

Carroll County to go wireless

Commissioners support county-wide broadband service proposal

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

A plan to utilize federal stimulus money to provide enhanced communication across Carroll County could be realized by county residents soon. The plan received formal support from county commissioners at the Monday morning meeting after a presentation by Shurz Communications in partnership with WASK radio in Lafayette.

President and general manager John Shurz explained Carroll County has the largest underserved population for wireless service in counties adjacent to Tippecanoe County. He said the service would provide access to businesses and residential customers for approximately \$29/month and would be a

boon for the local economy.

Shurz Communications Vice President of Digital Media Kerry Oslund said there is no financial investment expected from the county. He said matching funds for the federal stimulus money, which will be funneled through a Broadband Initiatives Program of the Federal Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, would be paid by Shurz Communications.

Shurz indicated in the letter of support provided for signatures the company was "uniquely qualified" to provide the services with the "resources, the experience and community ties necessary to help eliminate broadband inequity in this county."

WeTip Hotline

Commissioners supported a proposal from county prosecutor Tricia

Farmers were urged by commissioners to mow weeds growing between their fields and the road edges, including corners.

Thompson to provide the national anonymous crime reporting service, WeTip, to county residents by Aug. 15. Thompson said the annual contract for \$1,500 will be paid out of diversion funds. She said the contract amount is based on county population.

The WeTip Hotline is a not-for-profit organization based in California. Thompson explained all calls are anonymous, which is not necessarily the case when someone calls local law enforcement. She

said WeTip has Spanish-speaking operators which will enhance the comfort level of some Carroll County callers.

According to the Web site, WeTip has been in continual operation since 1972 and was founded because people with information to report do not due to fear of reprisal. The purpose of WeTip is to provide "an absolutely anonymous crime reporting resource to residents." Only live operators are used, therefore callers will not get an automated service or an answering machine at any time.

Thompson said when crime information is called into the hotline in California it is immediately reported, as anonymous, to Carroll County dispatch. The information will then be forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Highway department

Highway engineer Paul Coutts reported the salt barn located in Flora is under construction and should be completed by the end of August.

The culvert pipe on the Crooked Road to Flora/Delphi on CR125W, at CR150N., damaged in the spring flood, has been replaced.

Washington Township resident John Boughton expressed concern about the decision to turn the county road in front of his house, which has light traffic, into a gravel road.

"I just hate this going backwards idea," he said.

He suggested the county do nothing with the road rather than grind it into gravel.

Coutts said department workers "could selectively grind areas" and not do the entire road surface.

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Pg. 8 & 11A - Stories about Old Settlers activities

Pgs. 4-8B - Notice of Real Property Tax Sale (Sept. 22)

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City council delays projects position decision

Committee formed to study need and duties

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

The third time was not the charm for a city position proposed by Delphi Mayor Randy Strasser. The majority of the Delphi City Council declined to agree to allow Strasser to hire a special projects coordinator for the city, although the matter was on the agenda for consideration at Monday night's meeting.

"I am not in favor of a special projects position," said council president Carolyn Pearson. "It seems like a lot of money to spend."

Kyle Germond disagreed with Pearson. He said the position would not cost a significant amount of money and it was worth the expense.

"We owe it to everybody to improve our community," he said.

Brian Garrison said council members received a letter from Strasser which suggested a part-time position be created. He said the compromise could be worthwhile to explore. He continued to explain that he thought it would be difficult to find a person to perform all of the duties listed on the job description distributed to council mem-

bers.

Strasser admitted the list of job duties was "hodgepodge" but maintained the duties listed are essential.

"All of those things need to be completed," he said.

Garrison said positions were eliminated to save taxpayers dollars. He explained that it did not make sense to add another position to the payroll at this time. He indicated it was up to police to perform code and ordinance enforcement.

Council members did not dismiss the issue altogether. A committee with Garrison, Germond and Dan Sterrett was formed and approved by council member consensus to examine the needs and costs of the position and report to the council at the September

See Delphi page 5A

Flora residents have month to correct downspouts and drains before being fined

Comet staff report

Wastewater foreman Bill McCarty reported at Monday night's Flora Town Council meeting that his department continues to work on locating and repairing problems in the town's wastewater system.

He said that they are still learning about the capabilities of the newly purchased camera that they have already used three times.

McCarty said his department has replaced 35 to 40 manhole frames and lids and will use the remaining five frames and lids this week. He does not expect to order any more for a while.

After completing downspout inspections in Flora and Bringhurst, McCarty said that 170 to 200 violations and/or potential violations were noted.

The council agreed with his request to allow all property owners (businesses and individuals) one month to do self inspections of their properties for improper drains and downspouts.

"It's up to the property owner to prove where the water goes," McCarty said. "Just call the wastewater plant (967-3005 between 7 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday through Friday) and we'll help you," McCarty said. "We're a resource for property owners."

McCarty said that there are fenced properties that were not inspected. He asked those with fenced property to call his department to set up a time for an inspection.

McCarty will adjust his work hours to assist people

in the evenings if that is more convenient.

After the month of self inspections, violators will be issued a letter and fine as per town ordinance.

McCarty reminded the council that it is taking more to keep the Vactor truck in working order. The 1983 model was purchased used by the town about 15 years ago. He suggested the town consider purchasing a newer used Vactor.

Salary ordinance

The 2010 salary ordinance was approved on third and final reading after rules were suspended. The council gave raises of between one and one and a half percent to all employees.

"In the past, we've pretty much always given raises to employees," said Ayres. "It's

maybe not as generous as in the past, but all employees got something."

"The Council did not take a raise and seasonal help received no increase," Ayres added.

Longevity bonuses remain the same for town and utility personnel based on 2,080 hours worked per year: completion of five years of service, .5%; ten years service, 1.0%; 15 years service, 1.5%; and 20 years service, 2.0%. Longevity bonuses do not include the police department.

Apprentice lineman Ron Fritz recently completed another step to becoming a lineman that entitles him to a 50¢ per hour raise as per his hiring agreement with the town. The increase became effective Aug. 3.

2010 budget

Clerk-treasurer Joretta Tinsman explained that the 2010 budget was not changed much from last year.

She said that the town's assessed valuation in 2009 was \$45 million, down from \$57 million in 2008. She said she has been told by the state to figure an additional five percent decrease in assessed valuation for 2010.

The council had earlier this year discussed a curb and sidewalk project using EDIT monies, but decided instead to combine that money with next year's money for a bigger project with hopefully better pricing.

Tractor pull

Ayres reported that the Community Club is considering hosting a tractor pull.

See Flora page 12A

Bringhurst man involved in nationwide service projects

Comet staff report

John Collins of Bringhurst recently graduated from AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (AmeriCorps NCCC) Pacific Region, wrapping up ten months and more than 1700 hours of community service nationwide.

This ceremony marked the 15th graduating class since the inception of AmeriCorps NCCC.

Collins was one of 296 graduates honored. During their term of service, Corps members worked in teams of 10-12 and were deployed throughout the U.S., including California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii, Utah, Nevada, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. The Pacific Region's 28 teams provided much needed support and countless hours to the residents of Texas and the Gulf Coast region devastated by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike, through work with FEMA, the American Red Cross and other grassroots organizations.

Collins is a 2008 graduate of Carroll Jr.-Sr. High School. He applied for and was accepted into AmeriCorps and took six weeks of "basic training" in California, beginning in October 2008. After his training, he was sent to several different locations including Galveston, Texas, Bay St. Louis, Miss., and Portland, Ore., to help with construction of homes for victims of hurricanes. Some of his other duties included tutoring underprivileged students at an elementary school in an area just south of San Diego, Calif.

Collins is the son of Scot and Sharon Collins of Bringhurst. He arrived back home on July 23 for a short time with his family, and will leave again Aug. 25. He has accepted a new position as a construction supervisor for a partnership between AmeriCorps and Habitat for Humanity, to build homes for hurricane victims in Punta Gorda, Fla.

AmeriCorps NCCC community service projects target five focus areas: education, public safety, unmet human needs, homeland security, and the environment.

This year's 155 projects included such things as: providing logistical and event support for the Special Olympics World Games in Boise, Idaho; tutoring and mentoring high school students in California; building homes with several Habitat for Humanity chapters; serving as camp counselors at Camp WOW in Salt Lake City, Utah; and invasive species removal on Catalina Island. Many service hours were dedicated to the Pacific Region's home community of Sacramento, serving local schools, food banks, and parks and bike trails.

Through these projects, Corps members have completed over 300,000 hours of community service in the past ten months.



Helping rebuild lives

John Collins, pictured, helped build homes for victims of hurricanes during a 10-month commitment to AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps. Photo provided

AmeriCorps NCCC encourages young adults, ages 18-24, to commit ten months of community service. Corps members receive room and board and a modest living allowance in return. Upon successful completion of the program, members earn a \$4,725 Education Award that can be used for educational advancement or the repayment of student loans.

AmeriCorps NCCC is a part of AmeriCorps, a network of national service programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service. For information about AmeriCorps, visit www.americorps.gov.



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