

THE KIRPC NEWS

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VURPILLAT OPERA HOUSE AWARDED COMMUNITY FOCUS FUND GRANT

The Vurpillat Opera House, located in Winamac, Indiana, was awarded a CFF grant in the amount of \$500,000 by the Office of Rural Affairs at their awards ceremony on June, 28, 2006 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The building was constructed in 1882 in the Second Empire architectural style with a mansard roof and has been vacant for approximately seven years.

The Opera House is listed on the National and Indiana Register of Historic Places and is an important cultural icon for the community, and the proposed renovation project will restore this important historic structure and rehabilitate the third floor for use as a community center.

Recently, the building has become an eyesore in the downtown area. The local historical society led the initiative to apply for the grant with the hope that the restoration will improve business opportunities downtown and draw people into the downtown



The representatives from KIRPC and the Town of Winamac accept the award from Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman.

area for events at the community center.

Work on the exterior of the building will include a new storefront that will preserve the historic look of the building; masonry reconstruction and painting; installation of new windows on the third floor, and a new slate roof.

The interior work will include all three floors. The commu-

nity meeting room will be on the third floor and will include new interior finishes and electrical and mechanical work. The project will include partial renovation of the second floor to use as restrooms and a kitchenette to serve the community room.

KIRPC offers their congratulations to the community for their dedication to the project.

KIRPC TO SPONSOR WAGE AND BENEFIT SURVEY

KIRPC will sponsor a survey that will provide information regarding pay and benefits for a seven county area including Benton, Jasper, Newton, Starke, Pulaski, Warren, and White. The information will be utilized by the Economic Development Directors in each

county to convey to prospective businesses hoping to relocate into their respective counties.

This survey will be the first since 2003, and will include over 150 organizations in manufacturing/distribution,

healthcare, and not-for-profit businesses.

The survey will be conducted by Compdata Surveys Inc. in Olathe, Kansas beginning in September and will conclude in December with a published report.

"I really believe that this is just the beginning. We are going to bring the best available technology to Reynolds. What we will have in the coming years may be completely different than what we will start building in November. This is where its going to happen".

*Charlie Van Voorst,
Reynolds Town Council
President*

"We look forward to the start of the year with new challenges."

*Belinda Gutwein,
Head Start Director*

"One Technologies is proud to work with KIRPC in creating a user friendly, highly cost effective, and highly informational web site."

*David Brechbiel,
One Technologies, Inc.*

KIRPC AIDS IN PLANNING FOR FUTURE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN BIOTOWN, USA

This coming November, at the site of this town's sewage treatment facility, BioTown will break ground on the Reynolds Energy Suite.

The environmentally friendly facility is designed to meet all the town's energy needs with bioenergy. It will include an anaerobic digester, a gasification plant and a fast pyrolysis unit, all capable of jointly producing natural gas, electricity and biodiesel from manure, crop stover, biofeedstock, and Municipal Solid Waste (MSW).

"Right now the plan is for Reynolds to provide the site and for the town investors to build the facility and own the

equipment", said Charlie Van Voorst, president of the Reynolds Town Council.

According to an estimate in the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's BioTown Sourcebook, Reynolds uses 384,000 gallons of regular gasoline, more than eight million kilowatt-hours of electricity and 147,721,090 cubic feet of natural gas per year.

White County produces 74 times the amount of undeveloped biomass energy required to replace these three energy needs for the town, the sourcebook states.

"I guess we first learned about the BioTown project

about six months ago", said King Van Voorst, the father of Charlie Van Voorst. "They have said that with this new technology our utility bills will be cheaper than what we pay now. People will want to come here to start businesses because the costs will be so much lower".

The town has selected the team of GRW Engineers, Strategic Development Group, and Civic Works LLC to help Reynolds create a new comprehensive land use plan to pull all the pieces of the project together. KIRPC will apply for a CDBG planning grant in the amount of \$50,000 to fund the project.

KIRPC HEAD START ORIENTATION UNDERWAY FOR 2006/2007

Orientation has begun for the KIRPC Head Start Staff in preparation for the start of classes Sept. 5, with 35 teachers and aides attending.

Head Start is a developmental program targeted primarily for children in low income households and includes children ages 3 to 5 years in age. KIRPC Head Start con-

ducts ten classes in seven sites within Pulaski, Jasper, & Newton counties, and the orientation is part of the overall requirements from the Dept. of Health & Human Services.

For the 2006//2007 year there are 148 children enrolled that will be instructed with "school readiness" skills, nutrition awareness, social skill de-

velopment, family health awareness, as well as personal development evaluations.

The uniqueness of the Head Start program lies in the involvement with the parents. The Head Start staff conducts home visitations to assist in educating the family and will work with the parents in the development of family goals.

WEB PAGE GETS MAJOR OVERHAUL

KIRPC has contracted with One Technologies Inc. out of Monticello, Indiana to further develop and enhance their web site.

One Technologies, Inc. is co-owned and operated by David Brechbiel, a former administrator within the Twin Lakes School Corporation in Monticello, Indiana and specializes in small business internet technologies.

The new web site will in-

clude a home page; a community services and Head Start section; web links; a library of key documents, as well as a section "about us"

Mr Brechbiel anticipates the development to take about six weeks with the delivery of the site in late fall. Stay tuned for exciting news surrounding KIRPC.



David Brechbiel and Edwin Buswell discuss the design of the enhanced KIRPC web page

KIRPC HEAD START/PACE PRESCHOOL SERVES PULASKI COUNTY

The partnership that exists between the KIRPC Head Start and Pulaski Alliance for Community Education (PACE) Preschool is a noteworthy program in and of itself. The fact that this program also partners with the Pulaski County Human Services makes it unique.

KIRPC Head Start/PACE Preschool operates in four sites within Pulaski County. Two classrooms in the Human Services Building in Winamac serve children Monday through Thursday. Two additional classrooms are housed in the West Central elementary school and Monterey

Elementary school at the counties' fringes.

Funding for Head Start comes from the Department of Health and Human Services, while the PACE Preschool program is partially funded through a grant from Eli Lilly as well as from partial funding that is generated from families who enroll their children and pay a monthly tuition.

In May 2006, Pulaski County Community Foundation awarded the program a total of \$3,037.33 to make repairs in the indoor gross motor area of the Human Services building. Belinda

Gutwein, KIRPC director, indicated these funds were necessary from the community because "there are never enough funds in a tight budget for all the repairs needed when working with children".

KIRPC gives kudos to the Pulaski County Community Foundation for recognizing the importance of early education to Pulaski County's youngest residents!

More information regarding this program can be obtained from:

Belinda Gutwein, Director
KIRPC Head Start

"There are never enough funds in a tight budget for all the repairs needed when working with children. We depend on support from all of our counties, and are grateful for their assistance".

Belinda Gutwein,
Head Start Director,
KIRPC

RECORD NUMBER OF GRANTS TO BE SUBMITTED BY KIRPC IN SEPTEMBER

A record number of eight applications for Community Focus Fund grants will be submitted by KIRPC to the Office of Rural Affairs in September. These submissions will represent a 33% increase from the numbers submitted in past years. The eight are:

- 1) CDC addition to existing building in Rensselaer.
- 2) An addition and renovation to the library in Kentland.
- 3) The Medaryville PCHS Westside Center project.
- 4) The Burnettsville storm water drainage improvement project.
- 5) The Benton Co. ambulance service building in Fowler.
- 6) The Water System Improvement project in Rensselaer.
- 7) The Washington Township Community Center project in Starke County.
- 8) The Wastewater Improvement project in Wolcott.

"The number of grants submitted represents a marked increase from past years. I think this speaks volumes as to the plans and activities within our communities."

Edwin Buswell, Executive Director, KIRPC.

KIRPC PREPARING GRANT APPLICATION FOR ARROWHEAD COUNTRY PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE

KIRPC is preparing the IN-DOT 531.1 grant application for the upcoming year on behalf of the Arrowhead Country Public Transit Service. Arrowhead is a transportation partnership serviced by Jasper County Community Services, Inc., Pulaski County Human Services, Inc., and Community Services of Starke County, Inc.

The grant from INDOT partially funds the transportation

program, which is administered for the entire Arrowhead Country Public Transit Service by KIRPC. The grant provides for operating expenses as well as allowing capital purchases of rolling stock to replace older, worn out vehicles. Matching funds to the grant come from a variety of service programs, the county budget, fare revenue, and donations.

Each agency is unique, but functions as a collaborative

unit within the Arrowhead system. This allows each provider the flexibility to tailor their services to the specific needs of their client base, while at the same time allowing each to enjoy the benefits of belonging to a larger organization.

The budget for the upcoming grant year includes money designed specifically for emphasizing the message that public transportation is for everyone!

"As Grantee, KIRPC will take a proactive role in assisting our providers to increase their outreach".

Tari Bateman, KIRPC
Transit Manager

Kankakee-Iroquois
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SERVING TODAY AND TOMORROW

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KIRPC MISSION STATEMENT

KIRPC is a voluntary public partnership serving Benton, Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, Starke, 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.

OUTLOOK BRIGHT FOR REGION

“**KIRPC** is experiencing an extraordinary year relative to the number of grants we are submitting in support of the communities within our Region”, stated Edwin Buswell, **KIRPC** Executive Director.

Having been appointed to the position eleven months ago, Mr. Buswell has witnessed a renewed interest by the cities and towns to invest in water and sewer rehabilitation, downtown revitalizations, and infrastructure improvements in their communities.

“We have restructured the staff in order to proactively interface with the 29 cities and towns within our Region to better serve their needs,” stated Buswell. The result has been a newfound utilization of the services that **KIRPC** provides. In addition to the basic grant writing and grant administration services that has been the cornerstone of activity in the past, **KIRPC** recently

has become involved in the development of a park plan for Fowler as well as the potential codification of ordinances for several communities.

“With the economy beginning to show a steady improvement, the cities and towns are beginning the process of funding projects that have been on the backburner for several years,” added Buswell. “Our Board of Directors recognized this trend at the end of 2005 and initiated our current strategy to become more proactive.”

KIRPC recently prepared a grant that has a far reaching economic impact to Starke County. Toll Brothers Inc., was awarded a CDBG grant in the amount of \$500,000 to locate in Knox, Indiana.

The grant will go towards infrastructure improvements involving roadway entrance and water line extensions. When completed, the site will

be a manufacturing and distribution center to supply lumber, wall panels, trusses, windows and exterior doors, and interior millwork to home construction job sites in Michigan, Illinois, and possibly Indiana. Private investment in the site will be approximately \$10.6 million and the company will create 200 to 250 new jobs.

Without the proposed infrastructure improvements, the company would not have chosen the Knox site and the company would not be investing in the site or creating the new jobs.



Edwin Buswell, KIRPC Executive Director