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## OUR COMMUNITIES

### Looking to the Future

Cover Photo | Amanda DeBusk



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Dan Moore and Dr. Stephen Moore break ground on Aspen Trace, senior living campus, Bargersville's latest major development project.



## BARGERSVILLE PREPS FOR COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

| Jennifer Uhl

Visitors to Bargersville often stop near the town's main intersection of State Roads 144 and 135 where the local flea market gathers every Saturday and dining hotspot Harvest Bistro melds fine dining with down-home comfort food. Others drive further west to Mallow Run Winery, a 600-acre farm known for its summer patio concerts and popular festivals. A few other businesses also dot the surrounding area and downtown; but currently, Bargersville isn't known for a bustling main street, and large swaths of nearby vacant fields and farmland are largely untouched with nary a big-box store in sight. All that is about to change.

Bargersville, once neatly situated within 1.1 square miles, has annexed numerous times since 2005 and now encompasses more than 20 square miles extending west to the county line between Johnson and Morgan counties and, in places, as far north as

Stones Crossing Road. However, the town's geographical growth is just the first step in part of a long-term plan to prep the area for future housing and commercial buildings. In preparation for land developers, they expanded the waste treatment plant; and plans are in the works to widen a portion of State Road 135, with a stoplight added to the intersection at Smokey Row Road sometime next year. The Stones Crossing Health Pavilion, as discussed in last month's Center Grove Community Newsletter, is about to open just south of Marsh, and a planned assisted-living facility slightly further south are already changing the landscape of Bargersville.

Town Manager Kevin McGinnis has been at his post for just three months; but as a 24-year director of REMC and a former homebuilder and VP of land development and finance, he's beyond qualified to help lead Bargersville toward expansion. "As a land developer, what I need available

is sewer and storm water drainage, and that's been taken care of with the expansion of the [waste treatment] plant," McGinnis said. "The goal right now is to get all the utilities poised for growth that will be coming south of the Center Grove school area. We're lucky we have some time to get everything revised and prepared."

The downtown of "Old Bargersville" is in need of some renovation. But they have plans in the work to support improvements downtown and elsewhere. Town Council President Rowana Umbarger says "The Town of Bargersville Endowment fund is very new and still in the early stages of development and planning. The hope is to grow this Endowment and use the interest from this fund to enhance the parks and downtown area. The funds available might be used to purchase benches, picnic tables, trees, lights. As the fund grows and more dollars become available to spend, projects might include enlarging our park system by acquiring additional land for a future park and connecting our park system with pedestrian pathways."

Bryan Pohl, Bargersville's director of development, is also new to the job; but he's no stranger to city planning, having worked as a code enforcement officer in Carmel, a senior planner for Indianapolis, and the past three years as Johnson County's planning director. An avid cyclist, Pohl is committed to making the town attractive to businesses and new residents while incorporating amenities such as trails and equitable roadways.

Pohl is also tackling the challenge of forwarding Bargersville's image. "I'm really fascinated with Bargersville," Pohl said. "When you look at what was annexed, there are residents with properties that have a Greenwood address, their children go to Center Grove schools, and they pay Bargersville utilities. We have these people who are Bargersville



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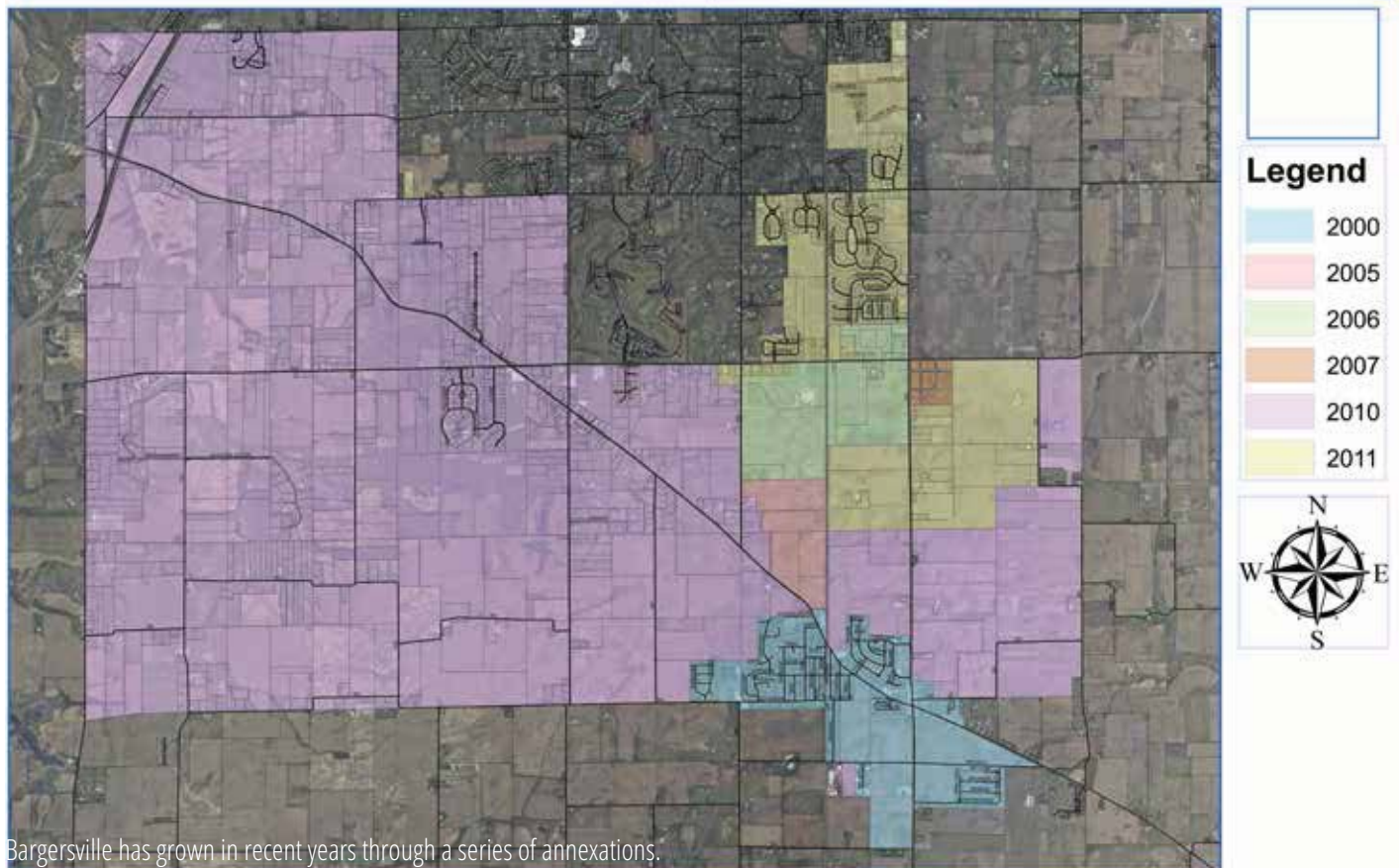
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Town of Bargersville  
Town Growth Map



Bargersville has grown in recent years through a series of annexations.



Kevin McGinnis, Bargersville Town Manager.



residents and may not even realize it, so we're trying to have events that promote the town's identity." One such recent event was the Parks & Pancakes 5K bike/run/walk, which aimed to familiarize participants with Bargersville's three parks. Looking ahead to summer, concerts will be set up in front of the town hall.

Residents who live near State Road 37 have wondered what may happen to Bargersville when the proposed leg of Interstate 69 goes through. Pohl admitted that would be a huge game changer for the town, but noted there's a lot of uncertainty surrounding the timeline of the interstate. For now, any growth that comes to Bargersville will likely be via commercial and

residential expansion along State Road 135 and Whiteland Road. Pohl also expects downtown — largely vacant, save for a salon, law office, popular pub, and a longstanding feed company — to undergo a rebirth once the town's employment base grows and attractive housing expands. A few locals have already expressed interest in setting up shop downtown. "That's very much the direction we need to go," Pohl said. "Developments and changes are coming — I think one of the biggest challenges is getting people to create a vision for their community," Pohl added. "If you have a vision in place, there's a real opportunity here to make something special." **cg**



*Jennifer Uhl is a former associate editor of Indianapolis Monthly Home. Now a freelance writer and stay-at-home mom, Uhl's work*

*has also appeared in Indianapolis Monthly and the city's suburb-based publications. She lives in Center Grove with her husband and two children.*

## JOHNSON COUNTY UNDER DEVELOPMENT



Cheryl Morpew, President and CEO of the Johnson County Development Corporation.



| Ann Craig-Cinnamon

One of the best yardsticks to measure the health and vitality of any community is the number of businesses it attracts. The decision to open shop or relocate to a new area isn't done on a whim or by chance. There are often months, even years of negotiations and offers of incentives by the community, the county, and even the state.

The Johnson County Development Corporation (JCDC) is a not-for-profit public/private partnership that helps in the process of bringing business to Johnson County. Cheryl Morphew, who has been the JCDC President and CEO for more than seven years, says it was formed in 1991 as a one-stop shop for businesses looking for a new location. She says they help businesses find available sites, consult on local and state incentives, and provide statistical data and demographics for companies looking to expand and/or relocate to Johnson County. Cheryl points out that Johnson County is one of the five fastest-growing counties in the state according to the last census, along with Hamilton, Hendricks, Boone, and Hancock Counties. And she adds that Johnson County is a solid competitor with the other metro counties when it comes to recruiting business and industry. In fact, the JCDC responded to 105 leads in 2012 with a proposed new capital investment of \$50 million.

There are many success stories. The Shell building project in Franklin is one that Cheryl points to and another is in northern Johnson County: the Stones Crossing Health Pavilion. Cheryl says that the developer, Alderson Commercial Group, was working with its clients who were

interested in the geographic area of White River Township at Stones Crossing and State Road 135. If the building went up on the east side of State Road 135, the city of Greenwood's Common Council most likely would have provided a Real Property Tax Abatement.

However, as it turns out, the businesses involved were more interested in the west side of State Road 135 that falls into the Town of Bargersville's jurisdiction. No one knew what Bargersville might do, because this was the town's first competitive project. Cheryl says it turned out extremely well. "We worked with the Town and its Council members to educate them on the value of incentives and how they worked. I was so impressed by their thirst for knowledge and understanding, of how they want what's best for the community, and they want to do the right things to be competitive when it comes to attracting business and industry. Through these combined efforts, they "hung their shingle" and said, "We are open for business and we will consider incentives when evaluating projects." The result? They granted a Real Property Tax Abatement and won the project.

## CORRECTIONS

In the May cover photo credit, we misidentified Jill Levenhagen Photography's web address. The correct address is [www.jilllevenhagenphotography.zenfolio.com](http://www.jilllevenhagenphotography.zenfolio.com).

In our May issue the picture captioned "Brown County State Park" was not inside the park. While trail rides are available in the park, the picture was of Jeff Snyder from Grandpa Jeff's Trail Rides, located north of Nashville, IN. at 5889 South Skinner Road, Morgantown, IN 46160. You can visit their website at [GrandpaJeffsTrailRides.com](http://GrandpaJeffsTrailRides.com). Our apologies for the error.





The new medical professional building, which will house a partnership with Community South Hospital and Johnson Memorial Health, will be finished in July!" says Cheryl, who thinks that Bargersville is on the right track. "Bargersville recently completed their comprehensive plan and has started to put the right plans in place to assist in their future growth. They are keenly aware that growth potential along State Road 37 is a priority and are working to get sewers to that area to support growth demands," she says.

As for Center Grove and its lack of commercial growth, Cheryl says first you must define Center Grove. "Some would argue that State Road 135 from Stones Crossing to County Line is "Center Grove." If you agree, then there has been a tremendous amount of commercial/retail growth along that corridor and it continues south. If you are referencing growth along State Road 37, the lack of commercial/retail or even industrial growth is due to a lack of necessary infrastructure to support that type of growth," she says. For many, the answer lies in the fact that much of Center Grove is in an "unincorporated" area, and no one is actively advocating it to bring in more business.

What Center Grove does have, however, is the right type of housing that Cheryl says companies are seeking. "When we are recruiting business in Johnson County, one of the first questions we hear is, 'Where is your executive-level housing?' We serve all of Johnson County regardless of where that company is looking to locate. Currently, our executive-level housing primarily is in the unincorporated areas of Center Grove and the southwestern part of our county. That's a challenge for other communities vying for the business," she says.

Another challenge that Cheryl says must be overcome is moving people and products east-west across our county and hopefully connecting State Road 37 and I-69 to I-65 and I-74 in Shelby County.

Cheryl sums up the future challenges by saying, "Trying to address the issues of population growth, the challenge of infrastructure, and how to move people and product will be addressed by an east-west corridor. I think the third interchange in Greenwood along I-65 will help address that as well. But I think, additionally, communities are going to have to think about their future growth opportunities for industry." **cg**



*Ann Craig-Cinnamon is a 30-year radio and television broadcast veteran. Ann is the Publisher of the Carmel Community Newsletter, a writer, travel speaker and author of the book "Walking Naked in Tehran".*

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Mark Myers became Mayor of Greenwood in 2011. Since that time the city has made significant progress.



# GREENWOOD 2020: A CITY'S VISION FOR ITS FUTURE



# SPLASH + WATER PARKS = FUN!

| Joyce Long

Yet this summer, Greenwood will unveil its downtown \$800,000 Splash Park, located at 415 Lincoln Street. Motion-activated jet sprays and misting posts will provide children a fun way to cool off. Its rubberized surface will help prevent falls and standing water. Funded partially by \$300,000 in city bonds recently approved by the Common Council, this project also received donations from the private sector. Contributions came from founding partners Huntington Bank; Endress + Hauser; Franciscan St. Francis Health; and service organization, The Sertoma Club of Greenwood.

This park will also feature two autism-friendly playgrounds, one designated for toddlers and the other designated for older children. Both were funded by Cornerstone Autism Center ([CornerstoneAutismCenter.com](http://CornerstoneAutismCenter.com)), located in the historic Polk Place. These playgrounds will be dedicated as a memorial to David Ide, one of the center's founders. All children will enjoy their exploratory and sensory activities.

Greenwood Mayor Mark Myers notes the private sector's early involvement becoming a vital part of the

The splash park will be constructed in the location of the old city swimming pool. The splash pad will include a number of fun water features. Also included in the plan is a playground for small children.



community who supports downtown redevelopment. "This park sits in the center of where Greenwood is going, in the shadow of the new City Center. We are still \$200,000 short of our goal to complete this project and are calling out to the community to support this endeavor and make the park their own."

Another exciting community-driven venture involves a potential partnership with the YMCA to build a facility and manage the new state-of-the-art water park, located at Freedom Park, 850 Stop 18 Road. Purchased by the city, this water park will feature a lazy river, water slides for all ages, and splash fountains. St. Louis-based Counsilman-Hunsaker, which designed Plainfield's Splash Island Aquatic Center, will oversee this project.

Mike Tapp, President of Greenwood's Redevelopment Commission and former City Council member (1988-2004), projects the water park to be completed during 2014's third quarter. Mike also noted last year's decision to close the community pool in downtown Greenwood was difficult but necessary. "Infrastructure starts to age and, at some point, it becomes difficult to maintain. So closing the old pool was a sound financial decision." Greenwood's pool, built in 1958, was

demolished last summer.

To fund the new water park, Greenwood's Redevelopment Commission has agreed to direct Tax Increment Financing (TIF) toward this project. TIF districts in Indiana allocate this funding to strengthen infrastructure and improve development rather than directing it to usual taxing units like schools, civil city, county, and township needs. The water park is estimated to cost \$10 million.

Director of Greenwood's Parks Department Evan Springer indicated the initial land purchase for Freedom Park, located one-eighth mile off Averitt Road on Stop 18, was bought with the idea that a new pool and more would someday be built there.

"We looked at 20 different sites before choosing the initial 72 acres in 2005. Its location as the center of our growing population, both now and in the future, and its reasonable price were deciding factors." In 2010, Greenwood purchased an additional seven acres, realizing the park's expansion potential. Always looking to the future, Evan summarized Greenwood's governing philosophy:

"The city needs to continue being proactive as it grows." **cg**



# A VISION FOR GREENWOOD'S FUTURE

| Joyce Long · Photos | Amanda DeBusk

While no one can predict the future, the city of Greenwood is planning for it. In fact, Greenwood Mayor Mark Myers expects great things to happen as the city begins to consolidate its offices and increases its partnerships with the community. Primarily, the mayor's priorities focus on a balanced budget, the new City Center, economic development, and enhanced parks, trails, and activities for all ages.

"We have taken some bold steps toward the revitalization of downtown Greenwood. The most significant is the acquisition of the Presnell building for use as the new City Center. It will become the cornerstone of downtown redevelopment."

## A New City Center

Currently, several of the city's offices are located two blocks north of Old Town Greenwood at 2 North Madison Avenue while other government departments are scattered throughout the city. For example, the City Court is located at 186 Surina Way while the city's planning, engineering, and building divisions and legal department are at 225 South Emerson Avenue. The Sanitation and Street Departments' address is 367 South Washington Street. Consolidating these offices in a single location will improve government efficiency. "Residents will benefit from one-stop service. We won't need to hand them a map to find offices. Also, potential residents and businesses seeking to relocate to Greenwood will leave with a much better impression of the city."

In addition, Greenwood has purchased the parking lot on the southwest corner of Main Street and Madison Avenue in order to keep it public. Its availability is crucial to several downtown businesses. "We have started with the tenet of being business friendly in an affordable and invigorating environment."

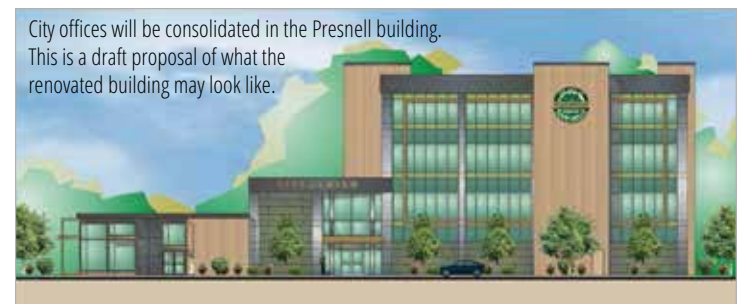
Part of the bond money recently approved by the Common Council was dedicated to improvements around the new City Center. The Splash Park, located at the site of the old pool just west of the City Center, is a great example of the city's facelift. Due to open mid summer, the Splash Park will prevent the vacant site from becoming an eyesore, creating an attractive amenity to complement the area's redevelopment.

## Madison Village

City officials anticipate the Madison Avenue north-south corridor continuing to be a vital part of Greenwood's personality. Nicknamed Madison Village, these shops and restaurants create a unique area organically growing on its

own. The old city building will most likely become a part of this village landscape while the new City Center will become its anchor.

Christian Maslowski, executive director of the Greater Greenwood Chamber of Commerce, considers Madison Village a viable option to bring identity to an existing set of shops, restaurants, and businesses. "What I like is that it's added a bit of culture and unique amenities to our community. Because this area is unlike any other part of Greenwood in its focus on the arts, it enhances the city's reputation for being a dining and retail destination for south central Indiana."



## I-65 at Worthsville Road

According to Mayor Myers, the planned I-65 interchange at Worthsville Road provides an answer to smoothing east-west traffic flow and will act as a gateway to the southern part of Greenwood. Structure Point, an Indianapolis-based civil engineering firm, has been hired to do a master plan of this area that will include upper-scale restaurants, professional businesses, and light industrial companies.

In anticipation of this new corridor, the city's planning department has minimized entrances onto Worthsville Road, allocating connector roads for subdivision entrances and exits. Large easements, allowing for pathways, have been established on each side of Worthsville Road. The Redevelopment Commission recently awarded a contract to widen Worthsville Road between US 31 and I-65 with phase one beginning soon.

Not only will Greenwood benefit from this new interchange, but also I-65 should become less congested. According to the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), this exit will reduce expected crashes on I-65 and nearby area surface streets. INDOT's technical findings also indicate this new interchange will reduce traffic at the crowded Main Street exit by 30 percent. "While Main Street is considered our premiere gateway, this exit will open up an east-west corridor that has been needed for some time. We are focused

on manageable and responsible development for this project.”

With the focus on improving traffic, city planners want this corridor to reflect economic development that is inviting and visionary. It will most likely be the main pathway to Freedom Park, where an aquatics facility is being proposed. The aquatics facility is expected to attract people from counties throughout central Indiana.

### City Parks & Trails

Seventy-nine-acre Freedom Park, 850 Stop 18 Road, is the newest centerpiece joining Greenwood’s extensive park system that includes Craig, Westside, Northeast, Northwest and its annex, Summerfield, Old City, Trails, Children’s Garden, Surina Square, and University Parks.

Mike Sawa, president of the Greenwood Parks Board, expects Freedom Park’s current expansion to increase usage. The large shelter house, to be completed by the end of summer, can be divided into sections, giving more scheduling flexibility. In addition, pet owners will enjoy the new dog park.

A family-friendly city, Greenwood expects even more development in its parks system. The city’s long-term plans include extending its trails and widening its current sidewalks to create safer ways to navigate heavily-traveled roads like

Fry, Smith Valley, and Worthsville.

Because vision takes work, challenges arise. Consequently, Greenwood faces the same infrastructure and development issues as its neighbors. As an example, the downtown’s storm water and sanitation system is almost 50 years old. Updates are critical before the city develops reconstruction in the Main Street and Madison Avenue area. The mayor anticipated these issues and is leading the city in addressing them.

Another challenge involves marketing Greenwood’s assets. “The biggest challenge Greenwood faces is that everyone – Greenwood, Indianapolis, and Franklin – is competing for the same business, so Greenwood needs to offer a unique solution. We need to find our niche to attract them.”

While economic development is significant, community involvement provides the catalyst for Greenwood’s vision to become a reality. Mayor Mark Myers’ dream for Greenwood depends upon “an open and transparent government that partners with the community to make great things happen.” **cg**



*Joyce Long, Greenwood Middle School language arts teacher from 1992-2000, has called Center Grove home for the past 25 years. Currently Joyce works as the communications coordinator for Center for Global Impact and is passionate about engaging people to empower the poor.*

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Airport manager Ralph Hill.



# - FLYING HIGH -

## GREENWOOD MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

| Joyce Long

When Mayor Mark Myers mentions the Greenwood Municipal Airport, he can't help but smile. With its recent refinancing, debt reduction, and increased revenue, the airport can now contribute \$100,000 toward the city's budget in 2013. "One of the great turnaround stories for Greenwood this year is the revitalization of our municipal airport. Its geographic advantages are unmatched and cannot be duplicated by any other community."

Ralph Hill agrees wholeheartedly: "It's one of the few airports where both big and small aircraft co-exist in a mutually beneficial way." As the city's airport manager, Ralph fosters its mission of being safe, compliant, hospitable, progressive, and profitable.

Yearly traffic estimated at 30,000 – including both turbine and piston-powered planes – necessitates safety precautions and exemplary communication among pilots. Lengthening the runway 100 feet has helped not only safety but in increasing opportunities for larger aircraft to land. Ralph notes many larger corporate planes have policies that prevent them from landing on runways shorter than 5,000 feet. "If we want to attract the turbine traffic, they have to know that it's a good, safe place for them to come in." Grooving the runway also helps landing during inclement weather. This process creates full side cuts across the runway width to prevent water pooling and aircraft from hydroplaning.

Airport staff, now employed by Greenwood, view compliancy vital to safety. Procedure must align with

The Greenwood airport has a variety of hanger facilities.



standards from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Department of Homeland Security, National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), and the city.

Greenwood's airport is unique in that it recently purchased an office complex to house NCG Corporation, an aviation engineering company with 14 employees. Their contract provides an on-field engineering company, rare for most airports, but one that expedites maintenance and improvements. By December, 2013, three corporate-sized hangars will be completed, expanding capacity for the airport's growing turbine traffic.

During the 2012 Super Bowl in Indianapolis, 30 jets were on the ground at the airport, facilitated by 38 volunteers. Many are affiliated with the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), which promotes student interest in mathematics and science through aviation. In 2012, EAA flew over 200 kids, including Young Eagles along with Boy/Girl Scouts. It will host flights for the public in the Ford Tri-Motor June 6-8. Also active as airport volunteers are its flight school students.

Hospitality is key to a successful municipal airport. Ralph explains how that atmosphere is created. "We don't let the phone ring more than three times. Our reservation form is concise. We provide golf carts for baggage and umbrellas if it's raining. Marshaling visitors onto the ramp so they know where to park provides extra assistance."

Pilots express appreciation by posting comments on AirNav.com, providing significant word-of-mouth marketing for those who consider landing at Greenwood. Airport amenities like pilot supplies and lounge, weather briefing/flight-planning kiosk, free wireless, courtesy, crew, and rental cars also invite return business.

"Whether they're in a little airplane or a big airplane, we want to treat them very well because we want them to have a good impression of Indianapolis, Greenwood, and the Center Grove area."

Ralph notes potential businesses frequently assess Greenwood's airport. Recently, one new business developer explained he would not have considered this location without a healthy airport. Ralph recognizes "the importance of the airport in being an economic driver for the entire area. The city's administration has become very active in promoting and supporting this important asset."

With three soon-to-be constructed mid-field hangars and a brand new full-motion flight simulator, Greenwood Municipal Airport's future promises much more than smiles. **cg**

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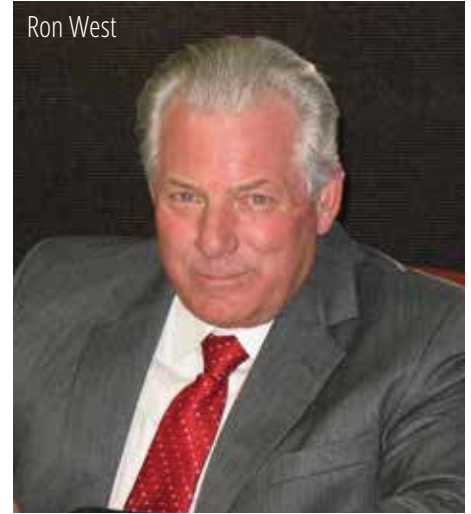
Tom Kite



Brian Baird



Ron West



# MEET YOUR GOVERNMENT

| *Dann Veldkamp*

Most of our readers live in “unincorporated White River Township,” often referred to as Center Grove. Very broadly, if you live south of County Line Road, west of the businesses that line State Road 135, and north of Smokey Row, you live in the unincorporated area. This area is the white area on the map. Your mailing address may be Greenwood or Bargersville, but that does not mean you live in either of those municipalities.

A board of three County Commissioners represents all of Johnson County. If you live in the unincorporated area of White River Township, this is your “local” government. The Commissioners are Brian Baird of District 1 (the three southern townships), Tom Kite of District 2 (the middle three townships), and Ron West of District 3 (the three northern townships). Even though they “represent” districts, they are all elected at large, or by all voters of Johnson County.

For this article, we sent five questions to each of the three Commissioners. While Baird and West responded to our request. Tom Kite failed to do so, even after an extension of the deadline, three

requests by email, and a personal request delivered the week before deadline. Unfortunately, he did not consider it important to respond.

So, what does a County Commissioner do? As Ron West explains it, “Commissioners are to the county what a Mayor is to a city. We are the executive branch of county government.” He continues, “Commissioners make policy, oversee county property, pass ordinances, hear relief appeals, personnel matters, litigation, road and street maintenance, claims, insurance coverage, and about a couple dozen more things.”

Obviously, their decisions have a significant impact on the Center Grove area. At a recent homeowners association meeting, some in the neighborhood proposed adding an additional stop sign. When informed that in order to do so they needed to get the permission of the County Highway Department, a resident was incensed: “Why should we have to go to Franklin to ask permission to place a stop sign in our neighborhood?” The answer is simple: because unincorporated areas live under the rules of county government, and Franklin is the home of Johnson County government.

In addition to the Commissioners, the County Council plays an important role. Brian Baird explains the role of the Council as being “responsible for setting salaries, the annual budget, and special spending. The council also has limited authority to impose local taxes, usually in the form of an income tax that is subject to state level approval, excise taxes, or service taxes, like those on dining or lodging.”

As for the Commissioners, “All three Commissioners serve in the same and equal capacity. However, we do concentrate on particular issues that we might have expertise in, and report to the other two Commissioners as to our findings or progress,” says Ron West. Baird says he is “very concerned of the inability of us, as a Commission, not being able to communicate effectively due to certain statutes in place currently.” State law requires a public notice any time a quorum of a public body meets. In the case of the three commissioners, if two sit down over coffee, they are holding an “official” meeting. This limits their ability to simply discuss issues in a casual environment.

“Center Grove” is the most densely-populated area in the county that is not

a town or a city. As such, its needs are different from those of other areas of the county. As Ron West describes it, "Center Grove, as an example, will have needs associated to population such as planning and zoning, traffic congestion, safety, and, of course, incorporation consideration. Rural areas require needs such as drainage, legal ditches, machinery movement on narrow roads, and possible annexation." Baird says, "Although there are some differences in the areas, such as emergency calls, crime rate, maintenance of roads and areas in the higher-populated areas, which are addressed daily by the Police Departments, Highway Department, etc., all citizens deserve the same treatment."

It's apparent that the needs vary by population density; the question is: Is it reasonable to expect one governing body to address such diverse needs? Do the needs of unincorporated Center Grove match the primary responsibilities of the County Commissioners?

While the timetable is not set, it is logical to assume that I-69, an Interstate highway that extends from Mexico to Canada, will be completed. The 27-mile stretch from Crane to Bloomington is expected to be completed by late 2015. When this happens, traffic on State Road 37 is expected to increase by over 300 percent. The state is in the process of accepting bids for the 21-mile section between Bloomington and Marstonsville. Some in White River Township are already beginning to plan for the arrival of I-69. The White River Township Fire Department headquarters is located in the area of the assumed path of the Interstate. Fire Chief Pell is currently leading an effort to scout alternative locations for the headquarters.

Bargersville and Morgan County are starting to look at how to prepare for the expected interchange at what are now State Road 37 and State Road 144. The Commissioners are not as

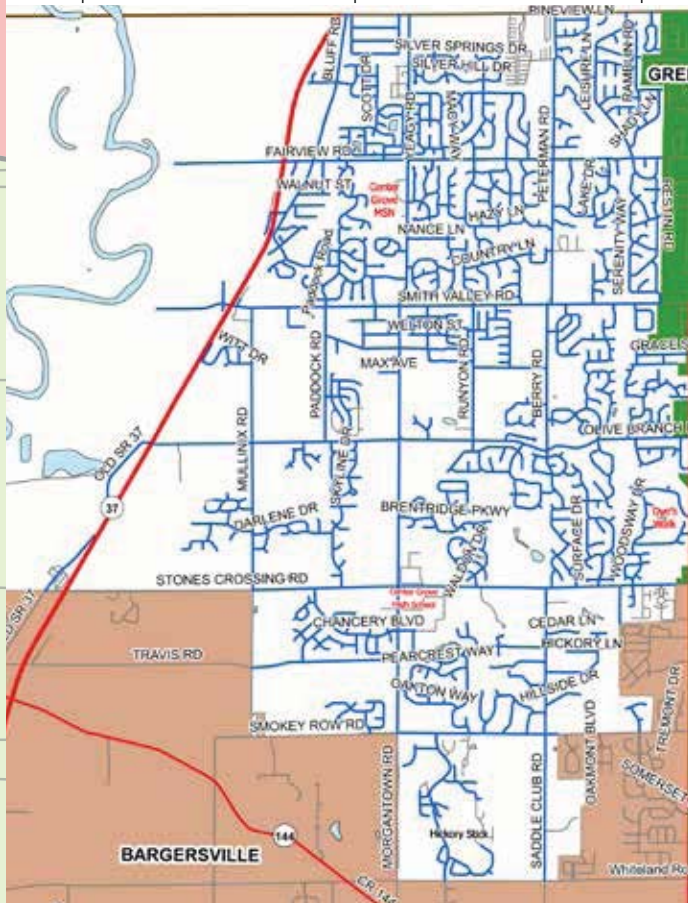
route through our county so that we might begin to plan properly. The State did not provide the route. Now, with funding uncertain, and all current plans showing I-69 following State Road 37 through the county, the county has simply suspended any planning for I-69, while others continue to plan for this significant development.

When asked what the biggest challenge the county is currently facing, the commissioners focused on county-wide issues. Brian Baird notes, "We have several challenges facing us at this time. We have the consolidation of the dispatches and 911 call center, new court system, economy issues, and everyday issues involving approximately 500 employees.

Commissioner West responded that the "Biggest challenge most likely will be in the criminal justice arena, jail expansion, community corrections expansion, PSAP (Public Safety Access Point or 911 call center) consolidation, new court or courts, and crime volume. All this leads to funding which will then be the biggest challenge.

Although the commissioners are "part-time" employees, they have a significant workload. Baird notes that they sit on several boards and are responsible for maintenance and construction of county-owned properties. This job load may be one of the reasons that the county is slow to respond in some situations.

Unincorporated White River Township is shown in white on this map.



concerned. West says he "cannot imagine what pre-planning Morgan County and Bargersville could be doing with any degree of certainty." When I-69 was first announced, West says he asked the State to give Johnson County a definite

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For example, the flood of 2008 damaged many homes across the county. For some homeowners, such as many in Franklin, the compensation from the government was settled in about a year. For those under the Commissioner's control, such as homeowners in Bluff Acres, it took over three years for the county to complete the process. For Franklin, putting the flood in the past was required to maintain a thriving community. The mayor drove the effort to a quick end. However, in the context of the entire county, with many of the nine townships affected by the flood, the plight of a few homeowners in White River Township was farther down the priority list. Other rules may have applied. And that, no doubt, played some part in the delayed satisfaction for the "Center Grove" residents. While this doesn't reflect on the effort or care of the County Commissioners, it does allow one to wonder if they are able to provide the services needed by residents of the unincorporated Center Grove area. **cg**

Center Grove High School Marching Band will be one of the ten bands in the 2014 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Hundreds of bands nationally compete for this honor.

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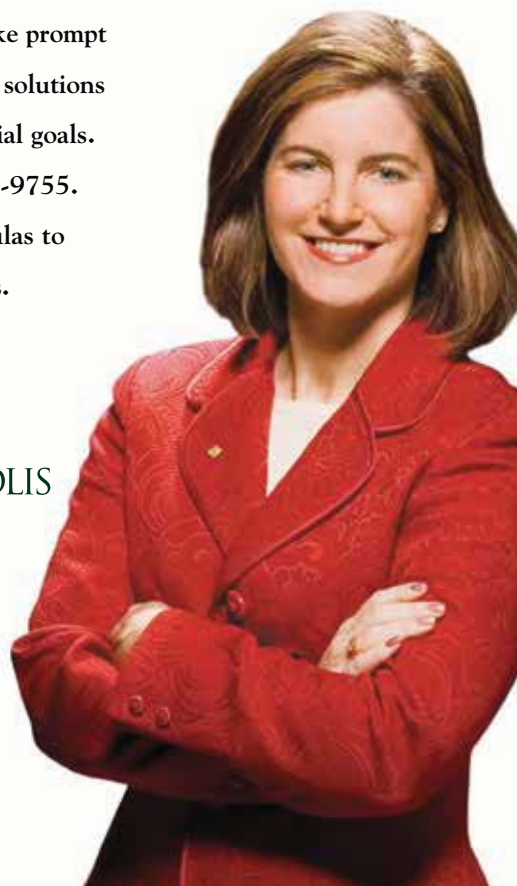
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