



Annual report

— By DAVE KITCHELL

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The largest crowd ever assembled for the State of the City Luncheon heard Logansport's mayor and Cass County's commissioners' president look ahead with optimism to full agendas for the year.

Mayor Mike Fincher said the city would continue to improve the quality of housing. Through a special housing rehabilitation program, 29 homeowners have reinvested \$373,363. With council support this year, \$500 in funds that are not tax dollars will be rebated to 40 homeowners who qualify for a new home painting program.

As much as Logansport residents have to work to improve what's inside their city limits, they also have to look to other shores, he said.

"In the future, no matter who is mayor, their overseas initiative must continue and, if possible, be expanded," Fincher said. "If we are to help local business growth opportunities and offer diversity for the local workforce, the overseas initiative is very important."

Fincher applauded the work of local police officers who arrested more than 40 people in a summer drug sweep and recovered two kilos of cocaine valued at more than \$200,000.

But Fincher said the city had an enormous task on the horizon that is important to its future.

"The completion of the new 81,000-square foot Ivy Tech campus is essential to our community and will give our existing work force and our work force of the future the opportunity to continue their education and give them the ability to change as technology changes, making them more adaptable to the needs of the employer. It will also, I believe, improve the marketability of our community."

Several infrastructure projects have been completed in the past year, including the reconstruction of city-owned portions of Market Street. Drainage projects on Anthony, Lux and Clinton streets also were finished.

"Under the leadership of Superintendent Paul Hartman, I believe the Stormwater Management Board and LMU will continue to give Logansport and Cass County a more business attractive environment," he said.

"Tomorrow starts today. The city is working with various arts groups to promote arts in Cass County. Promoting the talent we have in Cass County is another piece of the puzzle that will help our community grow and prosper. We plan to investigate the possibility of improving high-speed communications within the community and to continue to upgrade communications between departments."

Fincher noted that the city's new Web site was online and that in the near future, local residents would be able to use it to pay utility bills, parking tickets and apply for building permits.

He also noted that city officials were exploring a new trail from Mall Road to Spencer Park.

One of the keys to improving the community, he said, is city/county relations.

"Our governments can no longer be divided by the ravaging waters of politics, ego or turf," he said.

In his turn, Commissioners President Steve Kain had his own comments on city/county relations.

"I would say that city/county cooperation is improving rapidly but probably has always been better than the media would report to you," he said.

City and county officials have been meeting monthly over the last year to explore possibilities of how to work together, he said. One of the issues on a "full plate" for the commissioners, he said, is the operation of the 911 office and reducing the population of a relatively new jail that is already full.

"After being a commissioner for two years, I can say that taxpayers are getting a much higher level of work and competency from county employees than they might suspect they are," he said. "I appreciate

the efforts of all the county employees to help move the county ahead.”

Kain said one of the highlights of the past year had been the purchase of the former Dilling Mechanical Building at Sixth and High streets. That freed the county from a \$50,000 annual lease at Logan Square. “The tenants in those buildings will help us eventually pay off the cost of purchase,” he said.

He noted that the county’s animal shelter committee had quietly working under the leadership of Commissioner Dick Rusk.

“All the groups involved have come to the table to work together cooperatively to find a solution for the shelter and control of the animals,” he said.

Kain said road paving and bridge projects were in progress on Broadripple Bridge and Cass Station Road.

“I have found that over the past year, the financial health of the county is improving thanks to the efforts of employees and department heads,” he said. “However the future of county finances, and I think city finances, will depend heavily on what happens in the Indiana General Assembly.”

Kain said creating a long-range plan for road improvements was one of the commissioners’ priorities for this year. They also will have to examine the future of the Cass County Memorial Center and the former Children’s Home on Pleasant Hill.

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Photos



PACKED HOUSE: Logansport Mayor Mike Fincher presented his fourth State of the City Address Wednesday. More than 200 people gathered for a luncheon meeting hosted by the Logansport/Cass County Chamber of Commerce. (Arnold Ernest/Pharos-Tribune)