

Employee policy effective immediately

Commissioners adopt new personnel manual

By **Debbie Lowe**
Staff writer

An advisory committee was appointed last year to develop a revised county personnel policy manual with assistance from the firm of Waggoner, Irwin, Scheele & Associates. Committee members spent many hours meeting with consultant Kent Irwin to bring the new document to fruition. Carroll County Commissioners adopted the policy manual at their Monday morning meeting, effective Monday, although job descriptions have yet to be developed.

Committee members Loren Hylton (commissioners president), Rob Baker (former county council president), Barry Emerson (commissioners attorney) and county auditor Beth Myers recommended adoption. Irwin reported the committee exam-

ined the old policies, past practices and existing state laws as they developed the 88-page document.

Chapters include employment policies (recruitment to lay-off and recall), salary administration (normal work week, work hours, compensation and time keeping), employee benefits (vacation, personal leave, etc.), working conditions (safety, use of telephones, county mail, cellular phones), county credit cards, etc.) and personal conduct (attendance and punctuality, personal appearance, confidentiality, etc.). All terms and conditions are defined in detail.

Irwin noted forms are included for use by department heads and elected officials, which include employee acknowledgment forms to signify employees were given a copy of the manual and assume the responsibility for reading it.

It will cost the county more for Irwin's group to develop job descriptions. Deemed an imperative next step, a proposal from Irwin's firm for no less than \$11,881, billed hourly, was accepted to provide job descriptions.

Hylton said in a follow-up interview each employee would receive a copy of the new manual as soon as they are printed. He said Irwin would hold training sessions for department heads, elected officials and other employees within the next 30 days to explain each section and to answer questions. Hylton said it was important for employees to have an opportunity to review the new manual and process the information before attending training sessions.

The county leader said employees should take general questions to the auditor for help in policy manual review after training. A meeting of the

personnel advisory committee would be called in the event the question could not be answered by consulting the manual. He said the commissioners "were the bottom line" for resolving personnel issues.

EMS

Ron Slavens, speaking as a representative of the Adams Township Advisory Board and county council member, told commissioners his township would not support a contract with the Monticello Fire Department to provide ambulance service in Carroll County. He said advisory board members were not consulted prior to the presentation at the March 9 commissioners meeting when an agreement with Monticello was approved.

"The way it was presented, I thought you were on board with this," commissioner Pat Clawson said.

Slavens said the Monticello call priority and availability of ambulances were concerns. He explained the Monticello ambulance service is "co-mingled" with that county's fire department and suggested Monticello emergencies could receive higher priority than Carroll County emergencies. Slavens said at least one Jefferson Township advisory board member was not aware of the proposed contract before it was signed.

Slavens likened the situation to a similar one several years ago when a Jefferson Township representative and a small group of residents persuaded commissioners to invite the Twin Lakes Regional Sewer District into the county.

"And look what we got into with that," he said.

Yeoman Town Council President

See Policy page 5A

Delphi site is designated 'shovel ready' for development

Comet staff report

A 60-acre industrial site south of Delphi is one of 10 sites across Indiana that earned the title of "shovel ready," paving the way for businesses to quickly locate new operations on property ready for development.

The site on US 421 is being developed by the Carroll County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC). These new sites join the list of 38 other "shovel ready" sites identified by the state since 2006 that have undergone extensive title work, proof of ownership, legal and environmental review and qualify for expedited permitting with state regulatory agencies.

"The EDC is excited that the Delphi options site, formerly known as Gray's Turkey Farm, has been certified 'shovel ready' by the State of Indiana," said Daryl Smith, CCEDC executive director. "This means the site has gone through all the preliminary title work, environmental studies, and more and is ready for purchase and work to begin."

"A 'shovel ready' designation gives a site a big boost in marketing. It puts it a step above other sites, priority-wise, in the state. The Indiana Economic Development Corporation will partner with us to help market the site to potential clients."

"With more and more companies looking for sites where they can have a shovel in the ground as quickly as possible, this program gives Indiana an advantage when it comes to competing with other states for new investments and new jobs," said E.

Mitchell Roob Jr., secretary of commerce and chief executive officer of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. "We want to give companies every reason to choose Indiana and expedite job creation plans as we try to grow in spite of a slow national economy."

"The economy isn't booming right now, but it will rebound," said Smith. "The CCEDC's goal is to have sites prepared for that time when the economy improves. The Delphi site is the first. We also have options on a second site in Flora. We will submit that for 'shovel ready' consideration in the next round of applications."

"Communities are realizing the impact this program can have in attracting new investment," said Brad Moore, shovel ready project manager for the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. "Our steady stream of applicants is proof that the Shovel Ready program is fulfilling its mission of lowering costs and improving efficiencies in the site development process."

Passed in the 2005 legislative session as part of Governor Daniels' jobs agenda, "shovel ready" sites are certified by the state's Fast Access Site Team that consists of representatives from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, Governor's Office, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Indiana Department of Transportation, Indiana State Department of Health, Indiana State Department of Agriculture and the Indiana State Department of Homeland Security.

Certified sites have been eligible for matching grants to assist with eligible costs associated with applying for the shovel ready program. These sites are listed on the Indiana Economic Development Corporation's Site and Building Database at www.indianashovelready.com.

See Site page 5A



A glimpse of history
Burnett's Creek Arch, the oldest stone arch bridge in Indiana, is located on Towpath Road in Adams Township. It appears on the National Historic Register as the "Wabash and Erie Canal Culvert #100." Comet photo by Debbie Lowe

A meeting of the minds – ideas about Burnett's Creek Arch are shared

By **Debbie Lowe**
Staff writer

The oldest stone arch bridge in the State of Indiana is located in northern Carroll County on Towpath Road in Adams Township. It was part of the historic Wabash and Erie Canal system. Called the "Wabash and Erie Canal Culvert #100," it was placed on the National Historic Register in March 2002 due in part to the effort of the Carroll County Historical Society and museum cu-

lator Phyllis Moore. Since that time, efforts have been made to secure funding to preserve the arch where it was built for perpetuity.

However the move to preserve the bridge, which lies on non-county-owned land, has become controversial. A series of county highway leaders have come and gone and area residents have built a resistance to county commissioners' efforts to push forward with a project residents believe to be an extravagant use of taxpayer

money and a waste of time and energy.

Adams Township and county council representative Ron Slavens invited new county highway engineer Paul Coutts to visit the area Friday and to meet with landowners Janet and Bob Shafer, their son Kent, Ted Ratcliff and local resident Mike Berkshire.

"I thought it would be good for everyone here to meet Paul (Coutts) and open the lines of communication about this," Slavens began the meeting at the bridge site.

did not want to see the project move forward.

Ratcliff asked how the county could put a structure on the historical register, receive grants and spend taxpayer dollars for a structure it did not own and which was located on land it did not own. Coutts said he would research that aspect to find the answer.

Berkshire suggested area visitors be directed to park at nearby French Post Park and a walking trail developed along the waters' edge to accommodate them.

Coutts said the arch had to be made structurally sound and the money was allocated for the project. He explained the project is considered a "bridge enhancement," which requires more to be done than simply repairing or rehabilitating the bridge. He suggested a shelter could be added at some point to the park area.



Finding common ground
Highway engineer Paul Coutts and landowner Ted Ratcliff discuss the history of the Burnett's Creek Arch at an on-site meeting Friday. Comet photo by Debbie Lowe

Coutts told the landowners that plans included the purchase of three acres to the south of the road for a park. They explained to Coutts only about 20 visitors stopped at the arch each year and said the majority of those were bicycle riders.

Janet and Bob Shafer, whose land would be purchased for what the design engineers describe as a "park," which would include the adjoining lock, said they do not want to invite strangers onto the land next to their house. They cited noise, trash left behind and the lack of privacy for their home-life as reasons they

did not want to see the project move forward.

Ratcliff asked how the county could put a structure on the historical register, receive grants and spend taxpayer dollars for a structure it did not own and which was located on land it did not own. Coutts said he would research that aspect to find the answer.

Berkshire suggested area visitors be directed to park at nearby French Post Park and a walking trail developed along the waters' edge to accommodate them.

Coutts said the arch had to be made structurally sound and the money was allocated for the project. He explained the project is considered a "bridge enhancement," which requires more to be done than simply repairing or rehabilitating the bridge. He suggested a shelter could be added at some point to the park area.

"The reason for this meeting was to let the landowners and the highway engineer meet and start talking about how to resolve this," Slavens concluded. "I think we got the communication open and we can keep them that way."



Mailing label goes here

Special election date changed...again

By **Debbie Lowe**
Staff writer

Carroll County Clerk Nancy Mattox announced late Monday the date for the special election, to determine whether or not voters would agree to pay \$13 million plus interest (possibly as much as \$21 million) over the course of 20 years for the Delphi Community School Corporation's plan to renovate the middle and high schools, was changed to June 16.

"The election will now be

held on Tuesday, June 16, 2009," read an E-mail from Mattox.

"Indiana Code is vague as to the extent of information required to describe a 'controlled project,'" she explained. "Therefore, after further research of the code, the public question has again been revised. The text is as follows: 'Shall Delphi Community School Corporation issue bonds or enter into a lease to finance the renovation and upgrading of the existing facility in which the Delphi Community High

School and Delphi Community Middle School is located?' Because the question was certified by the Carroll County Auditor today (March 16, 2009), and the election cannot be held before 90 days from the date of certification, the election will now be held on June 16, 2009. If you have any questions, please feel free



Mattox

to contact me."

Mattox said she consulted with the Indiana Election Division to develop the current, and final, ballot question.

"I'm not playing favorites, I'm not picking sides," she said. "The question is not going to change now."

She said the election division advised her to describe "just the controlled project" and to not include all of the financial information previously included on the ballot. She said although the Indiana Code instructs to "de-

scribe" the project, it does not indicate how much detail the description should involve.

Mattox said she would appear before the county council at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday to request an additional appropriation for approximately \$6,000, which would be added to the already allocated budget appropriation, to fund the special election.

Mattox can be reached by telephone at (765) 564-4485 for questions. The Indiana Election Division can be reached at (800) 622-4941.