



LINTON DAILY CITIZEN

● Home

Greene County's Largest Daily Newspaper Wednesday, February 23, 2005

● Local News

Local News

● Local Sports

● Area Notes

● Classifieds

● Obituaries

● Business & Life

● World News

● Financial News

● Health

● Entertainment

● Subscribe

● About Us

● Guestbook

● Archive

Future appears bright for West Gate at Crane Technology Park

By Nick Schneider, STAFF WRITER

SWITZ CITY -- After sitting in a Tuesday evening briefing of the present plans and concepts for the West Gate at Crane Technology Park, Greene County Council President Jim Oliphant summed up what he heard about the unique tri-county economic development effort in simple terms.

"This is the best thing Greene County has seen in ages," Oliphant quickly commented in terms of economic development potential.

"It's a win-win situation for all three counties," Oliphant added. "For every dollar that goes in there's going to come back three for it."

Greene County Economic Corporation Executive Director Charles Dibble, who serves on the tech park planning committee, agreed and said, "We had a lot of hurdles to vault, but it looks very much like 2005 is going to be the year where this new technology economy begins to emerge in southwestern Indiana."

Speaking to the group, Dibble said, "This is your project and we want you to know we are on this project.

"We've come a long way. If you've gone to the site, you'll see some signs out there, some equipment out there and we believe very soon you're going to see a couple of buildings out there."

Oliphant was part of a briefing for governmental officials from Greene, Daviess and Martin Counties held at the Greene County fairgrounds. Others from Greene County attending included: county councilmen John Wilkes and Ed Michael, auditor David Bailey and Greene County Redevelopment Commission members Hal Harp and Charles Bonham.

The officials learned from the tech park planners that the project is on the

School Links:

Linton-Stockton School Corporation

White River Valley School Corporation

Bloomfield School District

Statecraft School

Eastern School District

Community Learning Center of Greene County

Library Links:

Margaret Cooper Public Library

**Bloomfield/Eastern Greene
County Public Library**

fast-track to accepting its first tenants and conduct groundbreaking by early summer.

Other Links:

**Greene County
Foundation**

"With the Pentagon's BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) process staring us in the face, we've got to make this happen right now to preserve the current intellectual capital in the region and prepare for possible major growth," said Ron Arnold, executive director of the Daviess County Growth Council.

**Linton
Workforce**

**Greene County
Resources**

Arnold pointed out that the Crane area is home to more than 1,000 scientists, engineers and technical professionals who work at the \$3 billion military facility.

Linton Police

**Linton Fire
Department**

Greene, Daviess and Martin Counties are cooperatively developing the new tech park that will be located near where the three counties converge, adjacent to Naval Surface Weapons Center, Crane Division's facility.

**Greene County
Crime Stoppers**

Arnold said the tech park area will attract a number of developers who will construct buildings for lease or sale to future tenants and four-phase project could attract more than 3,600 job by the end of 2009.

"As we tie everything together, I expect us to have a groundbreaking and be moving dirt at the facility by early summer," Arnold said.

He expects to issue RFPs (Requests for Proposals) very soon for the first buildings in the park.

Demolition on the old Crane barracks, located in Martin County, began this week to prepare for development and construction which could be ready by early May.

William Hartzell, with Facilities Solutions Group, of Elk Grove, Ill. is heading up the engineering team that is laying out the tech park.

Hartzell predicted that there will be buildings go up in all three county parcels in the next 12 to 18 months for what he called "minimal upfront dollars."

He said planners have come up with creative solutions to infrastructure challenges in terms of dollars that faced the early design phase of the project when they first looked at site requirements like sewer lines, the availability of water and access roads.

"I think we have really put them all behind us for the near term. I couldn't be happier to put to rest all of those questions about sewers that were going to cost us \$3 million up front. We can move forward with a high degree of confidence that in the near term we are in great shape," he said.

Hartzell promised there would be a nationwide marketing blitz to attract

tech-based business to the area.

"We are going to make sure that the whole country knows about this, especially all of the companies doing business around here. We want to have answers to all of the questions so when the real estate people say I need 100 acres and I need this building, we can say, 'oh, here are all these choices'," he said.

The engineer continued, "With all of these first phase buildings we are going to figure out what we want them to look like, how they are going to be used and what they are going to cost and how quickly we can get them up and running."

Hartzell said it is important that the development take place in parallel with all three counties.

Arnold, who is serving as the spokesperson for the tech park development, explained that funding issues initially delayed development of the tech park area after Daviess County received its state certified technical park status last year.

Daviess County received \$300,000 from that program, rather than \$1 million that was originally announced by former Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis in a meeting at the Greene County fairgrounds. The Daviess County Council made up the shortfall by passing a new economic development tax (EDIT) and Greene and Martin Counties each supplied \$60,000 to be used to as the local match for federal and state grant programs.

Currently, the tech park is being managed by a planning board of directors who have employed a consulting team that includes Facilities Solutions Group, Civil and Environmental Consultants, Inc., CB Richard Ellis -- the nation's largest commercial real estate broker/developer, and The MEK Group, which is coordinating the marketing and media exposure for the project.

The Indianapolis office of CB Richard Ellis has already begun actively marketing the technology region to Fortune 500 companies around the globe.

"This gives us a near-instant presence among the Fortune 500 technology communities who presenting do or will be doing business with the \$3 billion Crane naval facility," added Arnold.

EG&G -- a subsidiary of the URS technology corporation -- has committed to be the first tenant of the West Gate facility -- locating in Daviess County's sector of the park. It presently operates in rented space in Martin County, immediately south of the planned Tech Park region.

The Crane operations of Science Applications International Corporation (SIAC), which is presently housed in Bloomfield offices and CSC --

another Crane contractor -- located in Bloomington, are finalizing plans to become tenants in the Martin and Greene County sectors of tech park, respectively.

Arnold said he envisions the tech park area -- located in close proximity to the proposed U.S. 231 interchange of Interstate 69 -- to be a location for the development of other spin-off auxiliary businesses like service stations, mini-marts, restaurants, and a hotel.

By the end of March, a new seven-member governing board will be put into place to pull together final details of the tech park development project, Arnold announced.

The board will be comprised of two non-governmental representatives each from Greene, Martin and Daviess Counties along with a representative from the newly formed Crane Technology, Inc.

Arnold, who said a separate corporation may be formed in the future to operate the tech park, said the project is trying to forge a close alliance with Purdue University in West Lafayette and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute, two Hoosier universities with a world-wide reputation in the science and engineering fields.

"We want this whole thing to fit. We want to develop it as green as possible and make it a place that people will want to come to work and live. To do that you have to have some idea of what the total concept is of the project and then making sure you stay to that plan," he said.

He stressed that the project is a joint one between the three counties -- representing the kind of cooperation that is unprecedented in the state.


"As far as we look at it, this is one big project no matter where it is developed. There are going to be folks living in all the surrounding areas that are going to be working there. So it's a win-win situation," Arnold said.

Mike Snyder, of The MEK Group, said much effort has gone into "getting the word out about Crane" in the last year.

"A year ago, people didn't know what Crane was. It was a big mystery. That has all changed," he said.

Snyder said the BRAC process is key in the planning thoughts for the new tech park.

"BRAC is on everybody's mind now because these jobs are irreplaceable," Snyder commented. "No matter if this BRAC is for or against us (Crane), this tech park is going to play a role in the economic development of the whole area."

	STOLL'S COUNTRY INN <i>Homestyle Amish Buffet</i> Hwy 54 West, Linton	812-847-2477 HOURS: Mon.-Thurs. 7am-8pm Fri. & Sat. 7am-9pm, Sun. 11am-2pm
---	--	---

[[Home](#)] [[News](#)] [[Sports](#)] [[Area Notes](#)] [[Classifieds](#)] [[Obituaries](#)] [[Business Guide](#)]
[[World News](#)] [[Financial](#)] [[Health](#)] [[Entertainment](#)] [[Subscribe](#)] [[About Us](#)] [[Guestbook](#)] [[Archives](#)]

Copyright 2001. Linton Daily Citizen. All rights reserved. News and photos are provided for personal use only and may not be copied, redistributed or reused without permission.