

Berne Chamber takes walk through Muselman Wellness Center

BY JIM LANGHAM

Berne Tri-Weekly News

Tuesday would have been Art and Gloria Muselman's 47th wedding anniversary. Son, Roger Muselman, couldn't help but reflect on the special meaning of his parents as he toured the progress of a community shrine being built in their honor.

Muselman joined members of the Berne Chamber of Commerce in touring the rapidly developing Art and Gloria Muselman Wellness Center, a project the Muselman's had initiated well before the tragic accident that took their lives last year. It had been the Muselman's wishes that the center, that is being built under the umbrella of Swiss Village, Inc., would represent a gift of good health and friendship to the Berne community and surrounding area.

"This is just incredible. I just wish they were here. I would love to watch them see how this is developing," said Muselman. "They said repeatedly that this

building was not just for themselves, but for the whole community."

Swiss Village executive director Daryl Martin told those present at Tuesday's Chamber luncheon that plans for the wellness center had been initiated in late 2003 and early 2004. He praised community businesses and members of the private sector for stepping forth to support the effort.

"Through these years the community stepped forward to help us raise 3.7 million dollars," Martin told Chamber members. "Our goal is still to raise four million dollars. We'll still take donations for this."

Randy Sprunger, architect representing Fanning/Howey Associates, Inc. Celina, Ohio, and general contractor Mike Schwartz, of Limberlost Construction Co., were also on hand for the event.

In addition, Martin introduced Sarah Curtis as the new director of the wellness center. Martin said that she would be providing the

overall shape of the programming and direction of the center.

Martin noted that officials are currently working hard on marketing opportunities to become involved with the center. He invited area business enterprises to investigate the possibility of involving their employees in the opportunity to advance their health through the center.

"We want to partner with the business community and commercial enterprises," said Martin. "We are wanting to put together a wellness offer that area residents can purchase for family gifts for Christmas."

In addition to a large aquatic exercise area, the wellness center will offer the highest and latest state of the art cardiovascular and muscle training equipment. There will also be a fireplace room where those visiting the center can gather to visit, read, or simply relax. Also, there will be massage therapy and a child care area for parents or caretakers of



Swiss Village executive director Daryl Martin, center of photo, explains the layout of the new Art and Gloria Muselman Wellness Center to Chamber members on Tuesday as Swiss Village comptroller Roger Young (right) looks on. [Photo by Jim Langham]

children to utilize while they are at the center.

"There will be an array of furniture made available through Ken Reinhard, former Berne resident who is now an internationally known furniture designer," said

Martin.

Sprunger said that the exterior of the center was designed to have a visual appearance that fit into the surrounding community. He noted that all activities and

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Commissioners receive proposals for soil, water testing at site

BY BOB ADAMS

Berne Tri-Weekly News

The Adams County Commissioners on Monday received proposals for the Phase II Environmental Assessment at the old Decatur Casting Site.

This phase of the remediation of the site involves soil testing and the drilling of wells to test groundwater and is part of the Brownfield Remediation process.

Larry Macklin, head of the Adams County Economic Council, and the person who was charged with the completion of this project told the commissioners that the 6.689 acre site had been the site of various factories for over 100 years, starting with the old Ward Fence Factory.

Macklin said he had received four bids for the soil and water testing. Creek Run LLC of Montpelier submitted a bid of \$24,940, ERS Incorporated of Fort Wayne

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BARN BURNS TO THE GROUND—A barn at the Harvey Eicher residence on CR 150E was just about completely engulfed in flames by the time the Berne Fire Department was even notified, and the structure burned to the ground on Tuesday afternoon. According to Fire Chief Art Nussbaum and the owner of the barn, the fire was started by children playing with a lighter. No one was injured in the blaze, however, one horse and some cats did not make it out. Farm machinery was also lost. Additional photo page 5. [Photo by Nancy Sharp]

Indiana loses 3,300 jobs in September

BY DEANNA MARTIN

Associated Press Writer
INDIANAPOLIS (AP)

Preliminary numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that Indiana lost about 3,300 jobs in September. Indiana was among 41 states and the District of Columbia that lost jobs last month.

But there's some good news for Indiana also. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell from 6.4 percent in August

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Some property owners protest portions of planned annexation

BY AMY ORR

Berne Tri-Weekly News

On Monday evening, the Berne City Council met in order to hold a public hearing on the proposed annexation of several properties to the north and southeast of Berne's current city limits. Plans for the annexation were first discussed last fall and included approximately 95 acres on the north side of Berne and 33 acres on the southeast side of town.

Decatur attorney Mark Burry, who currently represents both Adams County and Berne's Storm Water Utility Board, opened the meeting with a revised fiscal plan for the annexation. "We have new numbers for the fiscal plan because of new assessments," he explained. "The information we had was based on pay 2006. Now, we have two certifications for pay 2008."

According to Steve Carter, of H.J. Umbaugh & Associates, the total assessed value of the northern parcels to be annexed is \$2.6 million, while parcels on the southeast side total \$1.3 million in assessed value. Total assessed value of all properties currently located within the city limits is approximately \$139 million.

"The earliest you can adopt these annexation ordinances is 30 days from tonight," Burry reported to council members. "But, you would need to adopt them within 60 days of tonight. And, if the ordinances are adopted, that would start a remonstrance period."

Among a handful of property owners present on Monday evening, local businessman Charlie Habegger was the first to voice his concerns about the proposed annexation. Approximately 10 of Habegger's properties on the north side of Berne, located in Schweitzer Platz, will be

included in the annexation.

Habegger read from a letter sent to all property owners involved in the proposed annexation, where Burry indicated the city did not anticipate a "significant increase in tax revenue." Noting that his own property taxes would likely increase by approximately \$4,200 per year, Habegger expressed some frustration at the way the letter was worded.

The increase in property taxes, combined with an additional \$175 per month, or \$2,100 per year, in storm water fees, was a major concern for Habegger. "I hope our tenants don't decide to leave town," he added.

Burry responded, "The fiscal plan does say the city does not anticipate a significant increase in tax revenues. But, that does not mean land owners will not see a tax increase."

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Indiana governor's race a litmus test for change

BY MIKE SMITH

Associated Press Writer
INDIANAPOLIS (AP)

Harley-riding, business-minded Republican Mitch Daniels roared in as Indiana's governor four years ago and shook up a state averse to change at a dizzying pace.

He canceled state workers' bargaining rights on his first day and never slowed down, erasing a \$600 million budget shortfall in his first year, winning approval of statewide daylight saving time after a three-decade battle and hiring private companies to manage state resources in a quest for savings and efficiency.

But in a year in which change is a key theme in the presidential race, President Bush's former budget director finds himself in a surprisingly close race against an underfunded opponent who gets more comments about her short hairstyle than about many of her proposals.

Three recent statewide polls show Daniels and former congresswoman Jill Long Thompson in a tight race, one of five competitive governor's races nationwide this year.

Daniels has raised millions more than his opponent and has blitzed the state with campaign ads since

March. But he is feeling the effects of the crumbling economy and anti-Republican sentiment that is expected to make this a big year for Democrats, even in traditionally red states.

Indiana hasn't chosen a Democrat for president since Lyndon Johnson in 1964, but Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama are running about even in the state.

Daniels "is fighting a really difficult political environment," said Robert Dion, a professor of American politics at the University of Evansville. "You certainly can't count out Jill Long at this point,

but if she wins, it will be in spite of her campaign that we've seen."

Long Thompson served in Congress from 1989 to 1995 and was an undersecretary for the U.S. Department of Agriculture during the Clinton administration. She narrowly won a contentious May primary, but her cash-strapped campaign hasn't been able to keep up with Daniels and took its ads off the air for six weeks after Labor Day.

Critics say her approach has been long on attacks against Daniels but short on specific reasons she would be a better governor. The Indianapolis Star,

in endorsing Daniels, called Long Thompson's run "one of the more ineffective and frustrating statewide campaigns in memory."

She insists Daniels' brand of change isn't what Indiana needs and believes she can capitalize on the momentum Obama has generated in the state, which has seen voter registrations soar to a record of nearly 4.5 million.

"This is the first time I've ever run with the tide running in my direction," she said. "It's really fun."

Daniels says he inherited a state that was essentially bankrupt

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

My experience with the library in Decatur dates back to the 1950s, and the service has always been first-rate. I happen to live inside the City of Decatur and so have library service. However, my five grandchildren live outside of the library district.

I believe they should have the same benefits educationally with the opportunities that a library presents. I fully support the extension of library service to all Adams County areas not in a library district—for the entire community, for all Adams County children, and especially for my grandchildren.

Phil Emenhiser
Decatur



BERNE CHAMBER AWARDED GRANT FROM THE ADAMS COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION—A grant was recently presented to the Berne Chamber of Commerce for new doors (shown in the background). For more information on how you could apply for a grant or scholarship please call the Adams County Community Foundation at 260-724-3939. If you have any questions about the Berne Chamber of Commerce, please contact Connie Potter, director, at 589-8080. Pictured left to right: Ron Kipfer, ACCF Grants Committee member is shown awarding a grant check to Connie Potter, director, Berne Chamber of Commerce and commerce board members: Charles Isch, president of the First Bank of Berne and Brian Habegger, president of Habegger Ace Lumber. [Photo submitted]

Annexation

Continued from page 1

“The city is bringing in additional properties, so the tax revenues needed for the city’s budget will be spread out over a larger area—spread over more citizens. Some currently inside the city limits will actually see their taxes go down.”

And, according to Burry, the storm water rates would be capped at \$350 annually for property owners. Shannon Smitley, Superintendent of Storm Water Management & Planning, clarified that for Habegger, the cap would apply to most parcels, which are owned by a single corporation. However, a few of Habegger’s properties in the vicinity, which appear under a different corporation, would be subject to a separate \$350 cap.

Habegger requested that the city avoid making the new tax and storm water amounts due upon completion of the annexation. However, as Burry explained, state law had already forced city officials to delay implementation of the annexation. “You cannot have an annexation the year before a federal decennial census—that would be next year, 2009, because the census will be in 2010,” he reported.

After further discussion, Carter speculated that even if the annexation were implemented in 2010, property owners would not feel its effects until the following year. “If the annexation were effective March 1, 2010, the assessor must value those properties, and that is normally done in the fall,” Carter stated. “You wouldn’t see an increase until the taxes that are payable in 2011.”

Later in the meeting, Kent Sprunger brought another concern about the proposed annexation before the council. “I had no information from the city that they were going to annex my four empty lots, so I don’t feel that should be included in the annexation,” Sprunger explained.

Burry explained that the lots had been included because the area was already surrounded on three sides by the city—and, city utilities were adjacent to the properties, making them ready for development. Sprunger responded, “I’ve lived there for 40 years, and there have been four houses built there in that time. There’s not a councilman here who will see another home built there in his lifetime. Berne isn’t growing that way.”

While Burry did not recommend that the council remove Sprunger’s vacant lots from the annexation proposal, he confirmed that Sprunger would retain whatever usage rights he currently held. Annexation would not change the property’s zoning classification, and since the property was zoned agricultural when Sprunger purchased it, he would still be at liberty to stable a horse and burn refuse on the property.

Burry advised the council to consider changes to the annexation proposal cautiously. “If you take out this portion, you’ll have others coming to you, saying their properties are similar. They’ll ask you to take theirs out, too. And, that might make you more susceptible to a remonstrance.”

Winter heating assistance

Community and Family Services, Inc. received a significant increase in funding this year to assist low-income Hoosiers with winter heating bills in Adams, Blackford, Huntington, Jay, Randolph and Wells counties.

Indiana’s Low-Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding doubled this year from \$51.8 million in 2008 to \$103.7 million in 2009. Community and Family Services will receive more than \$2,800,000, which is a significant increase from the \$1,760,000 that the agency received for the 2007–2008 heating season.

The income qualifications for the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) are 150 percent of the federal poverty level. For example, a family of four making less than \$31,800 would qualify, as well as an individual with an income of \$15,600 or less.

Households concerned about their energy bills are encouraged to call and schedule an appointment with the local Community and Family Services office. In Adams County, the office is located at 313 W. Jefferson Street, Room 142 in Decatur, phone 260-724-3574.

Two Indiana landfills now generating electricity

LOGANSPORT, Ind. (AP) – Two northern Indiana landfills equipped with machinery that turns methane gas into energy are now generating enough power to light about 5,100 homes.

The Oakridge Landfill in Logansport and Liberty Landfill in Buffalo are Waste Management Inc.’s newest Indiana power generating sites to harness the gas produced by decomposing garbage.

Waste Management, the nation’s largest garbage hauler, has installed methane-to-electricity systems at 16 of its Indiana landfills and hundreds more nationwide to turn the gas into power.

“We’re not just doing it here, we’re doing it everywhere it makes sense,” Terry Beasy, the district manager for both the Oakridge and Liberty facilities, told the Pharos-Tribune.

The methane is collected through networks of wells dug into the mounds of decomposing trash. It’s then pressurized and fed into a generator that burns it to produce electricity.

Together, the Logansport and Liberty landfills now generate enough electricity to power about 5,100 homes. That power is collected by Wabash Valley Power and distributed to homes throughout its system.

Beasy said that the 3.1-megawatt Oakridge plant generates the same amount of electricity each year as 50,000 barrels of oil. Since going online, he said the site has produced 131 million kilowatts of electricity—or the equivalent of 267,917 barrels of oil.

He said the Oakridge facility about 40 miles northeast of Lafayette uses four generator engines that churn out 3,100 kilowatts of electricity per hour.

Dick Hettinger, executive director of the Cass County Solid Waste District, called Oakridge’s generating facility “a very important project for the community,” and added that it is one of the little known facts about Waste Management.

“They’re taking something that’s totally wasted and converting it into something that can be used to power homes. That’s the big thing right there,” Hettinger said.

The gas-to-energy process used by Waste Management is among the methods recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency under its Landfill Methane Outreach Program. That voluntary program aims to reduce methane released into the atmosphere by landfills, which account for 23 percent of total methane production, according to the EPA.

The power conversion process begins with the gas collection and control system, a process required by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to reduce the odor and increase air quality.

Although methane collection is mandated, the method of controlling or using landfill gas thereafter is not regulated. Many landfills, especially smaller facilities, simply burn off the collected gas instead of converting it to electricity.

Pastor's Point of View

South Adams Ministerial Association

John Wanner
Youth for Christ

I just finished a great book. You might have heard of it. The Shack is a book about a father whose daughter has been kidnapped and murdered. Four years after the whole incident, he receives a note in the mailbox from God inviting him back to the shack where the murder took place. He goes to the shack with great fear of being set up and instead finds the trinity in human form. I challenge you to read this book; I think it is the type of book that could change your life. The author does a great job of making a relationship with the Lord not a far-fetched, mystical type of relationship that only a few will ever achieve. I will not vouch for all the theology in the book but I will tell you that it will open your eyes to a new way of looking at our heavenly Father.

Every so often, I think that it is good for us to see the Lord with a new set of eyes. I know when I hear of God doing something awesome in somebody’s life; it always brings a fresh breath of air to my lungs. It is incredible to have God moving in so many different ways in so many places with so many people all at the same time. Would I really want to worship a god who I could really understand and fathom? No!

I am falling more in love with the Father and His word. He has done so many great things in my life that I can’t even remember all of them. When you hear those incredible stories of God doing things, doesn’t it just move you to tears? Can you imagine going through life without the hope of something better coming? What would your life look like without the hope of Jesus?

I hope that He has turned your life inside out and upside down. I know that He loves us way too much to leave us in the condition that He found us. If you are in for a new way of thinking, read the book. Then, please call me or drop me a note to see what you thought. I love the Lord and already know that He loves me too.

Dearly loved and loving in return,
John

Wellness Center

Continued from page 1

rooms would flow out of a large lobby upon entering the building.

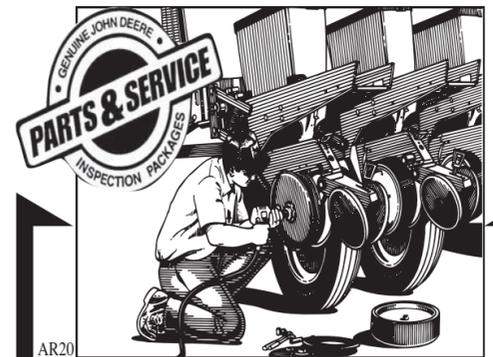
“It was designed to represent a wellness center,” said Sprunger. “This is the second design. The first design was larger in scope, but no functions have been lost from the original design. We tried to incorporate all aspects of the original plan into this building.”

Schwartz said that construction started eight weeks late because of the bad spring weather. However, due to the dry spell of late summer and fall, the contractor noted that the timetable has caught up to within one week of its goal.

“We’re giving it our best effort to complete this project before the end of this year. This is a very special year for Swiss Village, with the 40th anniversary, and this would be a very special way to end that year,” noted Schwartz.

“I had said that it would take seven months to complete the project from the time that we broke ground and we broke ground on June 1,” added Schwartz.

“My parents always said, ‘this is not for us but for people in your generation,’” observed Muselman. “This is something they hoped would take Swiss Village to another level. They wanted this to be a gift to the residents of Berne. I’m sure that they would be very happy if they would see what’s happening here today



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