

## **Greene County Economic Development Committee, Inc. Meeting Minutes July 19, 2006**

The meeting was held at the Greene County Almshouse and was the combined effort of three groups: the Greene County Tourism Group, the Illinois Valley Cultural Heritage Association and our group. The goal of the meeting was to discuss the future of the almshouse. Each group then broke into their separate groups and/or adjourned. Our meeting got off to a stormy beginning as a thunderstorm blew in just as we were gathering. Subsequently we were forced to relocate to the courthouse in Carrollton.

**Seth McGee**, CEO of IVCHA gave us some background on the Eldred House and the progress their group was making in restoring the house and their plans for the future. He talked about heritage tourism and its potential economic impact on the county. IVCHA was responsible for putting the Greene County Almshouse on the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois' Statewide Endangered List. Two representatives from the American Ghost Society were also present and shared with us the interest that had been generated by news articles appearing in the Jacksonville, Alton and Greene Prairie Press newspapers. They discussed possible commercial endeavors to raise funds for rehabbing the house. Sandra Schmidt stated the GCEDC's interest in the Almshouse and what steps need to be taken even before we think about raising money:

1. Meet with Greene County Board Property Committee seeking their approval to go before the County Board and ask for a moratorium on selling the Almshouse.
2. Meet with the Greene County Board regarding the above and seek their permission to proceed toward securing the house from further deterioration

Should this project move forward, **Patty Thaxton**, from Options, LLC, has expressed an interest in helping us find grant money, we also understand that emergency funds might be available through the Landmarks Preservation Council.

### **Other Business:**

**Sandra Schmidt & Chad Schutz** met earlier this month with a group of civic leaders and persons interested in building a bike trail through Greene County. Judie Hyde, a member of IVCHA, stated that there are grant monies available to build such a trail. She explained the economic benefits that could come from such a project and volunteered to write the grant. She would like to submit a master plan, which would include the whole county and has asked that civic leaders from all the municipalities be invited. The next meeting of the Bike Trail Committee is scheduled for August 8, 6:30 p.m. at the Roodhouse City Hall.

Please note that Greenfield has just finished building a walking path from the water treatment plant halfway around Rives Lake with grant money secured by Kathy Burkholder and the Greenfield Planning Committee. The anticipated unveiling will take place during Greene County Days.

**Kirby Ballard, Ron Coultas, and Sandra Schmidt** met to discuss business letters to be sent to banks and financial institutions asking their support of the Greene County Economic Development Committee, Inc. Ron Coultas volunteered to write the letters that we would like to send out by the end of August or first part of September with follow up visits after that.

**Robin Hanna**, Manager, Rural Economic Technical Assistance Center at the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs has completed revising our Business Retention and Expansion Survey. August 29<sup>th</sup> has been set for the training session to be held at the Rockbridge Township Hall from 7 – 9 p.m. Those who signed up to conduct the survey (Willie Rees, Andy & Sally Mansfield, Kelly Smith, Chad & Stacy Schutz, Joe Clark and Sandra Schmidt) please mark your calendar accordingly. Anyone else who would like to take part is welcome to be there.

### **New Business**

1. **Sandra Schmidt** to check with the DCEO to see what progress Gulf Inc. is making toward bringing their refinery to Greene County. We should have this information to stem rumors of fraud, scam, etc.

2. Do we want to have a booth at Greene County Days? Discussion at our next meeting

**Home Work:** Clip news article of interest to share with the group. If you have county promotion ideas please share them with the group. And if you know someone who might be interested in joining us, invite him or her to attend.

**Next Meeting, Tuesday, August 22, 7:00 p.m. Rockbridge Township Hall, Greenfield**

**Treats: Wilma Chappee**

**July 19<sup>th</sup> meeting attendees:**

**Greene County Tourism: Ken Hobson (President), Dean Evans (Secretary), Sylvia Kallal, Mitchel James, Sandra Schmidt**

**Illinois Valley Cultural Heritage Association: Seth McGee (CEO), Eileen Cunningham, Carolyn McCarry, Jerry Taetz, Loren and Rosanne Hamilton and Mark Brown.**

**Greene County Economic Development Committee, Inc. Wilma Chappee, Willie Rees, Don Roberts, Sandra Schmidt, Chad & Stacy Schutz and Jason Walker.**