

PRESSRELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Youth Group Environmental Banners Now On Display

Michigan City, IN (June 14, 2004) – “We Love Trees!” is one of the messages presented by ten groups of Michigan City’s young people who designed and created banners with environmental messages in a project sponsored by NIPSCO and the City of Michigan City on May 22, 2004. The charming and informative banners are now on display in the center court (between JC Penney and Sears) of Marquette Mall.

“Our world is full...it might overflow...and then we will have to go” is another environmental message sent by our community’s youth. A “solution to pollution” - recycling trash and keeping our communities clean – was the message from some children. “Trees add color to our lives” was another banner topic, and trees, flowers, owls, bees and ants carrying chocolate chip cookies away from a picnic decorated the delightful banners the children created for this project.

Don Babcock, director of economic development at NIPSCO, said, "We wanted to celebrate Arbor Day and Earth Day in a unique way, and the banner project was an idea that allowed us to reach out and partner with many organizations across the community for a good cause."

“We invited youth groups to register for this event,” said Jan Kostielney, marketing and community relations consultant to the City of Michigan City. “The first ten that signed up each received \$50 from NIPSCO to use for their summer programs. NIPSCO also provided the vinyl banners and paints for the project.”

Six groups (five Safe Harbor sites and Imagination Station) designed and completed their 4’x8’ banners at their own sites during the week and delivered their projects to Washington Park for the judging on Saturday, May 22.

Four additional groups (Mullen Girl Scout troop, Boys & Girls Club, HOPE, and Queen of All Saints youth group, gathered at the Jaycee Stage in Washington Park on May 22nd where they designed and created their own banners.

All ten environmental banners were judged by Dolly Marshall, executive director of the Lubeznik Center for the Arts; Sue Babcock, 1st Grade teacher at Edgewood and wife of Don Babcock; and Jennifer Payne, nurturing parent coordinator at Dunebrook.

NIPSCO provided ribbons which were awarded in two categories – the six banners done prior to Saturday were judged in one group and those done at the park were judged in a different group. The banner designers and creators at the park on Saturday had less time to work on their projects than the children who had worked on them during the prior week.

Ribbons for the banners done prior to May 22nd went to:

- 1st Place – Safe Harbor at Edgewood Elementary School
- 1st Place – Safe Harbor at Springfield Elementary School
- 2nd Place – Safe Harbor at Joy Elementary School
- 2nd Place – Imagination Station

Ribbons for banners completed at the park on May 22nd went to:

- 1st Place – Mullen Elementary School's Girl Scout troop
- 1st Place – Boys & Girls Club of Michigan City
- 2nd Place – HOPE (Help Our People Excel)
- 2nd Place – Queen of All Saints youth group

The banners are now on public display so that everyone has an opportunity to see the creative talents of our local children.

“The banners are hung on wooden frames constructed by the Michigan City Parks & Recreation Department’s maintenance staff,” Kostielney said, “and they will be displayed at Marquette Mall through the end of July. The banners will be returned to the original artists in time for display in their schools and organizations before school starts again this Fall.”

Babcock said, "It is so inspiring to see the creative talent of these young people in our community. When people see their work, I am sure they will think about the great place we live in and how important it is that we work together to make it even better."

Photographs of the event can be viewed on the city website's photo scrapbook section – www.emichigancity.com.

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