

Tongues wag about local government reform

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

Everywhere you go these days, people are talking about local government reform. The township trustees are worried township government will be eliminated. So are the fire departments. And a group from Indianapolis called MySmartgov.org is worried township government will not be eliminated. To that end, the group is sponsoring a series of "Meet Up" road shows across the state to discuss with communities the necessity of reform as they see it.

Third House

Rep. Don Lehe called the group assembled at the Brandywine Complex in Monticello Saturday morning for the second of four "Third House" sessions a "huge crowd." Many audience members attended to hear how bills, both about local government reform and other topics, were faring in the general as-

sembly this legislative session.

Lehe said 19 bills and resolutions were introduced about local government reform and in response to the recommendations included in the 2007 Kernan-Shepard Report. He said all bills were out of the House and Senate and lawmakers would return March 2 to review them.

Lehe said six House bills and 10 Senate bills about local government reform "all pretty much died." However, five other Senate bills were "still alive."

"A lot of stuff has been taken out of them," he said. "It just didn't happen."

Carroll County Rep. Rich McClain said Gov. Mitch Daniels stated recently the state should "manage a way, not tax a way" out of budgetary issues. McClain said thinking "outside of the box," he was a proponent for reduction of the school week from five to four

days because the measure would provide significant savings. He also suggested property owners be responsible to assess their own property.

McClain said he would like to hear from constituents about these ideas and others they might have.

"We face serious times right now," State Senator Brandt Hershman told the crowd. "We may be half-way through the legislative session, but we are not half-way through the workload."

Hershman called the most recent federal stimulus package "the biggest pork-barrel piece of legislation." He said the state should remember that "the only place the State's money comes from is YOU."

Hershman said the State has

talked about local government reform since 1901 to the present. He said every conclusion reached in the Kernan-Shepard Report was "worthy of discussion." Hershman stated the report provided a framework for that discussion.

"We are broke and getting broke," he said. "It's time to ask these questions."

Audience member Greg Nydegger said out of the 14 Carroll County townships, nine have approximately 300 percent surplus of their budgets.

"We shouldn't ask more of taxpayers than what the government needs," Hershman replied.

Meet Up session

MySmartgov.org presented former Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis and former State Reps. Sue Scholer and Joe Micon along with MySmartgov.org Executive Director Marilyn Schultz to the public Monday

morning in Lafayette in an effort to rally support for local government reform. Hershman was in the audience along with many Tippecanoe County, Lafayette and West Lafayette government and community leaders.

Davis said the Kernan-Shepard Report theme was to "get all facets of local government working together to make it more simple."

She said it was "hard to bring this change forward" because it meant changing a system with good people.

"The important thing is to keep talking about it," she said. "We can perform better when we simplify."

"The system takes more time, effort and money than it needs to take," Scholer said.

Scholer said only Indiana splits the legislative and fiscal duties of government between the commissioners and the council duties.

"It's the only state that looks like See Reform page 6A

To contact Carroll County Lawmakers:
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(800) 382-9467, (574) 581-2000 or S7@in.gov.
Rep. Rich McClain:
(800) 382-9841, (574) 652-2895 or R24@ai.org.

County election board gets ready for referendum

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

Carroll County residents in Liberty, Jackson, Madison, Tippecanoe, Rock Creek and Deer Creek townships, 5,832 in all, will be given the opportunity to vote whether or not to allow the Delphi Community School Corporation to proceed with a planned project to renovate the high school and middle school. The building and refurbishing project could cost as much as \$21 million. Known as a special election, the vote is a result of petitions filed requesting a referendum, or a public question, about the matter.



Mattox

mobile voting machine will also be employed to assist those voters who are unable to visit the poll or the clerk's office.

Mattox said paper ballots will be used for absentee balloting after voting machines have been re-programmed by the manufacturer. On the day of the vote, three poll workers will be stationed at the church as inspector, judge and poll clerk.

Mattox said it could not be determined how much the special election will cost until after the machines have been programmed for the public question. She said because the cost of the election would be a county-wide expense and was not anticipated in the 2009 budget, a request for an additional appropriation from the general fund would have to be made to the county council before the date of the vote in order to pay for the public question.

Mattox said the wording of the question is under development by the election board.

Sewer district is ready to connect south of Lake Freeman

Payment plan offered to county residents for connection fees

Carroll County customers of Twin Lakes Regional Sewer District (TLRSD) will pay a \$1,000 fee to connect to the service by April 1. Property owners within the project were mailed certified

notices and invoices. Invoices should be completed and returned with full payment by April 1. Those who cannot afford the entire amount can pay in monthly installments until the obligation is met.

According to Carroll County TLRSD representative Wayne Garrison, who also serves as president of the group, the district established an in-house payment plan for those residents who would rather pay on time than pay the entire amount at one time.

"The district will make the loans to the customers," he said. "No banks are involved but each customer who wants See Sewer page 7A



Garrison

Flora man thankful for heart transplant

By Jennifer Archibald
Staff writer

Jack Hayes of Flora has a young, healthy heart. It's not the heart he was born with, but it has given him a new lease on life.

He had a heart transplant operation on Dec. 19 at St. Vincent Hospital, Indianapolis.

"I feel like a whole new person - more energy than ever," he said.

That was not the case four years ago. He first thought he had bronchitis, but couldn't get over it. Then it was discovered that he had defective heart valves. His mitral valve was repaired, and his aortic valve was replaced - with a pig valve.

In August 2005, just two months after the valve surgery, he had a pacemaker/defibrillator inserted.

Last fall when he was at work at Jackson-Lee-Pearson, Flora, he started having trouble breathing. His wife, Mary, made him an appointment with his cardiologist.

At the appointment the doctor said, "You're going to have to have a new heart."

"That same day they started tests," Jack said. "They took 45 vials of blood in one day."

Then came the waiting for the heart.

Fortunately for Jack, he only had to wait six weeks.

"You think you're ready for when you get the call, but you're not," Mary said. "I had a bag packed, but I



Man with a heart

Jack Hayes came home from the hospital with a heart transplant and a heart pillow signed by more than 50 doctors and nurses. He is pictured above with his wife, Mary. Comet photo by Jennifer Archibald

still forgot some things."

Among his first visitors after the operation were his sons, Justin and Jeremy. They asked their dad how he felt and he gave them two thumbs up. Jack doesn't remember doing that, but it was a good sign to his sons.

Mary said you might think that the ordeal is the surgery itself, but she said the real ordeal is after the surgery. She described the aftermath as a whirlwind of going to

therapy three days a week, traveling to Indianapolis once a week for biopsies, taking lots of medicine, adjusting the medicine, blood work, doctor's appointments, checking blood pressure and sugar level twice a day, heart monitoring, etc.

Jack said his wife has been wonderful to help keep him on track with his appointments, monitoring, and medicine.

"He was taking 19 pills a

day, but is now down to about 14," Mary said. "Ninety percent of it is to prevent rejection." She said the frequent biopsies are to look for signs of rejection, which could occur anytime, usually within three to six months of the operation.

Jack said that six months from the surgery they might find out the identity of the donor's family, if they want to be known.

See Heart page 6A

Fire Protection Territory unanimously passes first city council reading

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

Delphi City Ordinance 2009-02, which establishes Delphi's participation in a fire protection territory with Deer Creek, Tippecanoe and Madison townships, unanimously passed first reading Thursday night at a special city council meeting. Attorney for the group Sue A. Beesley, with the law firm of Bingham McHale LLP of Indianapolis and who prepared the ordinance, said the document was "patterned after another territory in the state."

"You need to tailor it to fit your situation," she advised

city council members.

Beesley clarified that to change the agreement with the participating townships all of the townships have to approve the change, following a question from council member Kyle Germond.

Council president Carolyn Pearson asked who would be responsible to manage the bookkeeping for the com-

bined money from the three townships and the city.

"Would the fund be part of the city's budget?" she asked.

"The money completely flows through your budget," Beesley answered, referring to the city as the "head cheese" in the arrangement.

Beesley continued to clarify that, although the agreement between the city and the

townships established an advisory board, the board was not required by law. She said as the named "provider unit" for the group, Delphi would be in control of the territory.

"I've read it over and I don't see anything that would cause a significant problem," city attorney Kurtis Fouts said.

Former fire chief Bill Schock asked Mayor Randy Strasser how the "Delphi Fire Protection Territory" chief would be chosen. He said Adams and Rockfield townships and Burrows might decide to join the territory.

"I really don't want to See Fire page 6A

The public hearing for the Delphi City ordinance was scheduled for last night at 6:30, too late for the Comet to publish the results in its Wednesday edition. Deer Creek, Tippecanoe and Madison townships scheduled adoption of the associated resolutions for them to join the fire protection territory. Results from both actions will be posted on the Comet Web site at carrollcountycomet.com Wednesday by noon.



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