

# PRESSRELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

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## Quality of Life Begins With Cleaning Up

**Michigan City, IN** (September 26, 2003) – Mayor Chuck Oberlie encouraged the collaboration of city departments and the county to clean up a local neighborhood park.

Mayor Oberlie said, "A combination of resources for this targeted clean-up effort at Hanson Park are being provided by the Park's Maintenance Department under Darrell Garbacik and Darren Westphal; the Michigan City Police Department, through vehicle code enforcement and back-up clearing private property off of city land; the Refuge Department under Jim Kintzele and his crews; Ron Plencner, through evaluation and building code enforcement; the Planning Department by providing aerial photos and maps of property and property lines; the Street Department under Terry Farmer; the Sanitary District through Al Walus and Bob Sutherlin; the LaPorte County Sheriff's Department under Sheriff Arnold and Bob Blair; and also the Urban Enterprise Association and Clyde Zeek."

"This clean-up effort is a result of a combined effort by the Parks Department to do a better job of maintaining our park land," said Darrell Garbacik, Superintendent of the Michigan City Parks & Recreation Department, "and also as a result of commitment from Mayor Oberlie to clean-up the city overall and especially problem areas. The goals here represent a harmonious relationship between the Mayor and city departments to do just that - clean-up the city and improve the quality of life in our community."

Garbacik said the Mayor's support and guidance makes these sorts of tasks much easier for City Team department heads to carry out. "Number one is that Mayor Oberlie has a vast amount of experience in many facets of our city government and operations," Garbacik said, "and he can easily decide which organizations need to be contacted to get things done. This makes my job a lot easier because a lot of the homework and research is being provided to me under the mayor's direction. Secondly, I believe Mayor Oberlie has motivated us to share his vision of a cleaner city and community, and we have an ability to combine multi-departmental and community resources to all go after the same thing. A specific example of this type of collaboration is illustrated with the Hanson Park/Miller-Emily Street project."

Garbacik said, "Although a cost dollar figure is unavailable at this time, costs will be kept down by utilizing organizations outside of the various city departments. There have already been approximately 28 large bags of debris and garbage removed as people have been using the area as a dumping ground for some time. The Refuge Department makes almost daily trips to the area hauling stuff away, including a refrigerator and four tires. That does not include the truckloads of underbrush, dead trees and downed limbs that were removed from the site to make it more usable, safe and attractive."

Mayor Oberlie said, "We will move on to other locations after Hanson Park is cleaned up. Pullman and Adams Parks are the next target areas, and we will be focusing on adding amenities to these parks as well as simply cleaning them up. We will continue the collaboration between various departments and organizations who work together to bring about positive change to the community."

Hanson Park is the location for one segment of a proposed biking and hiking trail that will cross northwest Indiana. The non-motorized trail system will travel throughout Michigan City and LaPorte County and connect to trails in other northwest Indiana counties. The goal is to eventually tie into a regional trail system that includes multiple states. It will include inner-city trails that connect to rural trails, many of which follow abandoned railroad rights-of-way.

Laura New will present information about a \$1 million transportation enhancement grant for the proposed trail at two public meetings. The first is the Park Board meeting which will be held Thursday, October 2, 2003 beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Park offices located at Six on the Lake, in Washington Park. The second public meeting is the City Council meeting on Tuesday, October 7, 2003 beginning at 7:30 p.m. The City Council meetings are held in Council Chambers in the lower level of City Hall. Residents are encouraged to attend and provide ideas for this project.

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