

THE KIRPC NEWS

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WOLCOTT WASTEWATER PROJECT AWARDED A COMMUNITY FOCUS FUND GRANT

The Town of Wolcott was awarded a CFF grant in the amount of \$500,000 by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs at their awards ceremony on January 4, 2007 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

KIRPC was contacted last year by the town to prepare the grant in order for Wolcott to make critical upgrades to their wastewater system.

A planning study was completed in 2005, and this study identified several problems in the wastewater treatment systems. During public hearings, input was received from residents, town council members, and the engineering firm regarding the problems that had the greatest impact on the wastewater and treatment systems. Utilizing this input, the town council determined that they needed to prevent the inflow and infiltration of storm water into the sanitary sewer system. This will stop the overflow sewage problems at the plant.

Maintaining the two existing ponds for overflow is expensive for the town, and untreated sewage could reach the ditch if the ponds are not well maintained.



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

The short term benefits will be the protection of the resident's property, as well as the modernization of the sewer system. Residents are currently experiencing sewage back-up into their homes, which is a major health concern. The project will remedy this problem by eliminating much of the inflow of storm water into the sanitary system. The improved system will ultimately lower maintenance costs and make the system more efficient to operate. Additional long term benefits will be that the town will not have to expand its wastewater treatment plant, as well as to create the potential for economic and com-

munity development in the future. The project will certainly make business and residential growth in Wolcott increasingly viable.

The protection of the environment is a major concern, and the health and safety of its citizens is always the town's top priority. The project will eliminate any potentially dangerous discharges from the sewer treatment plant into the environment, which will insure a safe operation of the town's sewer plant for many years to come.

KIRPC AWARDED GRANT FROM INDOT TO CAPTURE TRAFFIC FLOW INFORMATION

KIRPC has been awarded a grant from INDOT to capture traffic flow information that will provide local input into the state transportation planning process.

The inclusion of local input will assure that transportation plans address local concerns

and are coordinated with local plans. **KIRPC** will provide local input to INDOT by two basic methods; local data collection, and coordinating consultation with local elected officials.

KIRPC will conduct traffic counts at all HPMS Count Sites located in the six county region

as submitted to **KIRPC** by INDOT. All counts will be classification counts and will follow the Traffic Counting Standards developed by INDOT.

The program should result in an improved transportation system that best meets the needs of local communities.

“The town appreciates receiving the funding from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs. This grant will enable the town to plan the future direction that our community will take as we become less dependent on foreign oils, while at the same time increasing our demand for alternative fuels.”

*Charlie Van Voorst,
Reynolds Town Council*

“We are excited to have completed this phase of our long-term strategy to modernize the look of the community.”

*Steve Rettig, Fowler
Town Board President*

“Our mission is to work with our partners to provide resources and technical assistance to aid rural communities in shaping their vision for economic development..”

*Kathleen Weissenberger, Director of Community Affairs,
Indiana Office of Community
and Rural Affairs*

BIO TOWN, USA AWARDED A PLANNING GRANT TO MAP FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman announced in Reynolds on September 29, 2006 that the town of Reynolds has been awarded a \$48,600 Planning Grant from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs. The funds will be used to complete a Comprehensive Plan for the town.

The town realized the need to complete a Comprehensive Plan after being selected as BioTown, USA. The goal of the BioTown initiative is to meet all of the energy needs of the town by way of biorenewable resources.

As a result of its BioTown designation, the town has

drawn tremendous interest from developers, academics, visitors, and potential residents. The prospect of previously unforeseen new development led town officials to seek the completion of the plan to help guide the community's development.

The planning process will include: establishing a steering committee, interviews with key stakeholders, a visioning workshop, a demographic profile, a study of economic development trends, evaluation of BioTown impacts, a history and character analysis, a profile of the natural environment, land use and development analysis, trans-

portation studies, facilities and infrastructure analysis, and the establishment of goals and objectives.

The development of the plan will include significant community input in all phases. The town has selected the Center for Economic and Community Development from Ball State University as the consultants for the project. The consultants began laying the groundwork for the project in November, 2006, and the target date for completion of the plan is May, 2007.

KIRPC has worked closely with the town and Ball State to develop the grant application and will administer the grant.

FOWLER CELEBRATES THEIR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION EFFORT

The Town of Fowler recently celebrated the completion of their downtown revitalization effort with a ribbon cutting ceremony on December 4, 2006 at the Town Hall.

The event was attended by State Representative Donald Lehe; Steven Ray, from the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, as well as the Fowler Town Council, local officials

and citizens.

The project was initiated to enhance the downtown area with the intent of attracting additional businesses by eliminating blighted conditions.

Following the recommendations from a HUD planning grant, the town replaced sidewalks in a three block area, installed decorative street lights, benches, and trash containers, as well as 24 new

trees along the corridor.

The total project cost was \$400,000, with \$80,000 coming from local funds. The improvements will provide an incentive for further investments in the downtown area.



Rep. Lehe, KIRPC, and state and local officials attend the ribbon cutting ceremony

KIRPC ANNUAL MEETING WELL ATTENDED

KIRPC hosted their annual business meeting on October 26, 2006 at North White High School in Monon, Indiana, with over 75 guests in attendance

Special guests and speakers for the evening were Kathleen Weissenberger, Director of Community Affairs with the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, and Manuela Johnson, Environmental Officer with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

Ms. Weissenberger and Johnson described the various funding opportunities that are available for each community to support their local improvement initiatives.

Ms. Weissenberger explained that the mission of OCRA is to work with local, state, and national partners to provide resources and technical assistance to aid rural communities in shaping their vision for economic development.

Ms. Johnson outlined how Homeland Security is obtaining funding for local communities to develop hazard mitigation plans.



Kathleen Weissenberger, Director of Community Affairs; Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs.

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY HELD FOR NEW PUBLIC TRANSIT VEHICLE IN STARKE COUNTY

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the Community Services of Starke Co. office in Knox, Indiana on November 9, 2006. The celebration was for receipt of a new 2006 Ford Modified Passenger Van for use in the Arrowhead Country Public Transit Service

Ceremony participants included Community Services of Starke Co. Board members and Exec. Director, Joan Haugh; Transit Advisory Council members; Starke Co. Commissioners; Knox Mayor, Dennis Estok; representatives from Starke United, Inc; and Tari Bateman, Transit Manager at KIRPC.

KIRPC is Grantee and Administrator of Arrowhead Country Public Transit, and has con-

tracted for provision of service with community service agencies in the counties of Jasper, Pulaski, and Starke for the past twenty years. The transit service is funded through the Federal Transportation Administration and INDOT.

KIRPC applied to INDOT for the vehicle through a Section 5311 Capital grant. The grant award covers 80% of the cost of the vehicle. The remaining 20% equaling \$6,200 was provided through the generosity of the Starke County Community Foundation and Starke United, Inc., whose contributions helped to meet local match requirements. Currently, Community Services of Starke Co. has a fleet of seven vehicles comprised of

mini-vans, passenger vans, and larger wheel chair lift-equipped vehicles.

In 2005, CSSC provided 17,720 rides in Starke Co., and the new vehicle will assure continued provision of reliable transit services for the residents of Starke County. Service is available to anyone of any age for any purpose at a reasonable cost.



Tari Bateman, KIRPC, cuts the ribbon with Joan Haugh, CSSC.

“CSSC is an important contributor to the community and to the Arrowhead Country Transit System. KIRPC looks forward to our continued partnership in making transportation available throughout the area.”

*Tari Bateman
KIRPC Transit
Manager*

CITY OF KNOX AWARDED CDBG GRANT TO ATTRACT NEW JOBS TO STARKE COUNTY

KIRPC has prepared a CDBG grant that will go a long way towards assisting Starke County in their economic development.

The Office of Community and Rural Affairs awarded an economic development grant in the amount of \$500,000 to Knox, Indiana as part of an incentive package to attract Toll Brothers Inc. to the area.

Specifically, the grant will pro-

vide infrastructure improvements involving a 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 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 in the Knox facility.



“We are excited to have Toll Brothers Inc. as an important addition to the Starke County revitalization effort.”

*Charles Weaver, Executive
Director, Starke County
Development Foundation*

KIRPC RECEIVES \$55,628 FOR NEW PROGRAMS

The U.S. Commerce Department’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced a \$55,628 investment to the Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission (KIRPC). The investment will continue a comprehensive economic development planning program.

“President Bush believes one way to create jobs is to grow the economy by encouraging investments in local communities,” said U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Sandy K. Baruah. “This

EDA investment will maintain an economic development planning program that is attracting new business opportunities and creating higher-skill, higher-wage jobs for local citizens.”

EDA serves as a venture capital resource to meet the economic development needs of distressed communities throughout the United States. EDA’s mission is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the world-wide economy.

KIRPC’s Executive Director, Edwin Buswell, commented that the funding allows KIRPC to continue their support to the rural communities throughout their six county region.



Edwin Buswell, KIRPC Executive Director

“President Bush believes one way to create jobs is to grow the economy by encouraging investments in local community initiatives.”

Sandy Baruah, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development

**Kankakee-Iroquois
Regional Planning
Commission**

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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.

**NEWTON AND PULASKI COUNTIES SUPPORT
LOCAL HEAD START INITIATIVES**

Newton and Pulaski counties have recently contributed funding to support **KIRPC Head Start** programs.

The Board of Directors for the Pulaski County Community Foundation awarded a Fall 2006 matching grant to **KIRPC Head Start** in Winamac. The grant amount totaled \$2,400 and was used to renovate a second floor kitchen utilized by Head Start and the Pulaski Alliance for Community Education (PACE) Preschool. The Head Start and PACE Preschool are housed in the Pulaski Human Services Building in Winamac, and serves forty children from the county. Director Belinda Gutwein, as well as Health Manager, Jeannie Polakovic, received the check in early December at an award luncheon. The modifications included installation of an industrial strength dishwasher as well as installation of a stove, exhaust fan, and cabinet. All electrical work was

contracted to DK Electrical Contracting in Winamac. **KIRPC Head Start** is appreciative to the Pulaski County Community Foundation Board, and their Director, Wendy Rose, for their recognition of the importance of early education within the county.

Also, in late November 2006, **KIRPC Head Start** was notified by the Trustees of the Newton County Community Foundation of the approval of a grant in the amount of \$2,000 from the Foundation's Unrestricted Endowment Fund. **KIRPC Head Start** specified a request for a shade structure for the playground at the Head Start facility in Goodland. The shade structure will help protect the children from too much sun exposure while on the playground. The protective structure will be purchased and installed in the Spring 2007.

Belinda Gutwein, **KIRPC Head Start** Director, also advised that the Roselawn Head Start site, located at the Gen-

erations Center in Roselawn, received a much need facelift with new mulch, pea gravel, sand, and equipment repair. Parents, family, staff and children worked together to transform the play area for the forty children at this site. The purchase of the materials was made possible through the generous donations from local businesses and families. The site expects a wooden shade shelter to be installed in the Spring 2007.

Also at Roselawn, a group of senior citizen ladies that call themselves the Binki Patrol made and donated a small quilt to each of the children in the facility to help make them cozy and warm for the winter months.

Ms. Gutwein stated that "**KIRPC Head Start** appreciates the heartfelt generosity of the citizens in Newton County who help make the program successful. The program could not function as well as it does without their assistance."