

# THE KIRPC NEWS

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## THE TOWN OF WOLCOTT RECEIVES \$250,000 TO REVITALIZE THEIR DOWNTOWN BUSINESS AREA

On December 19, 2011, the Town of Wolcott was notified by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs that they were awarded a \$250,000 CDBG grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This award is part of OCRA's Main Street Revitalization Program that assists Indiana's rural residents in their endeavors to create successful, sustainable communities and improve local quality of life. The goal of the Main Street Revitalization Program is to encourage communities with eligible populations to focus on long-term community development efforts.

To be eligible to receive funding, each applicant must have a designated Active Indiana Main Street Group and the project must be part of the Main Street Group's overall strategy. The Town of Wolcott established their Main Street organization in collaboration with the Town of Remington in 2008 as part of the Remington-Wolcott Community Development Corporation. This represented the first time that the Main Street Program ever had two communities from two separate counties cooperate together on a Main Street Program.

Improvements will include new sidewalks, curbing and lighting,



Town officials and KIRPC representative accept the grant award from Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman.

and will deal with town issues such as vacancies, business recruitment and retention, and economic development.

## KIRPC SECURES OVER \$38 MILLION FOR EIGHT COUNTIES IN THE NORTHWEST INDIANA REGION

Over the last five years, **KIRPC** has been able to obtain funding for 100 projects totaling over \$38 million for cities and towns within their eight county region.

While the majority of this funding has involved infrastructure projects; eg. water, wastewater and storm water (40 projects, or 40% of the total), other projects include planning grants, park grants, fire stations and fire trucks, and housing projects. Funding was also secured by **KIRPC** for libraries, hazard mitigation, downtown revitalizations, senior center projects, dams and levees and debris removal.

In addition, **KIRPC** has also acquired funding from EDA for major developments in Knox, Rochester and Wolcott. The funding for these three areas alone account for over \$5 million.

By far, the greatest source of funding for the rural communities

In KIRPC's northwest region comes from Community Focus Funds (CFF). These grants are funded with federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This program is administered through the Indiana Office of Community Affairs under the leadership of David Terrell, Executive Director.

Any applicant for a CFF grant must meet four basic criteria: 1) the area to be served has a substantial low-and moderate-income population (51% or greater) or is designated a slum or blighted area by local resolution; 2) the project must address the long-term planning and development efforts for the community; 3) the funds granted will have a significant impact on the proposed project; and 4) the project is ready to proceed and will be



Edwin Buswell, KIRPC Executive Director

completed within 18 months after being awarded.

Eligible CFF projects include, but are not limited to infrastructure projects (water, wastewater, and storm water); senior centers; daycare centers; community centers; downtown revitalizations; historic preservation; libraries; healthcare centers; special needs buildings; and fire stations and fire trucks.

*“KIRPC Head Start is very appreciative of the support from the community on behalf of the youngest residents of Jasper and Pulaski counties.”*

*Dr. Belinda Gutwein  
Director, KIRPC Head Start*

*“Your economic development strategy takes into account your strengths and assets. Your economic vision is achievable, and I am particularly impressed with your plans for the revitalization of your downtown area.”*

*David Terrell  
Executive Director, Indiana Office  
of Community and Rural Affairs*

*“For years, the city utility departments have attempted to keep the river channel free of limbs and foreign material. Lately, we have utilized private contractors to clean the river channel through our community. This has given us a temporary measure of relief, but a permanent remedy is needed to keep the waters flowing without flooding after rain events.”*

*Herbert H. Aribhood  
Former Mayor of Rensselaer*

## HEALTH & SAFETY GOALS FOR KIRPC HEAD START MET THROUGH PLAYGROUND UPGRADES

Learning to exercise, unhooking from electronics, and practicing good health habits are lifetime skills taught to young children in the KIRPC Head Start Program. Dr. Belinda Gutwein, Head Start Director says “we continue to receive community support from donors who share my vision and believe children and outdoors belong together.”

The KIRPC Head Start playground at the Fase Center in Jasper County will receive a much needed facelift in the summer of 2012 due to the generosity of the community. The Jasper County Community Foundation has provided \$2,500; REMC contributed \$2,000 and the DeMotte State Bank donated \$500 toward the purchase of a new climbing apparatus that is geared to children

ages three, four and five years old. In addition, KIRPC Head Start partnered with the town of DeMotte to receive a grant from the Northwest Indiana Solid Waste District and will receive \$11,631 to install a ground cover where children fall that is made from recycled tires.

The Fase Center has two classrooms serving forty Head Start children who attend Monday through Thursday in a preschool setting with school readiness as the goal.

The KIRPC Head Start program partnered with the Town of Winamac to receive a \$7,000 grant from Northwest Solid Waste District for a ground cover made from recycled tires that will serve as a cushion in the areas whereby falls may occur. The Winamac site has

thirty-four children who attend a nine month preschool program to prepare them for entry in kindergarten.

KIRPC Head Start is very appreciative of the support from the community on behalf of the youngest residents of Jasper and Pulaski Counties.

With the completion of these two playgrounds, all five Head Start sites have received improvements over the last two years due to community assistance.

KIRPC Head Start serves 148 children in Newton, Jasper and Pulaski counties.

Looking ahead for 2012, KIRPC Head Start will partner with INDOT to receive two large transit vans to serve the area.

## MOROCCO IS AWARDED FUNDING TO RENEW THE DOWNTOWN BUSINESS AREA

KIRPC has assisted Morocco in obtaining \$48,600 in funding to seek planning services for the completion of a downtown revitalization plan with an emphasis on streetscape design, and will include an analysis of commercial development opportunities and conceptual ideas for façade improvements.

The final plan will offer suggestions and recommendations in accordance with the Indiana Main Street Program’s four-point

approach. The plan will include a profile of existing conditions, an extensive downtown market assessment, public participation, building inventory, historic preservation design standards, project options with design standards, a recommended streetscape project with timelines for construction, and cost estimates including a mix of grant funding opportunities. Ultimately, the study will distinguish Morocco as a destination by understanding not only the physical and

economic attributes, but also understanding the culture of the community.

An example of the potential impact of the downtown renovation is the fact that Morocco is surrounded to the north by 24,000 acres of fish and wildlife preserves. These preserves bring over 50,000 visitors to the area to fish and hunt, so the plan will focus on what businesses can attract these visitors to the downtown area.

## JASPER COUNTY RECEIVES \$180,765 TO REMOVE LOG JAMS AND DEBRIS ALONG IROQUOIS RIVER

In late 2011, KIRPC assisted Jasper County to receive a CDBG Disaster Recovery grant that will remove log jams and debris from 31 locations along the Iroquois River.

Jasper County was declared a disaster in 2008 due to significant flooding events, and these floods washed logs and debris into the river. Obstructions in the river have been an ongoing problem for the area for years. How-

ever, the scope of the problems since the 2008 flooding are beyond the capabilities of a volunteer organization established to help clean log jams and trash from the river.

The river flooding has caused sizeable damage and economic distress to the community, and the flooding and congestion along the river can present hazards for both humans and wildlife. Also, the

flooding has become an increasing issue regarding damage to crops and livestock.

Many residents have been affected by the flooding, as 139 households are within the area most affected by the flooding. Due to log jams, flooding has expanded into areas that are targeted for industrial growth, so it is vital to keep the river free of debris so proper drainage can occur.

## ARIHOOD, CARPENTER RECOGNIZED FOR YEARS OF SERVICE ON THE KIRPC BOARD

Herbert Arihood and Rita Carpenter were recognized at a luncheon on February 29 for their years of service to the Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission.

Mr. Arihood owned and operated Arihood's Tire Market for over 45 years in Rensselaer where he also served as a past Deacon, Elder and Board President for the First Christian Church.

Mr. Arihood's public service began as a school board member for the Rensselaer Central School system from 1992 to 2000. During this time he also served as President of the Rensselaer City Council.

In 2000, Mr. Arihood was elected as Mayor of Rensselaer and served in this capacity for 12 years. During his term as Mayor,

he also served on the Board of Directors of **KIRPC**, and served as President of the Board for eight of those twelve years.

Among his numerous accomplishments, then Mayor Arihood brought over \$5 million to the city in the form of sewer, storm water, downtown revitalization and park improvements.

After serving on county, district, and state committees for over 20 years as an extension homemaker for Pulaski County, Ms. Carpenter gained the confidence to enter into politics as a member of the county council of Pulaski County in 1990. Ms. Carpenter's initial assignment from the council was also to serve on the Boards of **KIRPC** and the Northwest Solid Waste District, and she remained on those boards for over 20 years. Until her retirement from the **KIRPC** board at the



**Edwin Buswell, KIRPC Executive Director, presents desk clocks to Herbert Arihood and Rita Carpenter to recognize their years of service on the KIRPC board.**

end of 2011, Ms. Carpenter held offices of Secretary and Chairperson. Most recently, Ms. Carpenter is Vice President of the Pulaski County Library Board.

Ms. Carpenter cites the creation of the Judicial Center as her greatest accomplishment.

*"Herbert Arihood and Rita Carpenter have led KIRPC through many changes during their years of service to the KIRPC Board. We are grateful for their commitment to our organization."*

*Edwin Buswell,  
Executive Director KIRPC*

## KIRPC ASSISTS FULTON COUNTY WITH EDA FUNDS FOR INDUSTRIAL PARK INFRASTRUCTURE

**KIRPC** has secured an EDA grant for Fulton County and the City of Rochester for funding to provide infrastructure improvements to property located along SR 25 on the northeast side of Rochester.

The total amount awarded from federal funds is \$577,250, and it is anticipated that the area will attract \$50-\$75 million in private investment that in turn will lead to the creation of 152 jobs in the region.

Specifically, the scope of work will include the extension of sanitary sewer service to the northeast side of the city to serve 75 acres of property that is being marketed for industrial development.

As a small rural community, Fulton County and the City of Rochester have difficulty providing the needed infrastructure for economic development projects. And, due to the lack of infrastruc-

ture, the area has had difficulty attracting private investment that results in higher paying jobs.

One of the goals identified in the Fulton Co. Economic Development Corp. Strategic Plan is to add to the current infrastructure in Fulton County to provide additional space and opportunities for existing companies to grow and new companies to locate.

*"Rochester is adjacent to US31, a highway currently undergoing major improvements. As such, it will attract industry and residential growth. This project will positively impact the economy and quality of life in Fulton Co."*

*Congressman Joe Donnelly*

## REMINGTON PLANS FOR DOWNTOWN RENOVATION

Remington was recently awarded a planning grant in the amount of \$48,600 to develop a revitalization plan to improve the downtown area.

This project will develop a detailed plan for the downtown area that will offer a framework for rejuvenating the economic, social, and cultural prosperity for the community.

The town is using the award to contract with **RATIO** Architects out of Indianapolis to develop the plan. **RATIO** will utilize a three stage process that will begin with collec-

tion data that involves interviews with stakeholders and business leaders, and a site walk around the downtown area. This first stage will conclude with an economic analysis that will involve demographic and market research, area retail inventory, and a determination of retail gaps and consumer demand in the town.

The second stage will engage the public regarding past growth and declines in the area. As opinions and data are collected at this stage, the development of concepts will begin. **RATIO** will em-

ploy various social-media outlets and other online resources to provide round-the-clock project accessibility.

In stage three, **RATIO** will review its initial draft of the plan as well as results from workshops, interviews and other inputs. From this, the plan will be revised into a final document and presented to the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs for approval.

Remington is a forward thinking community that will benefit from this revitalization.

*"Remington has the potential to once again be a place whereby people want to raise their children, open a business, and have a sense of community. We have wonderful assets to share."*

*Rochelle D. Ward  
President, Remington  
Main Street Organization*

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## ***SERVING TODAY AND TOMORROW***

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## ***KIRPC MISSION STATEMENT***

**KIRPC** is a voluntary public partnership serving Benton, Carroll, Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, Starke, Warren and White Counties that provides assistance to local units of government to maximize community and economic development opportunities for the benefit of all citizens.

### ***Representation/Governance***

The **KIRPC** agency is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of appointees from each member county, city, and incorporated town within the region. At least two-thirds of the membership consists of locally elected officials. While **KIRPC** personnel work in cooperation and coordination with federal, state, and local agencies on behalf of the member units of government, they remain directly responsible to the governing board.

## **DOMESTIC ABUSE CENTER IN KNOX ACCEPTS FUNDING FOR VICTIMS AND FAMILIES**

The Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (CADA) serves domestic abuse victims and their families. The Phoenix House is operated by CADA as a transitional home for victims and serves as a bridge between an emergency shelter and permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

On December, CADA learned that they were awarded a grant in the amount of \$424,620 from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs to construct an addition to the current office and garage building of the Phoenix House located in the City of Knox to serve as an advocacy center for victims of domestic abuse. The addition will include a child advocacy room, storage areas, and converting some of the existing garage area into a client storage area. Other items included in the scope of work include new sidewalks, parking areas, a driveway, sanitary and water lines, site clearing and grading, and final grading/erosion control.

The City of Knox was the applicant and KIRPC submitted the

application and will administer the grant. The city currently owns the existing building and CADA will furnish the local matching funds for the project. CADA is also responsible for operating the facility and for the upkeep and maintenance of the building which it will fund through its annual budget.

While at the Phoenix House, the clients receive counseling and skill development. To have a facility like Phoenix House is critical, for without a safe and secure base from which to operate, families cannot achieve stability.

The funding for the expansion has come just in time as the house has experience severe flooding in the basement since 2001, and because of water damage and mold, the basement can no longer be used for the children's play area and for counseling. CADA attempted to solve the flooding issues by installing sump pumps, but have worn out two pumps trying to keep the basement dry. The



**Mayor Chambers, KIRPC and representatives supporting the Phoenix House accept the award from Lt. Governor Becky Skillman**

computers for the residents to use has been moved to the laundry area because no other room is available.

Long-term support is critical to maintaining a safer life for CADA's clients. Emergency shelters provide immediate assistance, but a sustainable network of support and resources must be developed to transition to a life safe from abuse. This must be provided over time for the clients. CADA is proposing the development of a Phoenix House Advocacy Center to provide long term services to its clients.