

Council and commissioners put planning hats on in joint meeting

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

When Carroll County Commissioners and Council members met for approximately two-and-a-half hours Monday afternoon, a significant amount of information was disseminated, but few spending decisions were made. The Cumulative Capital Improvement budgets for the next three years, a proposed highway equipment replacement plan and a \$107,343.70 encumbrance for the Burnett's Creek Arch renovation project from the cumulative bridge fund were agenda items for county leaders to discuss and consider jointly.

Council President Ann Brown began the meeting by providing a detailed explanation from economic experts about the potential impact of property tax caps to county revenue for the next three years. She said it is widely accepted that if state tax caps are levied, county revenue will likely decrease.

Brown explained that capping the amount of property tax is good for the property owner but could negatively impact county revenue. She said to counteract the impact of tax caps, the county may have to reduce services or levy higher tax rates.

Revisions to three-year cum cap budgets

A highway equipment replacement plan, which in-

cluded \$150,000 for 2010 and for 2011, was proposed. Brown said the council is prepared to contribute \$75,000 from the Riverboat Gambling Fund, both years. She suggested commissioners appropriate the same amount from either Economic Development Income Tax (EDIT) or from funds put aside for a county road extension to SR75 near Camden.

No final decision about funding the equipment replacement plan, presented by county highway engineer Paul Coutts, was made during the meeting. Other budgetary considerations for the next three years, such as Carroll Manor roofing and guttering, sheriff's department vehicle replacements, additional ambulances, carpeting for the circuit court and other spending concerns were also not confirmed. Commissioners said they will discuss the plan in its entirety during a regularly scheduled commissioners meeting.

Burnett's Creek Arch

Many residents and interested parties were present for a lengthy discussion about the Burnett's Creek Arch project, which has been ongoing for several years. Those in favor of completing the project as originally developed, which includes a park on the south side of the arch and access on the north side, and those opposed to doing anything more than making adequate

repairs to ensure the stability of the bridge foundation, were heard.

Michael Wenning of Structure Point Engineers said the current engineering contract is for \$240,000 and the work is approximately 40 to 50 percent finished. He said there is no county obligation to continue the contract.

Coutts advised that due to how the project was managed prior to his administration, the county is responsible for 100 percent of the preliminary engineering costs.

Ownership of the road and bridge was questioned by those in the audience who own the property north and south of the stone arch. Wenning explained there is currently no platted right-of-way for the road or bridge. He said the plan is to take enough ground, by eminent domain if necessary, from landowners on both sides of the bridge to construct access or vantage points for visitors.

Wenning also advised that some sort of a park will have to be constructed to be eligible to draw down funds from two Transportation Enhancement Grants, worth \$1,009,000, already awarded for the project.

Commissioner Bill Brown said he is in favor of bridge preservation and would like to be able to offer a viewing place for visitors but he does not be-

lieve in taking property from private land owners "that the county does not absolutely need."

Council member Ron Slavens said he is in favor of repairing the bridge as needed. However, he pointed out there is no weight limit on the bridge, which he interpreted as there are no concerns about the stability of the structure.

Wenning was directed to do no more on the project until the scope of work needed for transportation grant eligibility is determined. The council will reconsider the request for the requested encumbrance at the April 15 meeting. Wenning is scheduled to make a follow-up report at that time.

Additional appropriation

Council members approved a \$5,743 additional appropriation for the county clerk for a new computer system from the clerk's perpetuation fund. It was noted by Ann Brown that county clerk Nancy Mattox will be expected to report, in detail, "on the progress of balancing her books as required by the Indiana State Board of Accounts until the task is completed, at every meeting beginning with the March 18 meeting." It was also stated that follow-up reports will be required by the council after the office check book is in balance with the bank.

Professional Brief

LIFELINE CRITICAL CARE TRANSPORT

will soon expand service to Lafayette and Muncie. Beginning in July, LifeLine, which operates 24-hours a day, will offer base locations in Indianapolis, Lafayette, Muncie, Columbus, Kokomo and Terre Haute.

The new base locations will ensure accessibility to critical care transport for the entire central Indiana community and enable Clarian Arnett and Ball Memorial hospitals to serve as regional centers for critical care and patient needs in east and west central Indiana.

LifeLine transport service is affiliated with Methodist Hospital, the largest Level I Trauma Center in the state, and Riley Hospital for Children, the region's only Level I Pediatric Trauma Center.

APRIL TRAPP of Flora

is now working at En'core Hair Design in Flora. She is a graduate of Paul Mitchell the School, Normal, Ill., and was previously employed at Colourz Salon in Frankfort.

Trapp specializes in haircuts, colors, perms, foils and waxes. She works Wednesday through Saturday. Call (574) 967-0005 or come in the salon to make an appointment.

Carroll County private investigator DALE SEWARD, owner of Bob's Investigations, has been published for the first time. Seward blogs about his business on his social sites and was asked by an online magazine to submit an article dealing with marketing. The magazine is located at www.pursuitmag.com and is for private investigators worldwide.

National Weather Service offers storm spotter class

Comet staff report

Carroll County Emergency Management Director Dave McDowell announced Tuesday there will be a free National Weather Service (NWS) Storm Spotter class on March 31 at 6:30 p.m. at the Wabash & Erie Canal Interpretive Center in Delphi. Dave Tucek from NWS will conduct the class. The public is welcome to attend.

Moffitt provides input on Checkoff programs

Camden pork producer Sam Moffitt served as a delegate at the Pork Act Delegate Assembly held March 4-6 in Kansas City, Mo.

Moffitt, selected by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, was one of 163 delegates who represented producers from 44 states and importers who sell pork products in the United States. The delegates were charged with helping to provide direction to the pork promotion, research and consumer information programs that are funded by the Pork Checkoff through the National Pork Board. Producers contribute 40¢ of every \$100 of sales to the Checkoff, and importers use a sales formula to contribute a similar amount.

"From managing issues to promoting our product at home and internationally, Pork Checkoff programs are continually working toward the end results of yielding positive results for pork pro-

ducers," said Moffitt.

The National Pork Board approved a 2010 budget for national spending of \$44.1 million. About \$19 million is focused on domestic pork expenditures.

"Several of the National Pork Board's goals for 2010 reflect a commitment to increasing demand for pork products," said Moffitt. "For example, aggressive retail program are being planned with leading retailers in a year that likely will have consumers paying higher prices for pork."

The Checkoff also is at work in ongoing programs that include efforts to provide science-based answers and educational opportunities including:

- We Care, a responsible pork initiative, which is a coordinated effort of the National Pork Board and National Pork Producers Council to earn the trust of the pork industry's customers

as well as regulators and consumers.

- Pork Quality Assurance Plus® (PQA®), which is a three-part process that includes attending an educational and training session and then having an on-farm site evaluation to achieve PQA Plus site status. The program also includes a third component of random, statistically valid, third-party evaluation of program implementation. Results of those evaluations will show if the industry is improving its overall animal-care practices.
- The Pork Checkoff has developed and is implementing a plan to understand the fundamentals of its carbon footprint and the impact that has on the environment.

For information on Checkoff-funded programs, pork producers can call the Pork Checkoff Service Center at (800) 456-PORK or check the Internet at www.pork.org.

Census important for federal funding to communities

Comet staff report

You've probably received your 2010 Census form now, or soon will.

Filling it out is required by law. With only 10 questions, the Census Bureau estimates that it will take only about 10 minutes to complete. All answers are kept confidential.

Anyone who has questions about the form or doesn't receive a form can receive assistance in Carroll County.

Question Assistance Centers will be in operation March 19-April 19 at the following places: Delphi Public Library, Burlington Library, Camden Library, and Flora Public Library. A worker will be there 15 hours a week, but the Census forms will be there in five languages (English, Spanish,

Korean, Chinese and Russian) all the time. Hours will likely vary according to the facility.

Be Counted Centers (Census forms only) will be at the Delphi City Building, Burlington Town Hall, Flora Town Hall, and Yeoman Telephone.

People have until mid-April to complete and return the form; otherwise, a Census taker (enumerator) will knock on their door to get the form answered.

Federal funding to local municipalities is determined using Census figures, which is why the Census is so important. The Cen-

sus will help each community get its fair share of government funds for highways, schools, bridges, senior centers, health facilities, and many other programs. It also affects the number of seats a state occupies in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Census information is also used for other purposes such as to advocate for causes, rescue disaster victims, prevent diseases, research markets, locate pools of skilled workers and more.

The Census is a requirement of the US Constitution, and is conducted every 10 years.

State tax credits still available for 2010

Homestead Consulting Services helped over 440 clients in 2009 with foreclosure issues. As a HUD approved counseling agency, services are free to the client. One of the ways Homestead funds this program is by fundraising. The State of Indiana helps with this by providing state tax credits to funders through their Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP).

State tax credits are available to donors who make contributions to Homestead Consulting Services in the amount of \$100 or more. The contributions are used to offer foreclosure prevention services to eligible counties, which include Tippecanoe, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Clinton, Fountain, Montgomery, Warren

and White counties. In return for the contribution, the donor will receive a 50% state tax credit to offset their Indiana income taxes. In addition, the entire amount of the contribution is an eligible federal tax deduction.

State tax credits will be granted in the order contributions are received until all credits are used. Contributions should be mailed to: Homestead Consulting Services at P.O. Box 256, Lafayette, IN 47902

Homestead Consulting Services is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization that works in nine area counties and has been helping families with homeownership for over 25 years. More information is available on at www.homesteadconsulting.net.

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