

Scottsburg officials consider buying old industrial building for Electric Department

Written by Marty Randall

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Scottsburg officials are considering making a bid on a vacant factory building on U.S. Highway 31 South. The old Jay Packaging building has an office section connected to a large warehouse-type structure. The company for which the complex was originally built in the 1980s withdrew last year to its East Coast plant after experiencing several years of dwindling work in the thermo-form packaging industry.

In looking at the building, Mayor Bill Graham said during the January 12 Scottsburg Board of Works and Public Safety that it might do very well for the city's electric department and its growing wireless service, Citizens Communications Corporation Broadband (c3bb.com).

Currently, the Electric Department is housed on Bond Street in a residential area. That facility is land-locked, advised Jim Binkley, Electric Department Superintendent. "There's no place for us to go if we need more room," he said during the meeting. Citizens Communications' vehicles and equipment are housed both at the Electric Department and the Street Department with its office at City Hall.

Board of Works members Chuck Rose and Ray Zollman each thought the idea of a centralized facility was a good one. Consequently, the city will seek an appraisal of the building so that a fair price might be offered for it.

In other business handled by the board on January 12, contract for \$52,500 was approved by the board for Ratio Architects, the firm being used to transform the old Bacala Medical Clinic into the new Scottsburg youth and senior citizen center. The building is on the south side of Scottsburg's downtown square.

EQ Environmental Quality Company was hired by the board to perform clean-up of contaminated soil on the site of the old Scott Manufacturing plant on South Elm Street. A \$140,000 contract with that firm was approved. This should be the final step in the clean-up of that site, considered a "brownfield" because of contamination there. The building was torn down earlier in the reclamation project, whose goal is to clean the site so that it will again be attractive to industry.

January 28 is the date that bids on the renovation of the old Freudenberg NOK building will be opened. The board approved a \$48,000 contract with River Hills Economic Development District for administrative services for the project as well as for labor standards and environmental review services.

That building on South Lake Road will be transformed into another portion of the Scottsburg Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (TIE) Center through a multi-million dollar contract awarded to the city by Economic Development Administration (EDA).

A company, Sensory Technologies, is so eager to become a part of the TIE Center renovation and expansion that a company representative asked the board to sign a non-binding letter of intent to continue exploration of a way in which the firm could become involved.

"They were awfully impressed with what we've done so far and with the fact that we own our own wireless company. They couldn't believe we already had wireless service there," related Mayor Graham. Sensory Technologies created all of the audio visual technology used at the Lucas Stadium in downtown Indianapolis. It also works with the Lilly Company and other large firms on big projects. The Mayor said he was told, "When it comes to technology, they're the best."

Bill Saegesser said the firm is eager to come on-board. "I think the owners reckon they will get a good return eventually for participating." The TIE Center's plans include a state-of-the-art, 120-seat auditorium. The agreement was signed.

Inflow at the wastewater plant is still larger than what it should be, board members learned

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from Saegesser and wastewater plant operator Jason Combs. Combs said department staff has been seeking leaks in collection lines, and manholes have been checked. "We never saw any large problems, but we're still looking," Combs reported. "It's just not something that you solve overnight."

Combs and Saegesser had compared the amount of water emitted by the water treatment plant to the intake at the wastewater plant to determine the size of the infiltration problem. The numbers are closer now, but the hunt for more leaks will continue, Combs said.

Board members signed an annual contract for services with the Scott County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for \$55,100. They also approved an annual contract for city attorney Kerry Thompson.

Jamie Knowles, Executive Director of the Scott County Area Plan Commission, provided information on that department's activities in 2009. No subdivision plans were presented although 54 permits for a total of \$5.7 million worth of improvements were issued. A lot of businesses in the county reinvested in their infrastructure, Knowles noted.

Mayor Graham reported that the City Council appointed Mark Whittymore to replace David Kilburn on the Area Plan Commission. Kilburn resigned his post at the end of December after serving for three years.

Police Chief Delbert Meeks also provided the Board of Works with his end-of-the-year report on arrests and tickets issued and incidents investigated.