

## Township government... temporary answer to ambulance shortage?

By Debbie Lowe  
Staff writer

Carroll County's ambulance service is in a state of flux that has left some area residents wondering what would happen if they experienced a medical emergency and needed an ambulance.

Due to a critical financial situation, the county council reduced the overall appropriation for the service in 2009 by \$250,000. Emergency Medical Services Director Mike Durr said only two ambulances could be staffed with the remaining \$673,000. County commissioners decided the two ambulances would be located in Delphi and Flora to provide the most comprehensive coverage possible for county residents.

That decision meant Burlington,

who only a year ago surrendered its ambulance service to the county, would now be without service based in that immediate community. When Burlington community leaders realized their county-supported ambulance service was eliminated, they decided to take action to discuss options.

Durr, Burlington Town Council members, and township trustee Al Jackson met Dec. 17 to develop a plan about how to proceed.

"The Burlington area was not told about this," council member Teddy Huffer said. "We are very interested in keeping the ambulance service in Burlington."

Jackson echoed Huffer's sentiment. He said it was ironic that Burlington had the first ambulance service in the county about 40 years

ago and now they are the ones to be without.

"The meeting we had was to hear the facts about why the service was reduced," he said. "I am concerned about the loss of the service."

Jackson said the group developed a plan to proceed to remedy the situation for themselves and perhaps others in the community. He said other townships could step in to temporarily bridge the funding gap for the service.

"I agreed to contact other trustees and meet as soon as possible," he said. "Mike (Durr) is supposed to give us the bottom-line of what it would cost for one EMT and a volunteer driver."

He said Burlington Council president Stan Moore agreed to consult the Burlington VFD about establishing a

core of volunteers for the service.

"I want to ask if there is a way to bridge the current situation toward a long-term plan," Jackson said. "But a long-range plan is imperative for the county."

A county advisory committee was established several months ago to address the ambulance funding issue. Members initially named were Durr, council members Ann Brown and Steve Ashby, commissioner Loren Hylton and community member Nancy Williamson R.N. Members recently added were commissioner-elect Pat Clawson, EMS medical director Dr. Mark Estes, and Dr. Mark Meyer of Flora.

"I think it is a good thing that everybody is working on this," Brown said. "Everyone needs to be educated about how this happened.

We all need to discuss and make decisions about how to get the best service we can."

Brown said the lack of property tax income will be difficult to overcome because that income was consistent and county leaders could depend on that tax income.

"The property tax loss must be replaced," she said. "Income tax is not a reliable funding stream for the county."

"Many Carroll County residents work outside of the county and many of them in the auto industry," she added. "If the very worst scenario plays out - what are we going to use for income if we solely rely on income tax to fund county services?"

Ten of Carroll County's 14 township trustees met Tuesday morning to

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## Cob blaze over

By Debbie Lowe  
Staff writer  
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The eight-day corncob fire at The Andersons on SR25 was extinguished Sunday, but not until after all Carroll County firefighters and their equipment were exhausted from the battle. The fire started in the early morning hours of Dec. 27 and burned and scorched tons of cobs. The cobs were raw product but would have been made into cat litter, laboratory animal bedding and products for agriculture and industrial applications.

According to a press release, The Andersons hired F&K Excavators of Carroll

County Saturday to assist with the tear down and relocation of a portion of the corncob pile. That reduced the amount of fuel for the fire, thereby reducing the amount of time the fire burned. Five tanker trucks from the nearby Walton Andersons facility arrived on the scene Saturday. Andersons fire brigades from the Delphi and Maumee, Ohio, facilities assisted in the effort to eliminate the fire.

Carroll County Emergency Management Agency Director Dave McDowell said his office will treat the fire event as a learning opportunity. He said loss documentation would become useful to the community later in the year

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## Mayor is ready for trash questions

By Debbie Lowe  
Staff writer

Delphi Mayor Randy Strasser told the city council members Monday night that he expects to receive questions about the change in the city's trash removal. He said he is ready to talk to anyone who calls or drops by to discuss the changes in the city service.

Strasser didn't have to wait long for a question to be presented to him. Rhineland Mobile Home Park owner Roland Breece said 44 of the 46 spaces in the park were filled. City water is included in the rent at the trailer park, therefore Breece will receive a \$10 bill for each occupied residence in the park beginning this month.

After being told the company hired to provide trash removal for the city would be providing the same service for trailer park tenants, Breece asked street commissioner Aaron Lyons if he was allowed to make alternative trash removal arrangements. Lyons referred the property owner to the mayor who

arranged to meet with him at a later date.

In a follow-up interview with the Comet Breece said he discovered he could get a commercial trash dumpster for \$110/month, or about one-fourth the cost of the city service. He said the trailer park water bill is roughly \$920/month and after the addition of trash removal costs, it will be nearly \$1,400/month.

Breece said he spoke with Strasser in November and December but did not understand the real impact of the changes in the trash removal on his business. He said he received a telephone call from a tenant Monday afternoon explaining how this would affect him.

Lyons said residents should have containers and trash on the curb at 7 a.m. every Tuesday. He stated the city trash truck is now the property of the new vendor. Lyons said the city would continue to remove yard waste when appropriate.

### Other business

Council member Carolyn Pearson was unanimously elected 2009 council president.

Strasser distributed a written report about the condition of city wells and water level done by a professional organization. He said the goal was to develop a city-owned wells back-up plan.

The mayor reported the city did not use \$217,363.63 of 2008 appropriations. He said the general fund budget accounted for approximately 30 percent of the total budget. Personnel services were roughly 50 percent of total appropriations for the year.

Strasser said there was an opening on the city's park board. He said all other city appointments would remain the same for 2009 as they were last year.

The police department issued more warnings, served more warrants, took more information reports and cited more animal control violations than in the same time period last year. However, fewer felony and misde-

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## New faces spotted in the courthouse



Three newly elected officials were seen in the Carroll County Courthouse Monday morning. Commissioner Pat Clawson (top photo, far right) sat at the head of the commissioners' room for the first meeting of the year. Recorder Mary Ann Burton (bottom, second from left), along with her first deputy Teresa Groninger, and county clerk Nancy Maddox (right) are becoming familiar in their respective offices with their new duties. Comet photo by Debbie Lowe

## Clawson jumps in with both feet

### New commissioner accepts appointments, makes decisions

By Debbie Lowe  
Staff writer

Monday was the first meeting of the New Year for Carroll County Commissioners. Pat Clawson, who defeated incumbent George Mears in the primary and was not challenged in the general election for the commissioners' seat, wasted no time in accepting responsibility and making his presence known.

Clawson agreed to serve on the county drainage board, along with fellow commissioners Loren Hylton and Bill Brown, for no compensation.

"I believe the compensation is inadequate," Hylton said. "But I'm still willing to serve."

There was no formal drainage board meeting Monday (regularly scheduled to begin just prior to the commissioners' meeting) because the 2009 members had yet to be appointed.

Clawson nominated Carroll County resident and Lafayette Bank and Trust employee Monty Edging to serve on the Carroll County Redevelopment Commission, filling the seat vacated by Delphi resident Marshall McCammack. Edging, who had not been contacted about serving, was the unanimous choice for the position.

Clawson was appointed to the board of the Carroll County Economic Development Corp. for a three-year term. In addition, he will be the county financial officer.

Hylton was re-elected commissioners' president and Brown, vice-president.

Clawson volunteered to meet with Delphi Mayor Randy Strasser and county highway engineer Paul Coutts this week to address Hoosier Heartland Highway relinquishment issues and concerns. He requested a written copy of the plan utilized by

county highway workers to determine what priority system is used to plow and sand county roads. He also requested district worker assignments.

Coutts said he was discussing with department employees how the most recent weather was addressed to recognize where improvements can be made in service delivery.

"We did the best job we could," he said. "We were stretched pretty thin."

Commissioners voted to limit the length of time a sign may be posted on the courthouse lawn upon Clawson's recommendation. Signs will be allowed for seven days preceding the event advertised. The request form will be modified to reflect the change. A courthouse grounds application for a sign by Delphi Lions Club for two weeks was the last application of that length approved.

### Other appointments:

- Melissa Keown, Joe O'Donnell and George Mears were appointed to the Northwest Indiana Solid Waste District Board of Directors. County auditor Beth Myers said she was unable to reach Keown for confirmation of her willingness to serve.

- Ron Slavens, Hylton and Kyle Germond were appointed to the solid waste board of directors. Slavens and Germond were not contacted to determine their willingness to serve.

- Nancy S. Cripe, Brown and Strasser were appointed as board alternates for the solid waste district.
- Clayton Hutson was appointed to the Local Alcoholic Beverage Board.

### Combined dispatch

E-911 coordinator Jay Dee Cree reported the telephone lines for combined dispatch service with Delphi were not

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## Flora seeks grant writer

Comet staff report

Flora Town Council approved advertising for a grant writer at Monday night's meeting.

"Money for the part-time position is in the budget," said council president Josh Ayres.

Three individuals expressed interest in serving on the town's area plan commission. One was disqualified because he resided out of town. The other two, Gary Yoder and Darrell Yoder, were appointed to serve on the area plan board, pending their approval. Gary Yoder was also appointed to serve

on the board of zoning appeals.

Bret Hanaway has agreed to represent the town for another four-year term on the county Economic Development Corporation.

Marshal Paul Redmon reported that December was a "pretty inactive month" for his department. Activity statistics for December were: 10 arrests/misdemeanors, 2 felonies, 7 citations, 23 warnings, 99 calls for service, and 5 accidents.

The council recognized the efforts of the volunteer fire department helping at The Andersons cob fire.

The volunteer fire depart-

ments are no longer needed; everything has been turned back over to The Andersons, said Josh Disinger, a Flora police officer.

"We have some very dedicated people on our department," Ayres added. "We appreciate their efforts."

Wastewater foreman Bill McCarty reported that his department has been moving portable flow meters around as required by T-Bird Engineering.

"We have until August to get the flow study done for IDEM," said Ayres.

The Utilities Department replaced two poles and a transformer following a re-

cent ice storm. They also had broken water mains that they repaired and replaced a fire hydrant due to the freezing weather.

The town's newest employee, Ron Fritz, has been cross training at the water plant.

The meeting opened with the election of officers. They will remain the same: Ayres, president; David Albaugh, vice president; and Vince Seaward, finance chairman.

The town office will be closed Jan. 19 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The next regular meeting will be Feb. 2 at 6 p.m.