

Kernan-Shepard report threatens township leaders

By **Debbie Lowe**
Staff writer

A front page article in last week's *Comet* told about Deer Creek Township leaders' desire to divest the township of surplus taxpayer money. The township trustee expressed concern that if the State of Indiana mandates a change in county government structure, possibly the township level of government would be abolished. She expressed fear the township would lose control of the money accumulated over the years.

In July 2007, Governor Mitch Daniels appointed the state Commission on Local Government Reform. The commission, co-chaired by former Democratic Governor Joe

Kernan and Supreme Court Justice Randall T. Shepard, made 27 recommendations to streamline local government. The report was released nearly one year ago on Dec. 11, 2007.

One of those recommendations was to eliminate township government.

State Senator Brandt Hershman said Monday he would warn township trustees and advisory boards the money in question is not "township" money.

"It is unfortunate that the Kernan-Shepard Report is viewed as a threat

rather than an opportunity," he said. "Ultimately my concern is the apparent feeling is that this is 'township' money, because it is really 'taxpayer' money."

Hershman said the report was an "honest attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of our government." He said it developed a "series of observations about Indiana government" which provided "an opportunity to talk about how things could be better" in Indiana.

Hershman said if local government structure would be changed and result in the dissolution of township government, township services and responsibilities would be assumed by another entity. However services would remain intact. He said taxpayers fund those serv-

ices now and would continue to fund them.

"To empty township accounts will force leaders to go back to the taxpayers to pay for the services," he advised.

Hershman challenged taxpayers to name a business which has not changed to keep step with the times in the past 100 years due to competition. He said local government is the only business which has remained the same.

"Townships were created when it took a half-a-day by horse to reach the county seat," he explained. "That just isn't the case anymore."

Townships operate with structured budgets and spending plans, much like the ones with which the county council works. Townships

receive money from property taxes via tax rates for a general fund, township assistance (formerly poor relief), fire fighting, parks and recreation, library, etc. State statute provides for the establishment of line items and the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance approves tax rates for them.

Each township is required by state statute to publish an annual financial report that details the financial history of the township for the previous year. All numbers presented in this article were taken from the townships' 2007 annual reports published in the *Comet* in the winter and spring of 2008.

According to "Here's Your Indiana Government," townships gener-

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Hershman

Elementary principal reports:

Planning for graduation starts in sixth grade

By **Jennifer Archibald**
Staff writer

At the Nov. 4 Carroll School Board meeting, Carroll Elementary principal Carolyn O'Connell explained the new Indiana Code pertaining to planning for graduation.

She said this year, for the first time, students are to begin planning in sixth grade. Before this year, preparation began in seventh grade. Superintendent John Sayers said he can remember when graduation planning didn't start until eighth grade.

Sixth graders have a checklist to stay on track for high school graduation and for post-secondary education and beyond.

O'Connell said sixth graders and their parents learn about the three types of diplomas (Core 40, Academic Honors, Technical Honors), about credits, electives, GPA's, and ISTEP testing. They also start thinking about preparing for college, exploring careers, and can fill out a Twenty-first Century Scholars application for college tuition scholarships. Sixth grade students and their parents are asked to sign a "Graduation Promise."

Each student's Graduation Plan packet will be kept at school and will be revisited every year. The elementary guidance counselor and teachers help with the planning.

The board approved advertising for bonds to pay for the piping/air conditioning project which will begin this coming spring or summer. Sayers said total cost of the project is estimated at \$1,967,000, to be paid through the debt service fund. He said the debt will be paid off in two years.

Ladd Kitchel, Wrestling Club coach, brought a concern to the board's attention. The wrestlers have their practices in the cafeteria, which he said is "not the cleanest or safest place." He said the chairs have to be picked up and then put back down. He added that if something else is being held in the cafeteria, and the auxiliary gym is not available, then wrestling practice has to be cancelled. Another conflict is when there is a home basketball game and concessions are in the cafeteria. Kitchel asked if there is any other unused space in the corporation to hold practices.

Sayers asked O'Connell to look into the possibility of the club practicing at the elementary school. Maintenance supervisor Tom Allbaugh also suggested the possibility of using the YMCA gym. Board president Sam Zook said existing space would have to be considered because there is no athletic facility planning in Capital Projects for at least the next three years.

High school principal Charles Huckstep announced the fall GPA ranking as follows: High school: First place, girls cross country, 3.476; second, girls golf, 3.461; third, boys cross country, 3.347. Junior high: First place, eighth grade volleyball, 3.648 (five of 15 players had a 4.0); second, junior high boys and girls cross country, combined-3.49; third, seventh grade volleyball, 3.488.

The board is asking for the public's input on two matters - school appointment to the Area Plan Commission and the proposed 2009-2010 school calendar.

School attorney Miriam

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Morrow honored for service to county



Former Carroll County Veterans' Services Administrator Bob Morrow, right, was honored Tuesday morning during the annual Veterans' Day ceremony on the county courthouse lawn. After the color guard-gun salute and the traditional playing of "Taps" concluded, county commissioner Loren Hylton presented Morrow with a state flag which hung over the Capital Building in Indianapolis on May 30. Gov. Mitch Daniels sent a certificate of authenticity with the award. A U.S. Flag provided by Sen. Richard Lugar was also presented to Morrow. Morrow retired from the Veterans' office in mid-May after serving for 59 years as Carroll County's Veterans' Services Administrator. Morrow still helps in the office part-time, said current administrator Larry Leach, and "he's been an immense help to me." "He's helped a lot of veterans down through the years," Hylton said. "He's such a humble man. He's a great American." Comet photos by Debbie Lowe

DCSC school corp. purchases land

Cash-rented immediately

By **Debbie Lowe**
Staff writer

The Delphi Community School Board of School Trustees voted to proceed with the purchase of 15 acres of land from Delphi United Methodist Church for no more than \$15,500 per acre at a Sept. 8 board meeting. That purchase was finalized last

week, according to school board president Robert Resler.

Resler said Friday the land was cash-rented by the end of the week to a local farmer without under-



Resler

going a competitive bid or price-quote process. He stated the school corporation did not need to take public input for the transaction.

Resler said a bid process would result in an additional cost of roughly \$30,000 for taxpayers due to the need for an access road. He said the board desired to save the school corporation the added expense.

After a question was raised by the *Comet* about the possible legal bid requirement to lease out the land, Resler replied that although the board was not required by law to bid out the work, it would now proceed with the bid process.

"Because you have complained, the board will get bids," he said.

Honored for enhancing county's business community



Five Carroll County businesses were honored recently as Community Enhancement Award winners for their efforts to enhance the visual appeal and business atmosphere of the county. Award recipients were Painted Pony Antiques, Burlington, Camden Auto, Times Past Restoration LLC, Delphi, Griffin's Auto Service, Flora, and Carroll Manor, rural Delphi. The Carroll County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) and Carroll County Chamber of Commerce (CCCC) present the awards annually. CCEDC Director Daryl Smith, left, and CCCC Director Sana Booker, right, recognized the following at an awards luncheon (l-r): Hank Ivy, representing Times Past Restoration LLC, Delphi, for restoration of the old Masonic Temple for Times Past Antiques; Tony and Belinda (Shoff) Griffin, owners of Griffin's Auto Service; Kelly Robey, co-owner of Camden Auto Company; Diane Brown, assistant superintendent of Carroll Manor; and Larry Hayes and Missy Harris, owners of Painted Pony Antiques. Comet photo



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