll County Council finance committee engaged the Indiana State Board of Accounts (SBOA) in dialog in 2007 prior and during the audit of the 2006 financial records. It was the understanding of committee Ron Slavens, Ann Brown and Steve Ashby after that experience they would be afforded the same opportunity in 2008 for the 2007 audit. However, that did not happen.

Council president Nancy S. Cripe announced at a Thursday morning council meeting SBOA representatives recently visited the county and completed the 2007 audit without input from the finance committee. She said she attended an exit interview and learned SBOA indicated

they found no issues with the treasurer and auditors' offices. Cripe said a written report would be issued in four to six weeks.

"The finance committee had questions," complained chair Ann Brown. "We expected a supplemental report to help the council."

Slavens concurred with Brown. He said he was disappointed and concerned that the committee was left out of the review process. He said he was told by Tammy White of SBOA last year the finance committee would have an active role in the 2007 audit this year.

"I'm very disappointed," he said. "This is inexcusable."

"I'm like Ron," Steve Ashby said. "I'm very concerned. We've got a long way to go. We've got a lot of things fixed but we've got to get

everything fixed."

"I would like an opportunity to ask SBOA questions," he added.

Cripe said one of the auditors, Sandy Gerlach, would be at the courthouse Tuesday. She said the finance committee could visit at that time to ask questions.

Yeoman Community Center/EMS Garage grant

Emergency Medical Services (ambulance) Director Mike Durr presented the department's 2009 budget request. Additionally he explained the need to request an additional appropriation for the accounts recovery service fee and fuel.

He further reported bids for the Yeoman Community Center and EMS Garage joint project were well over the engineer's estimate, which is what grant funding was based upon.

The engineer's estimate for the project was approximately \$380,000 but bids started at roughly \$439,000. He said town leaders would meet to discuss the situation.

Due to the nature of the grant request, Carroll County Commissioners became the grantee for funding. Bids were formally received at the last commissioners' meeting by Yeoman town engineer Ken Smith.

Other business

Highway superintendent Ron Francis was granted permission to fill a truck driver vacancy. He said the department was currently shy three employees with only 10 working. Francis explained that one resigned, one was terminated and one is on short-term disability. He was encouraged by council members to resolve the disability issue before

snow-plowing commences.

The Local Option Income Tax workshop scheduled for the meeting was tabled.

According to assessor Doris McLeland, The Andersons missed the deadline to apply for a 2007 tax abatement. A public hearing will be held to provide currency for the matter to allow the abatement to proceed.

A \$16,000 additional appropriation from the Riverboat Gambling Fund for an update to the personnel policy manual was approved.

Transfers approved:

- Commissioners - \$4,830 from Social Security to the cost of keeping juveniles (an additional \$3,059 claim was tabled for further review);
- Treasurer - \$283.82 from mileage and meeting expenses to printing

See **Transfers** page 5A

Full speed ahead for county extension office

Despite cutbacks, programs and professional staff remain constant

By **Debbie Lowe**
Staff writer

The Carroll County Extension Office was significantly impacted by 2008 budget reductions. Extension staff member Joann Lytton explained that the office suffered the loss of a program assistant, a part-time clerical worker and will assume the annual \$14,500 rent obligation. That obligation was previously paid out of the county commissioners' budget.



Lytton

clubs." "We even want to add another program called 'Youth Leadership Carroll County' next year," she added.

Lytton said one tradition that was financially affected by budget reductions was the county fair. Although there were fewer staff to implement the components and be leaders in fair activities, community volunteers stepped forward to provide the necessary manpower for the fair to proceed normally.

"We have always had wonderful help from club leaders and junior leaders," Lytton said. "We received additional help from parents, 4-H'ers, Extension Homemakers, Lions and Kiwanis clubs and other service organizations."

"Flora Community Club, the Antique Tractor Club, the Flora Police Department, and Flora Park Board all coordinated efforts to provide whatever they could to accommodate what we needed for the fair to be the success it was this year," she added.

Marcellino will continue to offer the 13-week Master Gardener Program. He said he will also continue to be significantly involved with the Carroll County Agriculture Association, soliciting and adding new members whenever possible.

"It's just not pork anymore in Carroll County," Mar-

See **Extension** page 5A

When a road is not just a road And a bridge is not just a bridge

Story and photos by **Debbie Lowe**

While discussing the proposed restoration of Burnett's Creek Arch at the Aug. 18 county commissioners meeting, Carroll County Highway Department Superintendent Ron Francis reported a landowner of adjoining property would not allow county employees or surveyors access to his land to work on the Arch. He made reference to a long-ago court case involving the man's son being terminated from county employment but he did not identify the landowner.

Ted Ratcliff is the landowner and he wants the county to know where he stands on the issue and why. He further wants his views known about what he considers to be the needless expense of the rehabilitation of the bridge.

"Burnett's Creek Arch has been surveyed at least three, maybe four times," he said. "Are we doing what we ought to be doing up there or are we spinning our wheels?" Ratcliff said part of his feelings about allowing surveyors on his property has to do with his resentment that his son was accused of crimes against the county several years ago. He said his son was terminated from the county, stood trial but was acquitted for the charges. Additionally, when his son applied for unemployment, the county fought the action and lost.

Ratcliff said he was also targeted unjustly when his son was terminated. A road Ratcliff said had been maintained by the county for many years, was removed from county road maintenance. He said he was not aware of the action and that left him in the middle of a land sale in which the purchaser's land was then unable to be accessed by a



Ted Ratcliff's land borders the Burnett's Creek Arch along Towpath Road near Lockport

public road. Ratcliff said the county has not been fair with him and he will not acquiesce to the highway department or anyone connected with the county.

"Why should I do anything for them?" Ratcliff said. "All the county has done is put up obstacles for me."

"What goes around comes around," he added. "I've waited a long time for this day."

The 67-year-old life-long Carroll County resident maintains the county has no right-of-way off the road. He said he has attempted to learn where the county right-of-way is located, and after visiting several county offices found no evidence there is a right-of-way.

Ratcliff said he was never contacted by the county about proposed work or asked to give permission for anyone to be on his property. He said surveyors and others have been trespassing for at least two years.

"They have no business out there," he said. "We should know what they're doing, where they are from."



Stairs from the road, put in by the county, lead down to the Burnett's Creek Arch

Francis did not disagree with Ratcliff. He said that he did not know if there was a right-of-way. However, he said that he assumed the county's right-of-way extended at least six feet from the edge of Towpath Road.

"There is a right-of-way on every road," he said.

Francis said he notified Structure Point Engineering, the firm hired to do design work on the project, that there might be a problem with a local about using his land. He said he instructed them to call

Ratcliff before going on the property.

Ratcliff said he allowed the county to put steps on his land from the road down the side of the Arch for people to be able to visit and look at the running water approximately 20 years ago. He said the county did not maintain the stairs and they became a liability for him because they were located on his land.

He said in October 2004 when then first lady Maggie Kernan visited to present a

See **Bridge** page 5A

Carroll enrollment unofficially down

By **Jennifer Archibald**
Staff writer

Current enrollment in the Carroll School Corporation is down from last year, according to preliminary figures released by Superintendent John Sayers last week.

He reported at the Aug. 19 Carroll School Board meeting that total enrollment is 1,098.5, which is down nine from the enrollment on official count day last year. He said figures could change between now and official count day this year, which is Sept. 12. There are more actual students than the current total reflects because kindergarten students are counted as half. The total also includes 11 Carroll students who go to Twin Lakes, Delphi, and Logansport schools.

The corporation will pay \$28,575 for two 100-gallon hot water heaters to replace one deteriorating 650-gallon heater at

the elementary school. The board received three quotes and accepted the proposal of Quality Plumbing & Heating of Bunker Hill.

Sayers said the Quality quote was the next to the lowest bid. The low bidder, Goudy Bros. Boiler Co., proposed one replacement heater. Sayers said the reasoning on two heaters is that if there is a problem with one heater, the other can be a back-up, and at times when less hot water is needed, such as in the summer, only one heater would need to be in use.

Cost for the heaters will be paid out of the Capital Projects Fund. They will be installed over fall or Christmas break.

Bob Reef from RME Insurance presented two proposals for Carroll property and liability insurance. He said the quote from Indiana Insurance was \$5,714 less than the quote from Hanover Insurance. He also said that the Indiana premium

was \$11,000 less than the corporation's insurance last year, with a million dollars more in coverage.

Reef recommended adding "crime coverage," which pays up to \$25,000 for school losses caused by employee crimes such as forgery, theft, disappearance, destruction, robbery, computer fraud, and dishonesty. The deductible is \$500, and the premium is \$141.

The board accepted the Indiana quote with crime coverage. Also added was one million dollars worth of earthquake coverage for an additional premium of \$700.

Sayers announced the resignation of Charisse Smith, family and consumer sciences teacher. She has taken a position with Western High School in Howard County, and will be leaving Carroll within a month.

The following paid coaching positions were approved: Charisse Smith, JV volleyball

(temporary); Tom Allen, JV basketball; Patsy Bosley, varsity cheer; Nick Beaver, freshman boys basketball; Rob Ives, seventh grade boys basketball; Mike McCroskey, girls varsity basketball; Jack Malson, freshman girls basketball; Tom Hedde, seventh grade girls basketball; Steve Pencek, varsity wrestling; Ladd Kitchell, wrestling assistant; Ladd Kitchell, junior high wrestling; Carla Richardson, junior high

swim coach; Michelle Strawcutter, junior high swim assistant; Bill Dillon, baseball assistant and ninth grade; Tom Hedde, boys golf; Jerry Reinke, girls tennis; Chad Myers, varsity softball; Larry Henning, varsity assistant track.

The board increased bus drivers' pay for extracurricular and field trips to \$8.50 an hour.

Renee McIlrath, Beth Hay-

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