

PROGRESS

2016



SQUARE FEET	
FIRST FLOOR	1531 SF
SECOND FLOOR	651 SF
TOTAL AREA	2188 SF
ORCH	351 SF
UNDER ROOF	623 SF
WIDTH	412 SF
DEPTH	3574 SF
	66'
	49'-9"

ANGLES ARE 45° UNO.
NOT SCALE DRAWINGS.
• Street Arch
• Street Arch Opening

A SUPPLEMENT OF THE URBANA DAILY CITIZEN

Grimes Field sees hangar update, other improvements

By Nick Walton
nwalton@civitasmedia.com

Grimes Field had multiple improvements during the first year of Airport Manager Lou Driever's tenure in 2015.

Driever said when he was hired in February 2015 he wanted to kick-start the airport by improving the facilities and increase the accessibility of the airport to the community.

"I believe that we have an active vibrant airport that offers a host of opportunities to both the surrounding community and visiting aviators," Driever said. "We've got two different groups that we're supporting. One is the group that comes by air. The other is the group that comes on the ground."

Some of the ways the airport improved its facilities in Driever's first year include repairs to the taxiways and aprons and roof repairs to the Grimes Hangar.

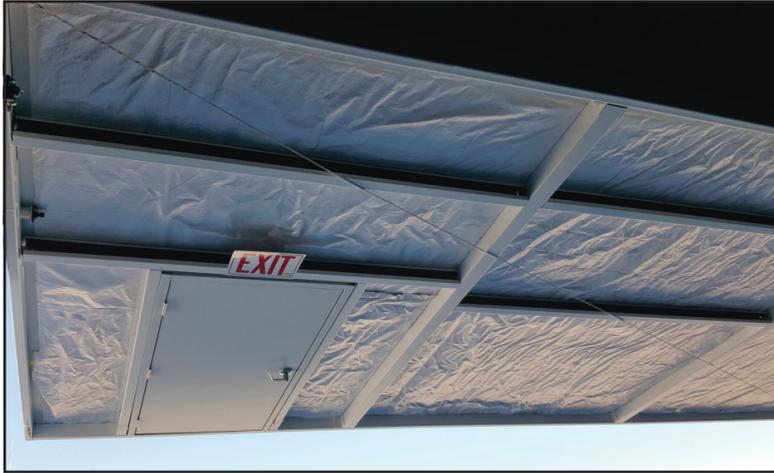
A major project the airport took on in 2015 was replacing 72-year-old sliding doors on the north and south ends of Grimes Hangar with two new hydraulic doors. Driever said the old doors were pieces of steel that had to be slid to move.

He said the improvements to the hangar are important for preserving its history.

"We want to have an up-to-date airport," Driever said. "It's great to have a retro theme going on, but at the same time everything has to work."



Nick Walton | Urbana Daily Citizen
Pictured is the outside of Grimes Hangar at Grimes Field. The hangar underwent changes last year when older sliding doors were replaced with two new hydraulic doors.



Pictured is one of the Grimes Hangar's hydraulic doors from inside the hangar as it is being raised.

Driever said the airport accepted money from Friesian, LLC, to construct a hangar expected to break ground in 2017.

In June, Driever said, the airport will break ground on a corporate hangar and a set of T-hangars.

Driever said the airport has 52 airplanes, with 23 pilots on a waiting list, meaning the airport is a desirable place for pilots.

"I don't have enough hangars. Every place is just about full," Driever said. "As soon as we build those 10 hangars

they're full but I still got 13 people on the waiting list so anyone that wants to invest in the airport can call me. I would be happy to build more hangars because they would be filled up as soon as we build them."

Driever said more

hangars at the airport allows for more pilots to be based at the airport who will buy gas. He noted the airport receives no money from the city's general fund and they receive money from selling gas, renting facilities and income from agricultural operations.

Driever said the airport's biggest asset is land. He said 265 acres of the land are under cultivation by Clyburn Farms.

"We've been farming this property since 1943 and we're going to farm it for the next 50 or 60 years, so it's important that we farm it wisely because it's a long-term capital asset," Driever said. "To that end in addition to just doing corn, soybeans, wheat, we've got all these ponds so Freshwater Farms is actually renting one of our ponds to raise fish so we're getting an aquaculture."

Driever said the airport is looking at a variety of ways to get better revenue, including potential beekeeping and becoming a monarch butterfly habitat.

Airport accessibility

To increase airport accessibility, Driever said, the airport has hosted at least one event per month. Some of the events the airport has planned for this year include having a Young Eagles Rally with free plane rides for children ages 8 through 17 in April, a military appreciation day in June that will feature a traveling Vietnam War Memorial Wall and the July 4th

celebration and fire-cracker car show.

"The airport serves not just the aviation community here, but also the entire community of Urbana and Champaign County," Driever said. "We're the only airport in Champaign County so while we're owned by the city we belong to the people of the county as well."

Driever said it is important to attract different groups of people to the airport through events to expose them to the airport. In addition to promoting the airport, he said events also help promote the county.

Driever said he creates a buzz about different events by getting the word out to as many people as possible. He does this by reaching out to numerous media outlets including aviation publications, podcasts and radio.

According to a study conducted by the state, Driever said, the airport generates roughly 35 jobs within the community. These include positions at the airport, cafe, Champaign Aviation Museum, CareFlight and Ohio Hi-Point.

Driever said the airport cafe is a huge draw for people.

"We've got a constant flow of people coming in to eat and watch the airplanes," Driever said. "Meanwhile on a nice day, we'll often have 10 or more airplanes out here with people flying in for lunch."

Nick Walton can be reached at 937-652-1331 Ext. 1777 or on Twitter @UDCWalton.

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Longtime Urbana public figure aims to help community, education

By Casey S. Elliott
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“I enjoy being a part of the whole thing, the importance of it,” Urbana City Schools Board Vice President Warren Stevens said. “It’s not only education. I’ve served on other boards and councils that don’t involve education. The joy of being involved, of the knowledge gained, of what I feel I can contribute. Giving back is important.”

Stevens has been on a number of boards and groups for decades, with goals of improving the community. He is on the Ohio Hi-Point Career Center Board of Education and is the president-elect of the Ohio School Boards Association Southwest Region. He is on the Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Services Board of Logan and Champaign Counties.

Stevens is a former Urbana City Council representative and has been on groups that range from the local American Cancer Society chapter board to the Urbana University Board of Trustees.

Stevens was born in Urbana, but moved to Pennsylvania after his parents separated.

“My mother was a single mother who took care of my brother, my sister and me. We were dirt poor,” he said.

Stevens said he remembers his mother having the kids stay at the children’s home in Pittsburgh until she found a place to stay and got a job in town. His first job was at age 9 as a pinsetter at a local bowling alley.

Stevens and the family moved back to Urbana after his father died. He attended Urbana High School starting in his sophomore year, played sports – notably football – and graduated in 1959. He went into the Air Force, using dollars from the GI Bill to attend Ohio State University, while working full time at Honda in Marysville. He graduated in 1978.

Education has always been important to Stevens, which influenced his interest in being on area school boards.

“I really truly believe education is the most important issue our community, our state, even the world faces,” he said. “I really didn’t come from the classic household, where Mom and Dad would sit down with you at the table at night, help with schoolwork and stuff like that. The way I tried to overcome it, after I got out of the Air Force, was the GI bill. It took me 10 years working full time, going to school part time.”

Quitting not an option

Stevens said quitting was not an option.

“I still can remember vividly, when I was in grade school, standing in the kitchen one morning. I don’t remember why Mom told me this, but she said, ‘Warren, if you quit now, you’ll be quitting the rest of your life.’ It stuck with me,” he said.

Now Stevens sees himself as a bridge between the community and the public agencies that serve them. He said he learns a lot on each board he serves, and he tries to bring that knowledge to other groups, community members and boards where appropriate.

I tell the community I’m learning more than the kids,” he said. “I bring the experience of serving on lots of boards and councils. I think I gained a lot of good information on governance. I feel like I can be helpful to any organization with the knowledge I’ve gained.”

Stevens is the legislative liaison for both the Urbana and Ohio Hi-Point school boards, which keeps him informed of what’s going on in Columbus and Washington, D.C. as it relates to education. He finds he has learned a lot from the differing styles of board governance from both entities, which can then be passed on to others.

Stevens said he thinks the future depends on strong education of youth, and he hopes that legislators will stop changing the rules so teachers can do their jobs.

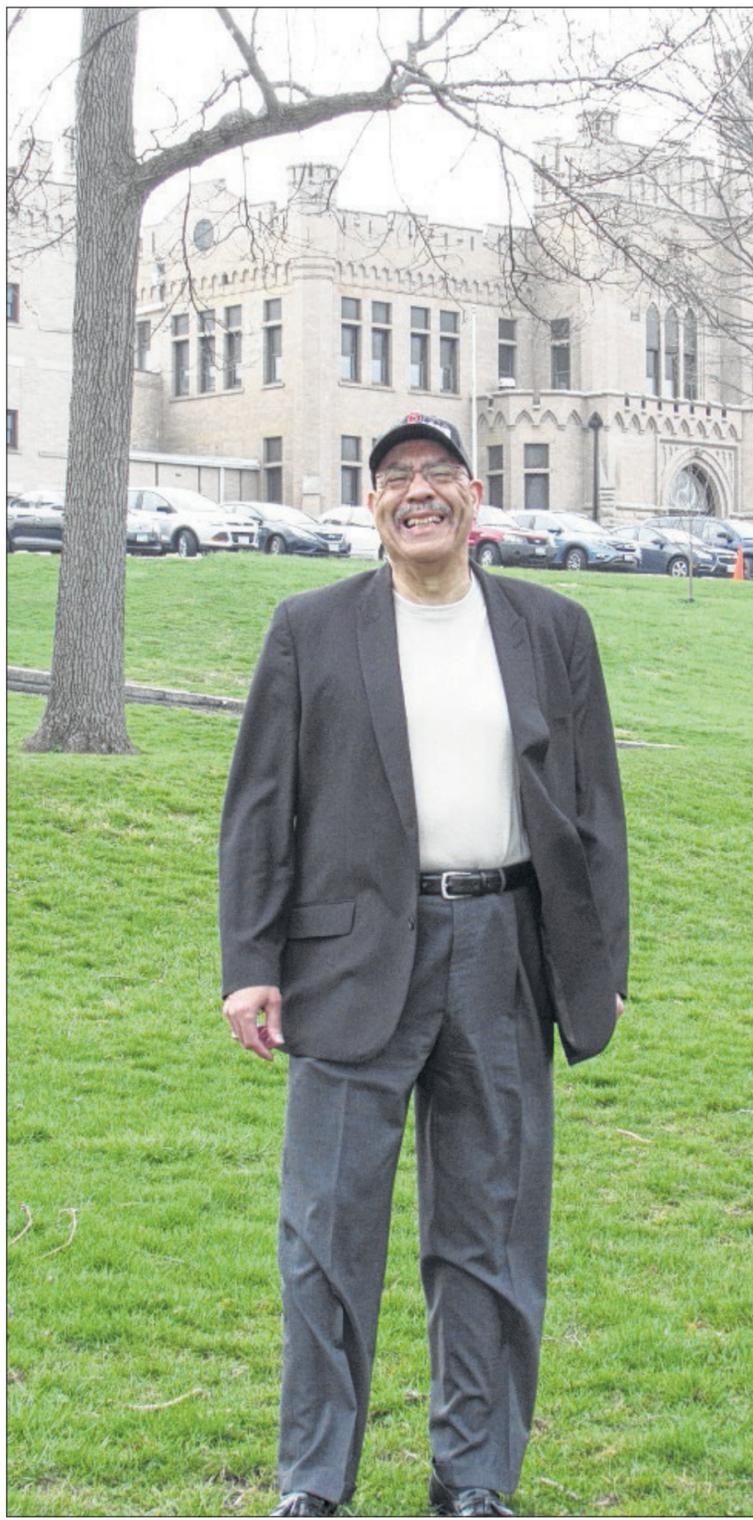
“One of the biggest challenges in education (in Ohio), one of the biggest complaints, is that (legislators) are changing things all the time,” he said. “People are just asking them to please leave things the way they are. They can tweak it, but stop all the changes. It’s hard on the school districts and teachers.”

Stevens added he has heard some teachers are getting so frustrated with the constant changes – from new tests, which are changing again this year, to new evaluation systems – that they are leaving the profession. And the constant uncertainty of education funding does no one any favors.

Stevens said he hopes he can help local schools and nudge legislators toward more sensible and stable practices. And he is always willing to help out.

“If there’s any way I can help, I hardly ever say no,” he said.

Casey S. Elliott may be reached at 937-652-1331 ext. 1772 or on Twitter @UDCELLIOTT.



Casey S. Elliott | Urbana Daily Citizen
Warren Stevens, a member of the Urbana City Schools board and the Ohio Hi-Point Career Center board, has spent years serving the community in a number of ways. He is also now the president-elect of the Ohio School Boards Association Southwest Region.

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\$362,800,912	- 2015 -	\$64,958,441
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Bike path supporters seeking funds for asphalt, maintenance

By Joshua Keeran
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Although the northern extension of the Simon Kenton Trail has been open to the public since November 2014, the Urbana-Bellefontaine connector remains an ongoing project as efforts continue to secure the \$1.5 million needed to pave the nearly 16-mile section of packed crushed limestone path.

Due to the northern half of the trail opening in the winter of 2014, the official ribbon-cutting ceremony was delayed until May 2015 as organizers celebrated the completion of a \$755,308.75 project in which crushed limestone was laid along 15.88 miles along the west side of a rail bed running north from Grimes Field in Urbana to Carter Avenue in Bellefontaine near Southview Park.

The project – a collaboration between the city of Bellefontaine and Simon Kenton Pathfinders (SKP) – was funded through a \$500,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Clean Ohio Trails Fund, and the remaining local match of \$255,308.75 came from donations to SKP.

The 15.88 miles of aggregate surface was phase two of a two-phase project outlined in 2006 when community members from Champaign and Logan counties began discussing the possibility of extending the Simon Kenton Trail northward from Urbana to Bellefontaine. Prior to these talks, the trail consisted of 16.6 miles of paved asphalt from downtown Springfield to the Champaign County



While traveling along the section of the Simon Kenton Trail that runs from the Depot in Urbana to the Champaign Family YMCA, trailgoers can stop near the North Main and Fyffe streets intersection to read an Ohio Historical Marker detailing the events surrounding April 29, 1865 – the day Abraham Lincoln's funeral train stopped in Urbana on its way to Springfield, Illinois.

YMCA.

In 2012, SKP – a non-profit community organization formed in 1997 to develop a multi-use trail in Champaign County – partnered with the city of Urbana to complete phase one of the project, which involved the construction of a 1.25-mile paved trail stretching from the Depot on Miami Street to the end of Railroad Street near Grimes Field. The \$560,771.61 project was funded through a \$444,500 Clean Ohio Trails Fund grant and a local cash amount provided by SKP of \$116,271.61.

In all, the Simon Kenton Trail now stretches 33 miles from downtown Springfield to Carter Avenue in Bellefontaine. In Springfield, the trail meets up with the Little Miami Scenic Trail (74 miles long) to form a 107-mile trail spanning from Newtown, a suburb of Cincinnati, to Bellefontaine.

Additional funding sought as issues arise

Due to funding constraints, the 15.88-mile northern extension to the Simon Kenton Trail is the only section of the

100-plus-mile trail from the highest point in Ohio to the southern tip of the state that is unpaved, which has kept some bike enthusiasts from this portion of trail and has caused headaches when it comes to maintaining the crushed limestone surface.

Last spring, SKP President Nancy Lokai-Baldwin told the *Daily Citizen*, "This trail is suited for runners, walkers and bikes with wider tires," she said. "Runners love the trail, but cyclists with narrow tires on their bikes have trouble riding on it. Those cyclists with wider tires do much better. If you want to have a good workout, this is the trail to ride."

A year later, Lokai-Baldwin said, the overall feedback on the northern extension has been positive, but there are those wondering if an asphalt surface is in the works.

"(People) are anxious to see it become paved," she said. "Runners and walkers love it as is. Cyclists with wider tires enjoy it, but would prefer pavement."

Off-road vehicles like ATVs, dirt bikes and snowmobiles have been



Pictured is the trail head in Bellefontaine where the northern extension of the Simon Kenton Trail ends at Carter Avenue. The city of Bellefontaine is applying for Ohio Department of Transportation funds to pave the 15.88-mile crushed limestone section of the trail that runs from Bellefontaine to Grimes Field in Urbana.

causing damage to the crushed limestone since the path was completed in late 2014. The damage not only makes the path treacherous for cyclists and runners, but it also leads to increased maintenance costs.

"(Vandalism) is still an issue, primarily at the northern end of the trail just south of Bellefontaine and in certain locations from Upper Valley Pike south to the paved portion north of Urbana," Lokai-Baldwin said.

In order to eliminate this issue and increase usage of the northern extension by those who favor an asphalt surface, the city of Bellefontaine is applying for Ohio Department of Transportation 2016 Transportation Alternatives Program funding to pave the 15.88 miles of aggregate surface from Urbana to Bellefontaine.

"They receive \$53 million in requests and fund \$11 million a year, so as you can see, there is no guarantee of funding at this stage in the process," Bellefontaine Mayor Ben Stahler said.

According to Stahler, paving the nearly 16

miles of trail will cost approximately \$1.5 million and would include a 5 percent local match of \$75,000, which would be provided by SKP.

"In its present state (packed crushed limestone), the path is ride-able but still a little bumpy," he said. "A paved surface is preferred as it is a smoother and more quiet ride. (Asphalt) would also be more durable and easier to maintain."

If the city is awarded the grant, the funding would be handed out between ODOT fiscal years 2019 and 2021, meaning the soonest construction could begin is July 1, 2018.

"We remain optimistic that we will someday obtain the funding to make this dream a reality," Stahler said.

Maintenance work

Now that all of the Simon Kenton Trail surface has been laid in Champaign and Logan counties, Lokai-Baldwin said, SKP has turned its attention to maintaining the asphalt section as well as the crushed limestone section.

In 2015, volunteers from the SKP crack-sealed the section of asphalt pavement running from County Line Road north to East Lawn Avenue. The only portion of paved path in Champaign County excluded from the crack-seal process was the 1.25-mile northward extension from The Depot to Grimes Field, laid less than four years ago.

Lokai-Baldwin said last year the SKP sprayed "obnoxious vegetation" on the southern portion of the trail in Champaign County and installed a tile drainage system to alleviate flooding on the trail near Liberty Hills Golf Course between West Liberty and Bellefontaine.

The crushed limestone surface was dragged and rolled in 2015, and the process will be repeated in May.

To continue maintaining the Simon Kenton Trail, the SKP relies on donations, which can be mailed to Simon Kenton Pathfinders, P.O. Box 91, Urbana, Ohio, 43078.

Joshua Keeran may be reached at 937-652-1331 (ext. 1774) or on Twitter @UDCKeeran.



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Urbana schools officials planning school design

Design won't change if district relocates elementary to new property

By Casey S. Elliott
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Though the location of one of the two new Urbana school buildings may be up in the air, planning continues on the interior design of each school.

The district is building a pre-kindergarten to grade eight building and knocking down and rebuilding the high school on its current location. The location of the elementary/middle school remains unclear, as a problem arose with the location the district first chose.

The problem is related to methane gas leaking from the city's old landfill near the school's property off Community Drive. The district wanted to build the elementary/middle school there. It is unknown how long it will take to have the methane issue mitigated, so the school board is looking at other property. The district has not said where it is looking to purchase property. The property would be funded with school district reserve dollars and not through another levy.

Superintendent Charles Thiel said at the end of March the school district needs at least 35 acres to build the elementary/middle school building, and it would preferably be relatively flat land. The hope is the current design of the elementary/middle school building could be used on a new property site.

If new property can be secured quickly, the project could continue with only a short delay. Right now, the district is considering building the high school first, since the state ordered the district to stop site development on the elementary/middle school building until the methane issue is resolved. The district estimates there will be at least a six-month delay for switching around construction planning for the buildings.

If the district were to purchase new property, Thiel said he would like to see it tied into city sewer and water service.

If new property is purchased, the Community Drive land could be sold,

or the district could keep it and rent it out for farming crops, Thiel said. The district has used it for crops in the past, which provides a small income.

New schools to feature new learning model

Both new schools would have two-story sections for academics, with the main floor featuring common areas like administrative offices, gymnasiums and cafeterias.

But the traditional classroom that students and the public are used to seeing will change. Classrooms are now designed in sections called "learning communities," which include flexible space for students to use in or outside class. Classrooms surround the flexible space that can be used by any classroom or teacher. The communities also include project areas, bathrooms, teacher conference area and office space and storage.

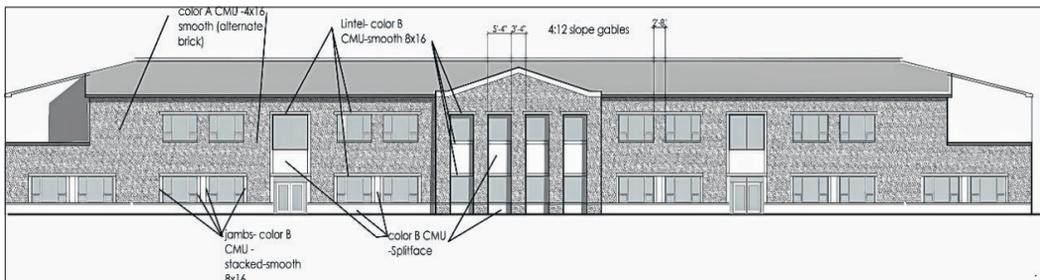
Some classrooms have movable walls, so classes can be combined. And each room has movable furniture, so students can move their desks to be grouped together if working on a project.

Learning communities can be divided by grade or subject, Thiel said. Generally, the elementary level learning communities would be by grade, while those for higher grades would be by subject.

Teachers won't be assigned specific classrooms; they may travel between classrooms. The idea is to have teachers working together to address the needs of the children in their grade level or subject area.

"We're trying to create a setting where it's not just the teacher working with the kids, it's a group of teachers working with them," Thiel said. "So you can take a group of third graders, and say based on this assessment, these kids know everything they need to know. We have to have them grow and learn, so let's give them extension activities, more challenging content."

In a traditional class-



This is a concept drawing of the side view of the proposed Urbana City Schools pre-kindergarten to grade 8 building. This is not a final rendering. Submitted photos

room, a teacher may have three students who don't understand fractions, Thiel said. The learning community design allows teachers to break out those students into a group to give them more focused attention on areas they are having difficulty, while other students can focus on different concepts.

"It gives more personalized instruction for students," he said.

The high school learning communities are designed similarly, though some subjects are done a little differently. For example, the science rooms have to be designated as science rooms because of the specific equipment in them.

Another change will be the lack of defined library space. Each classroom and group space will have books that cover reading levels for students in that learning community, but the traditional library space is gone in the elementary and middle school building. The books will be able to be checked out by students. The high school will have a media center, which will have some library materials, but would be a community space with other items that may include a 3-D printer.

Focus on learning, not test scores

Instruction will be more project-based rather than teaching to a specific test, Thiel said. This type of learning gives students the required instruction, but gives them different ways to show that they learned the material. And projects combine more than just one subject.

Parents and teachers may be a little alarmed at first with the new style of learning. Thiel said schools cannot do instruction the traditional way anymore.

"(In the past), a lot of kids dropped out because they didn't feel comfortable in school," he said, adding students who needed to stand



This is a concept drawing of a typical high school learning community. This is not a final rendering, but gives an idea of what a learning community would look like at the new Urbana High School.

up in class or lie down would have been sent to the principal for breaking rules or disruption, and that would lead to them dropping out. Schools are required to serve every student. "We can't have that anymore."

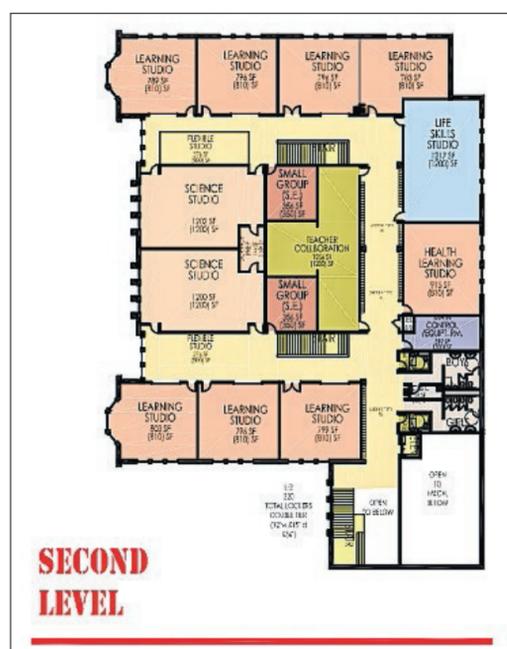
Thiel added adults exhibit the same characteristics. When adults work on a project, they don't work at a rigid, immovable desk. They find a place they feel comfortable to get the work done.

The new learning community design fosters more project-based learning, with less emphasis on test scores. Though test scores are important, they cannot be everything, Thiel said.

"The thought is that test scores are not the be all end all," he said. "Part of the discussion we had at the visioning session was we could focus on test scores, we could shoot at a goal for test scores. We can drill ... a student, put them in front of a computer and give them some instruction. Is that our goal? The group said it was not."

Thiel referred to a three-day session with administrators, teachers, students and community members that sought to define how the new schools should educate students. The group overwhelmingly focused on projects and collaboration for instruction.

"We believe we can go beyond the assessment tests issued by implementing a strong



This is a preliminary floor plan of the academic section of the new Urbana High School. This draft design gives an idea of what a learning community would look like at the school.

curriculum," he said. "That's the project-based learning program for students."

Instruction will involve more than just projects, Thiel added. The teacher will still have concepts that must be taught; but how students show they know those concepts will include projects to demonstrate learning.

Thiel said when he was an Industrial Arts teacher, he often would combine other subjects into what he was teaching. He would ask students to consider how much concrete would be needed for a walkway, because someday they would have to think of this. If students did not have an understanding of volume and math, they

would have a hard time determining how much concrete would be needed for the project, and how to compare prices to find the best deal.

"Project-based learning is the application of all this stuff," he said. "Most of it is to train your brain to think and think differently, not about the math fact or the social studies fact. You don't really typically remember Sept. 21 in math class what happened, but you remember the project you did with math. That's the stuff you don't forget, that you take with you long term."

Casey S. Elliott may be reached at 937-652-1331 ext. 1772 or on Twitter @UDCElliott.

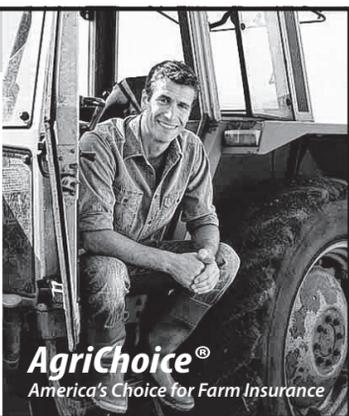
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First Baptist Church addition complete

Open house in May

By Casey S. Elliott
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The 5,000-square-foot addition to the Urbana First Baptist Church is complete, and the public is invited to an open house in May to experience the new space.

The \$1.1 million project, which included an additional 2,000 square feet of internal remodeling, began in June 2015 and wrapped up at the end of March, church Building Committee Chairman Jim Stouffer said.

Congregants donated approximately \$600,000 of the total cost of the project over a three-year period, and many dropped by to volunteer their time to get renovations completed.

The building committee had discussed adding space since 2009, Stouffer said. The desire was to have more room for congregants and the community to meet.

"The number one issue we had was navigating the old part of the church, the 'legacy' church," he said.

The church building dates to 1882, Stouffer said. Before the addition, congregants entered the structure off the parking lot and looped around the building to get to the sanctuary. The building had narrow hallways and no gathering space on the main floor, making visitors and congregants feel rushed to move out of the way if they wanted to stop for a short conversation.

And, there was no real place to have that conversation.

The addition features a

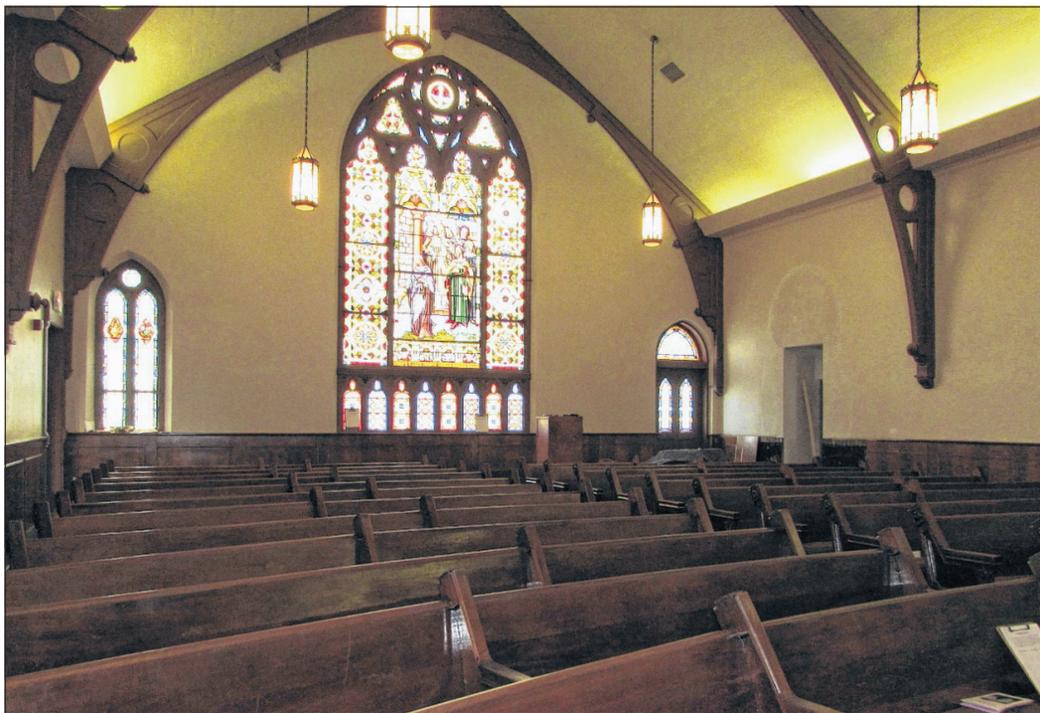
lobby area for people to gather, with new office space to put all church officials in easy reach of visitors and congregants. The project rearranged rooms to be more "intuitive," Stouffer said. An elevator was installed, making it easier for those with mobility issues to get around the church.

The new lobby has a mezzanine level, providing another space for conversation.

The older portion of the building has rooms upstairs and downstairs that made it difficult for people with mobility issues or disabilities to access all parts of the church. With the new elevator, those spaces are accessible.

As part of the renovations, the formerly cramped hallway was widened and restrooms and nursery and other learning rooms were rearranged.

Staff and volunteers updated other spaces in the "legacy" building, to build on making spaces more intuitive and functional. The renovations to the older structure include patching and painting walls, re-configuring spaces to make more sense, updating electrical wiring and lighting. Staff and volunteers did the work, to bring cohesiveness to the whole building. Staff had a goal of putting all classrooms on the main level, where these older offices and spaces were, to make it easier for students with disabilities or mobility issues to get where they need to go.



Photos by Casey S. Elliott | Urbana Daily Citizen

This photo of the sanctuary of the Urbana First Baptist Church shows slight modifications from the renovation and new building project. In the future, church officials would like to switch the orientation of the sanctuary around to provide more seating with this window serving as a backdrop for the stage and altar.



This is the mezzanine overlooking the Urbana First Baptist Church building addition. The addition gives more space for community and church members. The mezzanine, accessible by both elevator and stairs, is another gathering spot.



The Urbana First Baptist Church's renovation will move these decorative organ pipes around to open up this area as an entryway. In the future, church officials would like to switch the stage and altar from this location to the large stained glass window now at the back of the room.



This is the street side-view of the Urbana First Baptist Church addition. The 5,000-square-foot addition was designed to blend in with the existing church, using a similar aesthetic with updated materials.



This is the front entryway of the building addition to the Urbana First Baptist Church. The 5,000-square-foot addition gives more room for community members and churchgoers to gather. It also provides additional space for a nursery area and classrooms. The project removed eight parking spaces from the church's parking lot.



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New Animal Welfare League opens in Champaign County

By Casey S. Elliott
cellott@civitasmedia.com

MECHANICSBURG – Champaign County’s newest animal organization was set to formally open its doors in April.

The Champaign County Animal Welfare League was created from a nearly \$3 million donation from Daniel Robert “Bob” Wetzell, who died in December 2014. His will dictates a place for dogs, cats and other animals in Champaign County to receive the care and attention they need all under one roof.

Animal Welfare League Executive Director Tiger Franks said the facility is meant to be a place to help animals and help the public with their own pets. It features an adoption center, cat facility, dog facility, trails and agility courses and an onsite veterinary clinic. The cat facility and adoption center are not yet built, but will be in the future, Franks said.

The non-profit is a “no-kill” shelter, though it will provide medically-necessary euthanasia for animals in need. The facility will provide cremation services and burial on site. It will not euthanize for lack of space, Franks said.

The organization takes in cats and dogs, though it has also had some other unusual pets – birds, chinchillas and rabbits, for example.

The league is located on 72 acres of land just south of Mutual, which gives plenty of room for all services. The facility’s main building and cabin were already on the site when the league bought the property. The property was used for inner-city youths to camp for a day or so. Franks said staff have since added on to the main building, improved insulation and electrical wiring, added a garage and are working on cleaning up the rest of the property.

Wetzell dictated exactly what he wanted to see in the new facility, from services to the name of the organization.

Features and services

The dog area gives dogs free roaming all day, though they are in kennels at night.

The clinic is named after Wetzell. It focuses largely on sterilization services, but also does services to prepare animals to be adopted. That includes getting all shots, deworming, testing and microchipping, Franks said. Currently, the clinic is open Mondays for appointments. That is when the organization’s contracted veterinarian, Dr. Joy Davidson, largely spends time doing sterilization.

The clinic mostly focuses on sterilization, Franks said. It is not meant to be a veterinarian’s office, but will serve in an emergency capacity if a person can’t get that service at the time for whatever reason. The clinic is not a walk-in clinic, though there will be twice-a-



The new Animal Welfare League provides outdoor exercise and play space for dogs.

year vaccination clinics when pets can also be microchipped.

A main goal of the organization is the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) of feral cats. Franks said a TNR task force attempts to trap all the ferals in a given area in the county, neuter them and return them to their location.

These efforts should be more obvious next spring, Franks said. She said she expects there will be fewer kittens running around.

Franks said they will have space for 25 dogs to be adopted. Before animals walk out the door, they are sterilized, are up-to-date on shots, de-wormed, tested for various diseases, and microchipped.

The league currently has a program, “Seniors for Seniors,” in which a senior citizen can be matched with a potential senior-age pet, and there will be no fee for the adoption, Franks said. This was a program Franks started while at Barely Used Pets.

The Animal Welfare League works with other area non-profits, such as PAWS Animal Shelter, Barely Used Pets and Top of Ohio in Logan County. Franks said they are helping out by trying to get animals sterilized before adopting, since it is not always possible for those other organizations to get that done before an animal is adopted.

“We will help out anybody that needs the help,” she said.

Future projects and services

Upcoming projects will be to build a cat facility, a rehabilitation facility and a dedicated adoption facility.

The cat facility will focus on adult cats, since they are hardest to get adopted. Though the organization will likely have space for kittens, they tend to be quickly adopted.

The cat facility will be big enough to house cats that are surrendered. Sometimes this occurs when an older person moves to an assisted living facility.



Champaign County Animal Welfare League Executive Director Tiger Franks shows one of the rooms in the new facility for meeting and interacting with animals.

Photos by Casey S. Elliott | Urbana Daily Citizen

The future training and rehabilitation program will work with animals that have socialization issues or other issues that would normally get them classified as “not adoptable” and euthanized.

The hope is to have space for 15-20 dogs for rehabilitation, and the organization has its own animal trainer to do that work.

“Our focus is quality, not quantity,” Franks said.

The organization plans to eventually offer educational classes for the public, giving basic obedience training and grooming instruction. Franks said she would also like to institute a “Day Camp” for youths and their pets.

“We’re here for a public service,” Franks said. “That’s what Bob wanted. Bob was aware of every rescue and shelter around here. He wanted something done differently. We’re here to make a difference, not just for the animals, but for the public.”

Though the organization received a sizable monetary gift from Wetzell, that money is for the construction of facilities. It will be operated with donations and grants, Franks said. Membership is also available. Members will have access to the trails, agility course and pond area and will receive discounts on sterilization and training classes.

Hours at the facility are 10



The Animal Welfare League’s dogs have kennels they go to at night.



The new Champaign County Animal Welfare League was established through a nearly \$3 million gift from Daniel Robert Wetzell. The 72-acre property is a sanctuary for animals in the county and provides a variety of services from rehabilitating animals who have been injured or abused, to sterilization services. The Daniel Robert Wetzell Memorial Clinic on site will focus on sterilization, though it will provide other veterinary services as well.

a.m. to 4 p.m. every day but Sunday and Tuesday.

Those interested in helping out with TNR can contact Franks at the league.

The league is located at 3858 state Route 56. For more infor-

mation, call the Animal Welfare League at 937-834-5236 or www.champaigncoanimalwelfareleague.com. It also has a Facebook page.

Casey S. Elliott may be reached at 937-652-1331 ext. 1772 or on Twitter @UDCElliott.



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Sycamore House making most of new home

By Joshua Keeran
jkeeran@civitasmedia.com

In August 2014, officials at the Sycamore House Pregnancy Center of Champaign County decided to leave the nonprofit agency's original Urbana home at 315 Sycamore St. in favor of a location inside an office building located behind CRSI at 1150 Scioto St. The move has paid dividends as the agency has not only seen an increase in client visits, but is in the midst of adding limited ultrasound to its list of services.

"We had to move because we had outgrown our facility," Executive Director Vikki Pullins said. "We are on property lines over there, so we can't expand. Our new location has a larger waiting area, a conference room, two bathrooms instead of one, and more rooms to better serve our clients."

"Also, we are working on becoming a limited medical provider, and where we were previously located, we couldn't do this because of zoning restrictions," she added.

Last year, the pregnancy center served 115 families who, combined, visited the office a record 2,186 times. Prior to the move, the agency averaged 1,500 visits per year from roughly 100 families at its Sycamore Street location, which is for sale. The property had been home to the Sycamore House since it opened its doors on March 4, 1997.

Pullins said the overall belief is the increase in clients is due to the new location and various economic factors.



"The new location seems more visible, and most people know where the CRSI building is. Some people who lived in Urbana all their life didn't know where Sycamore Street was," she said. "Also, it's blocked from the main road, so it does provide confidentiality for our clients."

"Economically speaking, most of our families have a working income, but in some cases where there are two adults in the household, one may be working and one may not be working. In these situations, households are under-employed and in need of assistance," Pullins added.

Seeking help

The Sycamore House offers a wide range of services to pregnant women or anyone parenting a child age 6 or younger, and none of the services offered are income-based.

"We do not ask for an individual's financial records or financial proof," Pullins said. "We figure if they are going to take time out to come, then obviously there is a need there."

"A lot of the pregnancy centers only help parents up through the first year, but we do go up to age 6 here in Champaign County because there is a need for that," she added. "We have found we are pretty much it for Pull-Ups, diapers and toddler clothes."

Parents in need of baby

or toddler items receive help from the agency in one of two ways – either through emergency assistance or the Earn While You Learn Parenting Program.

The emergency assistance service - which parents can use once every three months up to three times - provides diapers, baby hygiene items, formula, maternity clothes and baby clothes.

Through the Earn While You Learn Parenting Program, clients meet with an advocate and watch DVDs covering a variety of topics. By participating in the program, clients earn "Sycamore Bucks" that can be used in the client store to purchase diapers, baby furniture, formula, clothing, etc.

The agency also offers free medical-grade pregnancy tests (38 provided in 2015), post-abortion support through H.E.A.L. (Healing the Effects of Abortion Loss), and information on the following topics: sexually transmitted diseases and infections (STDs/STIs), healthy relationships, abortion risks and procedures, adoption, single parenting and community referrals.

"Most of our visits involve the Earn While You Learn Parenting Program. I would say probably 90 percent right now," Pullins said.

New service to be offered

When the decision was made to relocate, Pullins said, the agency's board sought a location resembling a medical office because of a desire to become a limited medical provider.

"By the fall, we hope



Photos by Joshua Keeran | Urbana Daily Citizen

Pictured above is the new ultrasound room inside the Sycamore House in Urbana. Later this year, the pregnancy center, located in Suite 200 at 1150 Scioto St., will begin offering free limited diagnostic ultrasound services.

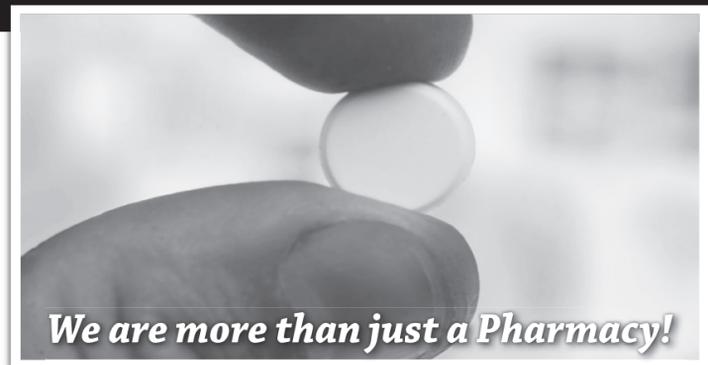


The waiting area at the Sycamore House in Urbana doubles as a conference room.



Pictured is the client store located at the Sycamore House in Urbana. Clients of the pregnancy center can purchase items using "Sycamore Bucks" earned through the Earn While You Learn Parent Program.

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to start offering limited diagnostic ultrasounds, which will be done by our nurse director and overseen by our medical director, Dr. Daniel Nesselrode," Pullins said. "The nurse will have to follow the orders provided by the doctor, and the doctor will be screening all the ultrasounds we do. If there is something that doesn't look quite right, we will be contacting him and he will be seeing that patient."

The ultrasound service will be available for women in their first trimester. "It would just be a way to confirm pregnancy and check the viability of the fetus, which is much-needed since we are in a community that doesn't have a birthing hospital in the county," Pullins said. "We are not going to be their medical provider during their pregnancy. Instead, they are going to have to find an OB-GYN."

"Eventually, once we get the ultrasound done and under our belt, we would like to add STD

and STI testing," she added.

Operations

A privately-funded nonprofit agency, the Sycamore House employs two full-time paid employees (Pullins and Molly Smith, executive assistant) and two part-time employees (Audrey Stevens, client coordinator, and Esther Hoover, nurse manager). A volunteer staff helps when needed.

"We don't take any government funding at all, so individual donations and fundraising are our two biggest funding sources," Pullins said.

In 2015, the Sycamore House had revenue of \$88,251.08 and expenses totaling \$112,899.37.

Pullins said the agency had to use its reserve funds to cover the expenses, but ended the year with money remaining in the checkbook due to what she calls "divine math."

"We try to be very frugal with the money we do get in, and we do file a 990 with the IRS and state each year, which is

available to the public," she said.

Along with monetary donations, the agency accepts material donations like diapers, wipes, formula and gently-used clothing (baby and maternity).

"Donations are very vital to our organization," Pullins said. "I like to say we are a community-based ministry because without the people in the community, we would not exist."

For individuals interested in lending their free time to help, the pregnancy center welcomes volunteers. For more information on joining the volunteer staff, call 937-653-3154.

"If anyone wants to volunteer, we will find them something to do," Pullins said. "We do provide training."

The Sycamore House is open Monday from 9 a.m. to noon, and on Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 2 to 6 p.m.

Joshua Keeran can be reached at 937-652-1331 (ext. 1774) or on Twitter @UDCKeeran.

Walking trail project underway at Green Hills Community

By Joshua Keeran
jkeeran@civitasmedia.com

WEST LIBERTY – While wrapping up its 40th anniversary celebration this past December, Green Hills Community received a last-minute gift in the form of a grant that will allow its residents and the local community to enjoy a stroll along the green hills once covered with peonies.

Despite its location on a former peony farm owned by the Atha family, the campus at Green Hills Community, 6557 S. U.S. Route 68, lacked an outdoor area where residents could get in a workout while enjoying the countryside and a little fresh air.

Having waited four decades for such a place, Green Hills Community officials decided to begin raising funds last summer for the Remnants of Peonies Walking Trail, and thanks to a \$30,000 grant from the Ohio Capital Impact Corporation – Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing’s philanthropic affiliate – construction is set to begin on the trail in mid-May.

“I’m a huge believer in wellness, and we have such a beautiful space here that when I was hired (June 2014), one of the first things I asked (President/CEO Mike Ray) about was a walking trail, and he said that was a dream they have had for a long time,” Director of Advancement Nita Wilkinson said.

“To begin the first phase of the trail, we needed to raise \$65,000, and the grant got us to our goal very quickly. We were about halfway there for the first phase when we got it, and it allowed us to start construction on that phase this spring.”

Wilkinson added Green Hills Community prides itself on enhancing residents’ lifestyles through whole-person wellness, which this newest project will help address.

“This walking trail will allow

residents to enjoy physical, spiritual and social wellness all together in one offering, which is a huge goal of ours,” she said. “We do currently have a tenth-of-a-mile walking trail inside our main facility, but this project will allow our residents to get outside more.”

Trail details

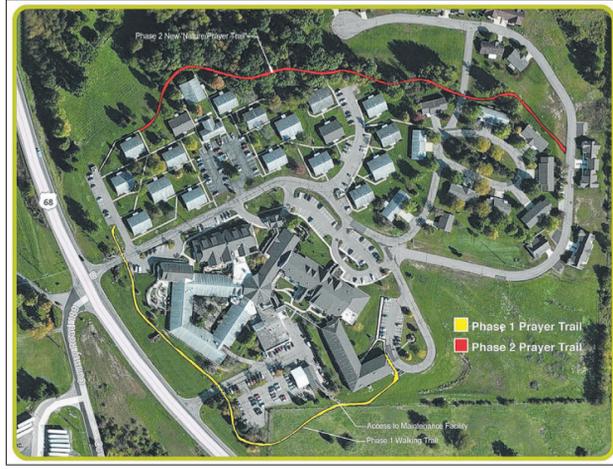
The Remnants of Peonies Walking Trail, expected to cost around \$180,000, is a two-phase project consisting of the construction of a 0.7-mile trail around the north, south and west ends of the Green Hills Community property. The trail will tie in to campus roads on the east side to complete the loop.

“While it will be open to the public and anyone who wants to use it can absolutely use it, our goal is to make it a walking trail that is best for elders,” Wilkinson said. “For this reason, the trail will be paved and six feet wide, which will ensure wheelchairs can safely pass each other going opposite directions. We will also have bridges in areas that are hilly to keep the trail from having too much of an incline for residents.”

Phase one is to be completed in the coming months and involves the section of the walking trail along the front portion of the campus that’s visible from U.S. Route 68. Once complete, the first phase will stretch from the entrance to The Inn on the south side of the facility to a parking lot located near the main entrance from U.S. Route 68 on the west side of the facility.

“This section of the walking trail will be on the half of our campus that houses our assisted living and healthcare folks, so they will be able to go right out their doors and the trail will be easily available for them to use,” Wilkinson said.

Phase two of the project, anticipated to cost \$115,000, will involve the construction of the portion of the walking trail



This image provided by Green Hills Community shows where the Remnants of Peonies Walking Trail will be located once the three-fourth-mile path is complete. Construction of phase one of the project is underway, while phase two will begin once funding is secured.



As part of the Remnants of Peonies Walking Trail Project at Green Hills, a senior playground featuring several fitness stations will be constructed. Pictured is the area where the senior playground will be located, which sits directly in front of The Inn or assisted living portion of the facility.

stretching from the northwest side of the campus near the main entrance to the east side of campus. To complete the loop with the phase one section, the phase two portion of the trail will connect with Pine Tree Lane, which runs north and south in the independent living area.

“I’m hopeful phase two will be done by November, but it depends on funding,” Wilkinson said. “We are writing a couple more significant grants, and we have some more fundraising to do here locally, so we will see where things are this

fall. If we can’t secure the funding in time this year, we will have to wait until next spring to finish the trail. Either way, it will be nice to at least have the first phase done this year.”

Playground, rest areas

The Remnants of Peonies Walking Trail Project involves more than just the installation of paved path along the perimeter of the Green Hills Community property.

While crews work on laying down the trail, construction will take place on a senior playground and multiple rest stops

located at various points along the walking path.

The green space located in front of The Inn will be transformed into a playground for seniors that will consist of various fitness stations.

“The equipment will be specific to elders’ needs in that it will be appropriate for elders’ joints and mobility,” Wilkinson said. “For instance, one of the stations is going to be a square piece of equipment that someone in a wheelchair can use for an upper-body workout. We are really excited about this because we want this area to be a place for everyone, not just those who can get around easily.”

Wilkinson added another unique feature of the walking trail is it will feature 10 rest stations.

“These areas will include benches for physical rest and plaques with scriptures or inspirational sayings on them for spiritual rest,” she said. “These areas will make it really nice for some of our more frail residents so they get outside with little risk of overdoing it since they can walk from bench to bench, resting along the way.”

The trail’s namesake will be on display at the rest areas.

“The Atha family, who owned the peony farm that was here before Green Hills, took some of the peonies with them before they left so they would have them,” Wilkinson said. “They are bringing some of them back here to put at the rest stations, so some of the original peonies that were here 40 years ago will be back as flowers to beautify the rest areas.”

Anyone interested in donating to the walking trail project can do so by visiting www.greenhillscommunity.org or by contacting Wilkinson at 937-650-7146 or nwilkinson@greenhillscommunity.org.

Joshua Keeran may be reached at 937-652-1331 (ext. 1774) or on Twitter @UDCKeeran.

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City completes major infrastructure upgrades

City now accepts credit card and online payments; opens new park

Submitted story

It's important to take time and reflect on the many positive things that are going on within the city of Urbana to help remind us how fortunate we are that our community has the willingness to work together for progress. There is an adage, "The only time you should look back is to see how far you've come."

During 2015 a significant amount of progress was made by every division within the city's organization in maintaining critical day-to-day operations, managing special projects and laying the foundation for future ones.

With a continued focus on infrastructure, the following summary highlights just a few of the city's major accomplishments in 2015, including the Wastewater Treatment Plant Renovation; the two-part Phase 1 Water Main Project; the East Lawn Avenue Water Tower Renovation; the Market Street bridge and Muzzy Road bridge replacements; and the launching of the Champaign Economic Partnership (CEP) initiative, a collaborative effort between the city, county and private business.

"We may not be there yet, but we're closer than we were yesterday." - Unknown

Major 2015 projects completed

After nearly six years of planning and design, transition to the city's new Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) was completed in 2015. Formerly referred to as the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the new \$20.7 million facility was fully operational in September 2015. Designed and engineered by CDM Smith, Dugan & Meyers Construction Co. completed construction on the two-phased upgrade. Phase 1 consisted of building a new oxidation ditch plant with Ultraviolet disinfection and Phase 2 consisted of renovating the entire South side of the plant. The new plant, with a capacity to treat up to 9 million gallons of influent per day, is a technologically advanced facility with Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) capable of treating incoming wastes in a cost-effective manner, while meeting and/or exceeding extensive new Water Quality Standards. The daily treatment capacity of this new expansion is 15 times greater than the original 1915 plant, 6 times greater than the 1955 upgrade and 3 times greater than the last upgrade 42 years ago, in 1972.

In collaboration with the county in early spring, Tom's Construction, Inc. completed

the East U.S. Route 36 Sewer Extension, a sanitary sewer extension to Robert Rothschild Farm. The project consisted of 1,400 feet of 8-inch gravity sewer, 5,300 feet of 4-inch force main sewer and a pump station. This extension provides Rothschild the ability to pump their waste to the city's Water Reclamation Facility, and as a result of the extension, Koenig Equipment was also able to tie into the new system. This project was partially funded by a Community Development Block Grant.

Part 1 of the Phase 1 Water Replacement on East Ward Street, East Church Street and East Court Street was completed under budget by Milcon Concrete, Inc. in late fall. The major project components consisted of 11,568 feet of 8-inch water main, 2,464 feet of 4-inch water main, 8,865 feet of water services, 28 fire hydrants and 7,542 tons of new asphalt. The final construction cost was \$2,574,403.91, approximately \$115,000 under the bid price. This project was funded through low interest loan obtained through Ohio EPA, DEFA/OWDA.

Part 2 of the Phase 1 Water Replacement on Wooddale Dr., Amherst Dr. and Finch St. was completed by Kinnison Excavating, Inc. in late

summer. The major project components consisted of 3,890 feet of 8-inch water main, 2,014 feet of water services, 10 fire hydrants and 2,022 tons of new asphalt. The final construction cost was \$587,204.36, approximately \$28,800 over the bid price (some of which was elected, additional paving). An OPWC zero percent loan funded this project.

The Muzzy Road Bridge Widening, funded by an OPWC 50/50 Grant, was complete mid-summer. The bridge was widened a total of 8 feet utilizing the existing abutments and 4 new prestressed concrete box beams. Other important components included 4 new concrete end caps, 138 feet of new guardrail and 312 tons of new asphalt.

The West Market Street Bridge Replacement, funded by an Ohio Department of Transportation Small Cities 80/20 grant, was completed by J&J Schlaegel, Inc. in late summer. The new box culvert replaced a 102-year-old jack arch bridge. The major project components in addition to the new 10-foot-by-6-foot box culvert included replacement utility lines underneath, new wing walls at the outlet, new curb, gutter and sidewalk, new ADA ramps, new asphalt and new decorative railing.

After two years of discussions and planning, the city and county finalized their collaborative effort and launched the Champaign Economic Partnership (CEP) in July. This new agency, headquartered at 3 Monument Square in the Security National Bank Building, is the sole private/public agency for economic development for Urbana and Champaign County. The CEP is led by an 18-member board (with over 70 percent private membership) and is under the direction of Marcia Bailey. More information is available on the new website, www.cepohio.com.

The city's 2015 completed paving projects included extra paving length on Amherst Drive, a chip seal & restripe of the city's portion of Dugan Road, a crack sealing/cape sealing and restriping on North Jefferson Avenue, crack sealing/restriping on East Water Street, restriping within Monument Square and seam repair and restriping on U.S. 36 East (to stabilize the road until the 2017 renovation). A portion of this money also allowed the city to collaborate with the county and Salem Township to fund a portion of the Dellinger Road bridge replacement/road realignment project.

In 2015, the city partnered with an outside firm to offer credit card and online payments. In May 2015, the city began accepting in-person credit card payments and online payments and there were a total of 1,651 transactions totaling \$123,256.71 for the year. Detailed information, frequently asked questions, forms, policies, procedures and rate schedules are available on the city of Urbana website at www.urbanao-hio.com.

Pointe North, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Wildlife opened in the spring of 2015. Located at 2222 U.S. Route 68 (just north of Grimes Airfield), Pointe North is a 224-acre "Trash Free" park that offers a quiet refuge for public fishing and wildlife observation and is open March 1 through Oct. 31. Rules and Regulations are posted in the park and are enforced by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Wildlife and the Champaign County Sheriff's Office.

The East Lawn Avenue water storage tower was refurbished. This tower is the first of the city's water storage towers to be cleaned, repaired and painted in a new cycle of preventive maintenance within the city's water system.

Submitted by the city of Urbana.

Countywide partnership formed to strengthen economy

Submitted story

Local government and business joined in partnership last July to launch the Champaign Economic Partnership (CEP), a countywide economic development agency. The purpose: To combine public and private resources to stimulate business and job growth in Champaign County and improve the local quality of life.

To form the CEP, the Champaign County commissioners and the city of Urbana signed an agreement designating the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) of Champaign County, doing business as the CEP, as Champaign County's sole economic development agency.

An 18-member board of trustees governs the CEP. About 70 percent of the board consists of private business representatives,



Submitted photo

Marcia Bailey, economic development director of the Champaign Economic Partnership (CEP), addresses members of the boards of the CEP, Champaign County Chamber of Commerce and West Central Ohio Port Authority in a training session held early in 2016 to lay the groundwork for the three groups to collaborate on economic development. The training was led by economic development expert Chris Schmenk (seated at left), former director of the Ohio Development Services Agency.

while the remainder represent local government - county, city, village and township. The board is led by President Todd Michael of Michael Family Farms, Vice President Andy Yoder, North Lewisburg village administrator, and Treasurer Bill Heitman, vice president of Civista Bank.

The board hired Marcia

Bailey as economic development director of the CEP. Prior to the partnership, Bailey served as economic development coordinator for the city of Urbana.

The CEP, which maintains an office in the Security National Bank building, 3 Monument Square, Urbana, receives public funding

from Champaign County and the city of Urbana and private funding from sponsors Pioneer Electric Cooperative and Dayton Power & Light. The CEP also receives support from in-kind sponsors Security National Bank, CT Communications, Civista Bank and Com-Doc.

Bailey said that the agency is currently working on about 25 economic development projects, which include possible expansions of existing businesses as well as inquiries for new businesses. These include service, retail, manufacturing and health care businesses, representing more than 300 potential new jobs.

"Through our partnerships, the CEP strives to promote economic growth by connecting businesses with resources to help them succeed in Champaign County,"

Bailey said. Examples include:

- Maintaining an inventory of available commercial property
- Easing the permitting and zoning processes
- Providing needed infrastructure and transportation
- Promoting workforce development
- Providing tax incentives to promote business investment and job development

Workforce development is a key focus of the CEP, Bailey explained, as manufacturers in Champaign County - and across the United States - face a shortage of job applicants with the training necessary for skilled, high-tech positions.

The CEP is partnering with educational institutions and the Champaign County Manufacturers Council's human resources group to help remedy this problem and interest

more youths in preparing for skilled manufacturing careers.

Bailey said, "Preparing our local workforce for skilled, technical jobs is a key to strengthening and growing our local economy. To succeed and grow their businesses, existing companies need well-trained employees. And companies building a new facility locate where the workforce is plentiful and well-trained."

One recent success in local workforce development: Ohio Hi-Point Career Center is completing the first year of an advanced manufacturing satellite program for fifth grade through high school at Triad Local Schools.

For more information on the CEP, visit the CEP's new website, CEPOhio.com.

Submitted on behalf of the Champaign Economic Partnership.



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Coalition impacts drug use prevention through grant

By Nick Walton
nwalton@civitasmedia.com

The Champaign County Drug Youth Coalition is in the final year of a federal grant that has helped the coalition implement prevention efforts across the community.

Coalition director Stacey Logwood said the grant the coalition applied for is the Drug Free Communities Grant. It was awarded in 2011.

Grant funding is provided by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), partnered with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration or SAMHSA. Logwood said these two entities review grants and the ONDCP issues funds.

Once the coalition received the grant award, Logwood said, the coalition's primary area of focus was to reduce youth substance abuse with a secondary focus of reducing adult substance abuse over time.

"We were required to work on two substances annually and we had to list those substances and for us based on our data it was alcohol and marijuana because those are the two most frequently used substances amongst youth," Logwood said. "We spent the first three years really working on alcohol primarily. We were building some capacity around marijuana in the background, collecting more data, looking at issues around why it was happening in the community but really didn't have the opportunity to start addressing it until last year."

Logwood said the

first year of the grant mainly revolved around training. This included spending a full month training multiple members of the coalition on the strategic prevention framework.

This process involved committing to send people out of state multiple times before members would come back and teach coalition members the information they learned.

The work the coalition did in its first year of the grant proved valuable as Logwood said the coalition formed its action plans for the following years.

"They say that it's a five-year grant but it really for us was a year of learning and then four years of implementation," Logwood said.

Coalition initiates prevention efforts

One of the ways the coalition has impacted prevention efforts is through school curriculum.

As the coalition went through its assessment process, Logwood said, it was realized there were limited prevention efforts.

The coalition built a prevention model around Search Institute Survey information.

"It allowed focus on what kids were missing, and what they said they were missing was they didn't have resistance skills, they didn't know how to say 'no' and then they also said they didn't know how to plan and make decisions well," Logwood said.

"We built an entire logic model around how do we improve those pieces in addition to reducing parents providing alcohol, young adults providing alcohol, alco-

hol retailers providing alcohol."

During year three of the grant, the coalition received the Botvin Lifeskills Grant from the University of Colorado Boulder. Logwood said the grant requires training every sixth grade student in a curriculum focused on violence and substance abuse prevention.

A student would receive 15 sessions as a sixth grader, eight more sessions as a seventh grader and additional sessions in eighth grade. Logwood said the coalition has learned the more doses of prevention children receive, the longer they are protected of having behavior more likely to engage in substance abuse.

The coalition originally wrote the grant for the Mechanicsburg Exempted Village School District with the intent of putting Consolidated Care's prevention worker in the school to implement the curriculum. After learning that Urbana City Schools also had applied for the grant, the coalition asked to expand the grant to other schools in the county.

As part of the three-year Botvin grant, the curriculum was expanded to other school districts such as Triad, Graham and West Liberty-Salem. Logwood said the curriculum is being delivered in every school district differently to meet the needs of the respective district.

Logwood noted the coalition is looking at expansion for ninth grade and third grade.

"We're excited about what that may mean for us ... we know that kids need multiple dosage over multiple

years," Logwood said. "We always get a lot of push-back around DARE and 'why don't you just let law enforcement do DARE.' What we found is that DARE hasn't been as effective as they wanted it to be because it's only delivered at one dose in fifth grade, it's not continued and that message is not shared multiple times."

"That's the difference with Botvin. We have the ability to deliver it over a multitude of years so that kids are getting the same message and, in some of the districts where they're having their general education teachers deliver it as part of homeroom, those kids are hearing the same verbiage throughout their entire day more than once - not just in that one setting."

Logwood said the coalition is the only group across the country driving the curriculum being implemented. The coalition was informed this year that the grant will be expanded for another three years as long as the coalition continues to drive it.

"That grant has bought every piece of curriculum for each district, it has paid for 16 people to be trained in the curriculum across the country and we have the opportunity to add new people every summer," Logwood said.

In 2007, Logwood said, 21 percent of eighth graders reported using alcohol within the last 30 days. Because of the coalition's efforts, Logwood said this number was driven down to 12 percent in 2015.

Alcohol compliance numbers

With the grant, the coalition has provided

identification scanners to local alcohol providers to aid employees.

WellSpring Executive Director Richele Shepard served as the coalition's chair for two consecutive terms including last year.

"IDs can be fake or maybe sometimes you get busy and you look at an ID and you think the person is 21 but they really aren't," Shepard said. "With the scanners, you scan the ID and then you know for sure that the person buying the alcohol has a legitimate ID and they're over 21."

Shepard said this has been a free service the coalition has provided throughout the county. She said a total of 26 ID scanners are in use across the county and the coalition hopes to implement these devices at fairs and festivals where alcohol is distributed.

Logwood said the coalition performed a pilot test with Parkfest last year in which ID scanners were provided.

"Every strategy we have has all of these layers of support," Logwood said. "It's not like we just give them the scanner and they keep them - we go out and teach them how to use them, we're asking for follow-up data on it mainly, about how's it working for you what are the barriers those kind of things so that we have this ongoing relationship with the vendors."

Shepard said the implementation of ID scanners goes with a reduction in the number of failed compliance checks. According to the coalition, the county went from 25 percent failure rate in 2012 to 12 percent failure rate

in 2015 which Logwood said was the lowest ever recorded.

Working with local law enforcement, the coalition conducts alcohol compliance checks annually at local alcohol vendors. Shepard said the decrease in compliance check failure is a significant number that shows some of the coalition's strategies are working.

Future of the grant

Logwood said the coalition in March applied for a grant that would cover the next five-year grant cycle. The current grant ends on Sept. 29.

"We're back in a competitive cycle and I think that is the difficulty of this kind of work ... we aren't sure if we'll be funded or not," Logwood said. "They were planning to fund 71 projects across the states, we heard rumor that they were considering cutting that to 31 across the states. The year we got funded we were number 79 of 83 that were awarded."

Logwood said the results the coalition has shown indicate the knowledge, skills and passion behind the group.

"Should the federal dollars go away, we still have the skills, the knowledge and the capacity locally to keep doing this kind of work," Logwood said. "Dollars are a great vehicle to help us get there, but we know how to do this through policy and environmental change that we think would keep us successful in the long run."

Nick Walton can be reached at 937-652-1331 Ext. 1777 or on Twitter @UDCWalton.

Church

From page 6

'Ease of use and friendliness'

"A lot of what was driving (the addition and renovations) was ease of use and friendliness," he said. "We want this to be a place for people to feel welcome to come, and we don't want the building to impede that."

Stouffer added they did not want the addition to be flashy - in the end, it is just a building. He said he wanted what was going on inside the building to be what interested people. Though the structure was matched

to the older parts of the building in terms of stucco, color and design elements, it does not try to stand out from the rest of the church.

"Now we've got a better facility for people to welcome in the community to use the space," Stouffer said, adding the open house in May is designed to get people to see what is available for their use. "We want the community to come in and see what the church is about in a non-threatening way."

Though removal of eight parking spaces could be an issue for some congregants, Stouffer said he hopes

staff can set up a valet service for mobility-challenged congregants to drive to the door and drop off their cars to be parked.

In the future, church officials would like to rearrange the sanctuary, reversing the back and front. That would allow for easier access and possibly extra seating, Stouffer said. Some of the renovations will help with that in the future.

The open house will be May 21 at the church. Call the church at 937-652-2129 for more information.

Casey S. Elliott may be reached at 937-652-1331 ext. 1772 or on Twitter @UDCElliott.



Urbana First Baptist Church Building Committee Chairman Jim Stouffer shows an area in the church's building addition. This is part of the new lobby, which provides more space for community and church members to gather.



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County jail overage numbers decrease again in 2015

By Nick Walton

nwalton@civitasmedia.com

Jail overage numbers for Champaign County continued to decrease in 2015 and continued to help the county's overall budget.

According to information provided by Tri-County Regional Jail Executive Director Scott Springhetti, Champaign County had one overage day last year and paid \$685 in overage costs. Madison County was charged \$57,420 in overage costs and Union County was charged \$173,745.

Springhetti noted the amount each county was charged for overages reflects the 2015 calendar year and does not reflect the amounts paid by each county as the fourth quarter overages would not be determined until the end of the calendar year and are not paid until the first quarter of the next calendar year.

Springhetti stated each county is charged for one overage day for each inmate that exceeds the county's population limit of 52 inmates.

Last year's overage number for Champaign County reflects a continued downward trend. Information from the jail shows the county had the most overage days of the three partner counties at 3,121 days in 2011. This number has continued to decrease from 2,056 days in 2012, to 1,647 days in 2013 and 49 days in 2014.

The jail's average daily population decreased from 170 inmates in 2012 to 150 in 2015.

Springhetti said inmate population trends vary by county, although all three counties have shown increased numbers of female inmates over the past few years.

From 2012 to 2015, he said, Champaign County's average daily population decreased every year. Madison County's was fairly consistent but showed an increase in 2014 followed by a significant decrease in 2015, and Union County has slowly increased its average daily population.

County overage costs shrink



After years of being a burden on the county's budget, inmate overage numbers for Champaign County decreased the last few years. Last year as one of the member counties at the Tri-County Regional Jail, Champaign County only had one overage day and paid \$685 in overage costs.

Champaign County's overages have had a significant impact on the county's budget.

According to information provided by the county, the average cost of jail overages between 2006 and 2009 was \$469,884. In 2007, the county paid \$565,885 towards overages.

Between 2012 and 2015, the average cost was \$51,640. Last year the county paid \$685 in overage costs which was down from \$2,385 in 2014.

Champaign County Commissioner Bob Corbett said the decrease in jail overages has made a huge difference in the county's budget. Due to hard financial times and jail overages, Corbett said at one point in time the county had to cut the budget for every department in the county by 2.5 percent to make up for jail expenses.

"I think it's safe to say that even with the hard times we went through for three or four years, the jail overage was devastating to our budget," Corbett said.

Champaign County Commissioner Steve Hess credits county offices for understanding the

significance of how big of an issue jail overages were during some years and for continuing to run their offices.

Champaign County Commissioner Dave Faulkner said jail overages caused many projects to be put aside and now the county is able to catch up on these things.

Local courts help decrease overages

Corbett attributes the decrease in jail overages to action taken by the Champaign County Common Pleas and Municipal courts.

Champaign County Common Pleas Judge Nick Selvaggio said the catalyst for taking action stems from when he was the county prosecutor.

"When I held the office of prosecutor I had employees that were laid off due to the financial difficulties we were suffering," Selvaggio said. "I had awareness of the problem and it was my goal to develop a solution and then after you developed a solution, bring in the buy-in by our criminal justice partners."

Selvaggio said the court was not being managed efficiently and had to figure out what

the local jail should be used for by the court. He said he believes jails should be used for pre-trial detention of violent offenders, punishing certain offenders and rehabilitating certain offenders.

An area where Selvaggio said the court was contributing to the overage problem was the turnaround time on getting sentencing entries filed with the clerk of courts. By speeding up this process, the court helps move an inmate to their next destination quicker.

"In the years before I took office - 2011 and 2012 - it took 8.06 and 7.36 days to get a sentencing entry filed with the clerk," Selvaggio said. "In 2013 - my first year—we dropped that down to 1.88 days, in 2014 0.58 days and last year we got down to 0.35 days."

Selvaggio said his staff has developed a method of creating paperwork that applies to all situations and has trained everyone in the office to perform these responsibilities.

The turnaround time for some of the court's criminal justice partners

has also improved.

Selvaggio said the Tri-County Jail has improved the average turnaround time of when an inmate is taken to prison from 4.1 days in 2011 to 3.21 days in 2015. He added the time getting an inmate from the jail to West Central or a residential facility has also improved. From 2013 to 2015 it improved by five days.

The court has also seen buy-in from criminal justice partners. Selvaggio said Municipal Court Judge Gil Weithman has been a wonderful complement because he shares the same vision of how the jail should be used.

Weithman said jail overage numbers started to decrease the year before he started as judge, which he attributes to electronic monitoring or using community control more effectively. He said the municipal court usually has between 12 and 17 people in the jail daily.

For offenses such as fines or contempt of court, Weithman said the court is not placing offenders in jail like the court previously had done.

Selvaggio said the county's jail overage numbers from the last two years were extraordinary.

"In 2014 we only had 49 days of jail overages, last year one single day of jail overages," Selvaggio said. "What that tells us is that we have more buy-in from the different courts, the effect of our paper processing is demonstrable and that other counties are now paying us for jail space."

Another tool the common pleas court uses to manage overage numbers is electronic monitoring.

According to information from the jail, the number of people on electronic monitoring from the common pleas court has continued to increase from 36 in 2013, to 57 in 2014 and 64 in 2015. The jail assists the common pleas court and the Madison County Sheriff's Office with electronic monitoring programs.

Selvaggio said electronic monitors enable the court to keep its most violent offenders in jail, allows non-violent offenders to get a head start on different kinds of treatment and gives the court a preview of how willing offenders are to follow court orders.

"If you follow the conditions of bond, that is a predictor of how well you're going to do on community control," Selvaggio said. "People who have violated multiple conditions of bond or people who have cut off their ankle monitor have learned they will receive a prison sentence because they haven't been able to follow court orders."

Selvaggio credits Sgt. Richard Wiskirchen for providing timely feedback on who has violated electronic monitoring.

Moving forward, Selvaggio said, the court will continue to prioritize these efforts as an office goal.

"We're not satisfied with yesterday's accomplishment. We want to sustain our success," Selvaggio said.

Nick Walton can be reached at 937-652-1331 Ext. 1777 or on Twitter @UDCWalton.

Champaign County engineer provides 2015 Annual Report

By Stephen McCall P.E., P.S.

Champaign County Engineer

It is with great pleasure to present the work of Champaign County Engineer's office. Whether we are keeping the roads safe during the winter season, resurfacing or repairing deteriorated roads, replacing bridges or culverts, or working on the right-of-way, the employees are very dedicated and hard working. Most of our man hours in 2015 were dedicated to the maintenance of the 239 miles of roadway and the upkeep of the right-of-way in the form of resurfacing, mowing, snow and ice control, ditch cleaning, trash pick-

up, tree cutting and road repair. The 2014-2015 winter was one of our coldest and busiest years. Many overtime hours and efforts were devoted to make the roads safer for our citizens. A great deal of thanks is given to them for making 2015 a successful year. Some of our accomplishments completed this year can be found in the following report.

Funding for our office to accomplish our work comes from three main sources. The portion of the 28 cents per gallon state gas tax that goes to each county only calculates to 3.2 cents per gallon. This fixed amount is based on the

number of gallons sold in Ohio and generated about \$2.3 million in 2014 for Champaign County. The fluctuating price of fuel does not change the amount we receive and this number has been stagnant for the past 7 years. The second funding source comes from a license plate fee which is divided between several government entities. The Engineer's office last year received just over \$1,304,000. The third main source of revenue is also based on the number of licenses issued in Champaign County referred to as the Permissive License Fee. This additional \$5 fee totaled about \$152,000

last year. The permissive fee increased \$10 per plate in 2016 and will help overcome the material and construction cost increases over the last 20 years. This will add approximately \$300,000 to our funding resources. Champaign County has less funding than more populated counties to pave our roads due to the limited number of license plates issued. With this funding challenge, our office has applied for additional State and Federal grants to assist in overcoming the 30 to 40 percent increase in material cost over recent years. We will continue to be innovative in our ways of using this money

in the most effective and efficient manner for the citizens of Champaign County.

In accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, an annual report must be made to the County Commissioners summarizing the work performed and the condition of the county infrastructure. Information about our

operation can be found on our website and any questions concerning this report or comments pertaining to our work, can be addressed to our office which will be happy to serve you.

This report was compiled by the Champaign County Engineer, who can be emailed at engineer@co.champaign.oh.us or phoned at 937-653-4848.



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West Liberty-Salem reaching home stretch on building project

By Casey S. Elliott
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WEST LIBERTY – The West Liberty-Salem Local Schools building project is nearing the final stretch, with large portions of interior work to be done this summer.

The school district is in phase three of six phases, Superintendent Kraig Hissong said. Phase three re-configures the current middle school wing to the new high school area, which includes renovated classrooms. That work is supposed to be finished by May, though the contract with construction companies allows it to stretch to August. If finished in May, the district would be able to move the grades 3-5 wing to where the high school is now before teachers leave for the summer.

The current school year ends May 20, and graduation is May 22.

In the summer, the entire core of the building, such as hallways, the cafetorium and gymnasiums, would be renovated. The cafetorium is a “major renovation,” Hissong said. The floor will be leveled and walls moved. The office areas and board and conference rooms will also be worked on. The offices will move temporarily to the classrooms that would have been completed.

Also this summer, work is to begin on U.S. Route 68 and the second entrance to the school, Hissong said. The school roadways and parking lots will be resurfaced.

The second driveway was supposed to be done last fall, but it was delayed due to Ohio Department of Transportation approval, Hissong said. ODOT made some modifications to the plans, such as changing the grade or making some areas wider.

The next school year starts Sept. 19, with a shorter school year due to the building project. This will be the second school year in a row in which the school year will be shortened to accommodate the building project. School days are extended 30 minutes to make up for the shorter year.

When students get back in school, the hope is that all the high school, middle school, cafetorium and gym areas will be done, and the office will be done.

Student drop-off will change for the upcoming school year. The new design calls for a second entrance at the back of the school where school buses will drop off students, while parents will use the front area to drop off their children.

“It will be great, because right now we don’t have a very good parent drop-off,” Hissong said. “That’ll be a huge improvement.”

There will also be a driveway that wraps around the school to improve traffic flow for buses and cars.

The last phase of the project, estimated to begin Nov. 1, will renovate the grades 3-5 hallway. The kindergarten to grade 2 hallway will also be done and is expected to be finished by March 2017, Hissong said.

The project is on track, despite being delayed earlier this year from a wet spring that set construction back a couple of weeks, Hissong said.

Once all this work is completed, everybody should be in the new spaces from the redesigned building. Construction crews will likely



Photos by Casey S. Elliott | Urbana Daily Citizen

This back of the West Liberty-Salem Local Schools building is a new addition that includes the new science wing classroom space.



This is the elementary addition to the West Liberty-Salem Local Schools building.



This is the artist's rendering of the new West Liberty-Salem Middle/High School media center.

have to return a bit later to finish one more parking lot, where modular classrooms are located now. There also may be some touch-up work and small things to finish, Hissong said.

Casey S. Elliott may be reached at 937-652-1331 ext. 1772 or on Twitter @UDCElliott.



West Liberty-Salem Local Schools Superintendent Kraig Hissong shows work being done to the middle/high school media center. The new center will appear more open.



This hallway will become part of the high school wing. It was the middle school hallway.



This is one of the new West Liberty-Salem Local Schools classrooms. New furniture is designed to be rearranged into groups of tables for collaboration among students.

Blue Knights improving under Franklin U.

By Justin Miller
jmillier@civitasmedia.com

When Franklin University partnered with Urbana University to save the floundering institution from financial ruin in 2014, the future of the Blue Knights athletic programs was uncertain. Although Franklin had promised to maintain the structure at Urbana, the specifics were still being decided.

Now, with two years gone by, it seems that not only have the programs been kept, many have been improved.

"We are pleased to announce that no programs have been cut. In fact, several upgrades and maintenance that had been deferred in the past, have been carried forward and implemented," Dr. George E. Lucas, Jr. said. Lucas serves as the president of UU.

Dr. Lucas explained that facilities have been upgraded, new vehicles

have been added for travel and the university established its first-ever exclusive apparel contract with Under Armour. The school has also invested in new software to improve information flow, which will aid in organization, reporting and recruitment.

Personnel changes have also taken place. A new athletic director took the helm, with Larry Cox now running the show. Derrick Blyberg was named to the newly-founded sports information director position. Tyler Haines was hired as the head football coach and Tim Alice has been hired as the head volleyball coach.

"Franklin University has been extremely supportive of Urbana University since the acquisition. Through shared services, we benefit from the collaboration that results from the resources of talented staff

members at Franklin and Urbana universities working on marketing and facilities projects," Dr. Lucas said. "As we grow, stabilize, and move forward, we do so with the intention to continually improve, update and expand our facilities."

The universities have a working relationship, with Cox reporting to Dr. Lucas as a member of both the President's Council and the President's Cabinet. Dr. Lucas then communicates with Franklin University President Dr. David R. Decker regarding the status and direction of the university.

"We continue to be thankful that Urbana University has been given the opportunity to preserve the 166-year history of this great campus and are proud to contribute to the economy and vitalization of Champaign and surrounding counties," Dr. Lucas said. "Our stu-



Sami Secret looks for a teammate to pass to during a lacrosse match against Findlay.

dent athletes understand their role in representing Urbana University in a positive manner and have achieved amazing accolades toward this end."

A total of 106 student-athletes qualified for the AD's Fall Honor Roll 2nd list and a school-record 30 Blue Knights posted a 4.0 grade-point average. Fourteen of the university's 15 teams registered a 2.9 GPA or higher and the Blue Knight men's swimming squad registered the highest team GPA in NCAA Division II at 3.64, while the women ranked seventh in Division II with a team GPA of 3.57.

The list of academic honors continues. Fifty-seven Blue Knights earned MEC Fall Academic Honors; 25

student-athletes were listed on the All-MEC Academic team, which recognizes athletes with a GPA of 3.7 or higher and 32 Blue Knights were recognized on the Commissioner's Honor Roll for posting a GPA of 3.25-3.69 in the fall semester. In addition, 42 UU student athletes are members of Chi Alpha Sigma (the academic fraternity for the National College Athlete Honor Society).

"This heartfelt dedication to academics has been made with a commitment to winning," Dr. Lucas said.

Perhaps the most pointed example of that sentiment came in 2015, when the UU men's soccer team built the finest season in school history, highlighted by the

school's first-ever NCAA Tournament berth in any sport, a second-round victory at Millersville. The Blue Knights went on to face MEC-rival Charleston in the Atlantic Region Final (Sweet 16), where they fell 1-0 on a late goal, and closed the season ranked 16th in the country. The Blue Knights finished one win shy of the school record with an overall record of 13-5-2, and finished second in the MEC regular season standings with a league record of 8-3-1.

"Urbana students are a diverse mix of men and women committed to maintaining the university's core values of excellence, lifelong learning, service, integrity and respect for

See KNIGHTS | 15



The Urbana University student section cheers on the Blue Knights at a basketball game.



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Knights

From page 14

others. Their commitment to academics, and in the case of our student athletes, athletic performance, extends to an altruistic spirit through their involvement in Community Service Projects in the Urbana area," Dr. Lucas said. "We are proud to note that 100 percent of Urbana Blue Knight athletes participate in some form of community service or volunteer activities."

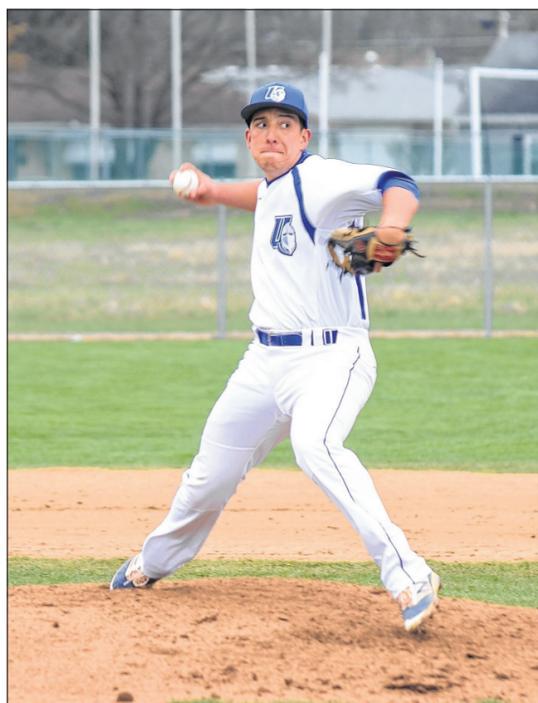
Those activities include participating in Kids Clinics, Youth Summer Camps, Breast Cancer Awareness Fundraisers, YMCA camps, Habitat for Humanity, PAWS Animal Shelter, Empty Bowls, Urbana City Schools reading program, Caring Kitchen Homeless Shelter, Relay for Life, Toys for Tots and Urbana Parks & Recreation cleanup.

While the future is still not set, it seems things at Urbana University might be on the rise.

"The future is bright for Urbana University athletics, and as noted, we already have a long list of impressive accomplishments that point to the high quality and character of our Blue Knight athletes," Dr. Lucas said. "We've already signed 42 football commitments for next fall, our rosters have grown by 15 percent annually and we celebrated our men's swimming team with the second-highest GPA in the nation among swimmers. We continue to look for ways to be help develop and lead the next generation with camps, facility use and providing contact with Urbana student-athletes."



Austin Adams soars in for a layup during a Blue Knights basketball contest.

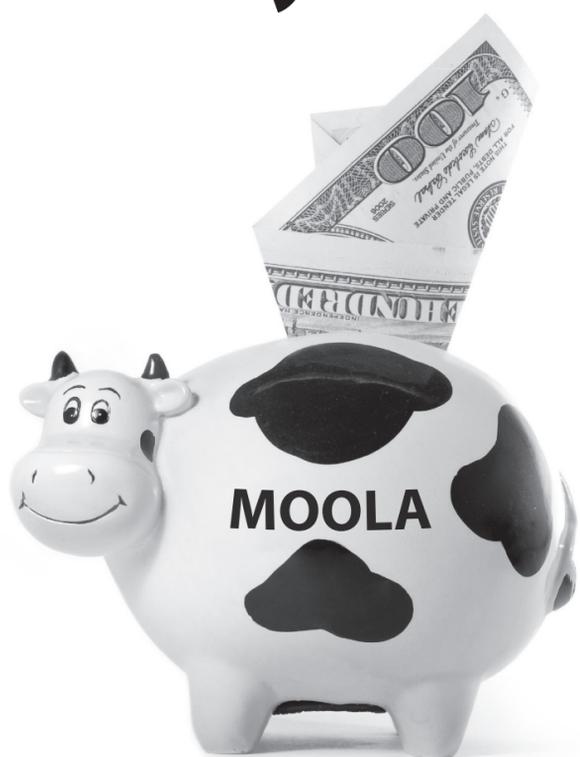


Adam Ramirez throws a pitch for the Blue Knights baseball team.



Danie Shafer drives along the baseline during the Blue Knights' Mountain East Conference first-round tournament game.

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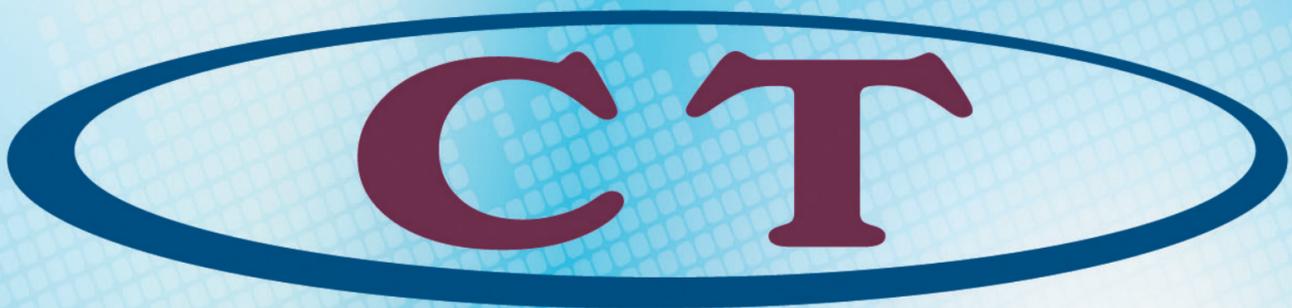
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