

Downtown Revitalization Committee Seeks Input on Conceptual Drawings at January 30th Meeting

- Michelle Barnauskas

Community-members of the greater Mantua area are invited to a meeting on Wednesday, January 30 at the Mantua-Shalersville Fire Station just south of Downtown Mantua. Guests are encouraged to arrive around 6:30 p.m. to sign-in, enjoy light refreshments, and find a seat before the presentation begins promptly at 7:00 p.m. Revitalization consultants E. G. & G., Inc. will show preliminary sketches of possible downtown improvements and solicit input from those in attendance.

The designs were developed in response to community input over the past year and a half. It all started in the spring of 2006, when over 100 community-members attended a public meeting hosted by the Village Planning Commission and the Mantua-Shalersville Area Chamber of Commerce. Nearly everyone at that meeting commented on the rundown appearance of downtown Mantua. Most recently, the

community gathered in September of 2007 to create a "Wish List" for downtown Mantua.

Suggestions from the community focus on key themes:

- Connect downtown with Cuyahoga River, hike & bike trail, parks; focus on outdoor activities
 - Renovate historic buildings and fill them with good businesses; services the area needs; attract jobs
 - Make downtown reflect the unique character of the area; serve community not tourists (we are not Chagrin Falls); maintain and promote "Mayberry" lifestyle
 - Use more planters, flowers, trees, green space; use natural materials like brick, stone, wood
 - Make downtown more walkable and bikeable and install gather places people spaces
 - Encourage community involvement and support of local businesses,
- With these thoughts in-mind, E. G. & G., Inc. created conceptual drawings to help the community envision what could be. Revisions

will be based on further input from the January 30 community meeting.

E. G. & G., Inc. was founded in 1981 and is based in Akron, Ohio. The multi-disciplinary firm specializes in comprehensive downtown and neighborhood improvement programs with a staff of urban planners, landscape architects, and engineers. The firm's goal in community revitalization is to "Recreate Prime Real Estate Value" in a worn-out area. Visit www.EGGco.com or call 330-379-2790 for more information on E. G. & G., Inc.

The Downtown Mantua Revitalization Committee was incorporated in the state of Ohio in April of 2007 as a non-profit corporation. It is managed by a volunteer slate of officers with a 12-member volunteer board of directors overseeing activities. For more information, visit MantuaShalersvilleChamber.com and click on Downtown Revitalization on the right side.

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For additional information, contact:
Downtown Mantua Revitalization Committee President
Edie Benner at 330.274.2747

Downtown Mantua Revitalization Committee Seeks Input on Streetscape Project Conceptual Designs at January 30 Community Meeting

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Group wants to revitalize downtown About 50 attend meeting to discuss goals, vision of village committee

Don Jovich
January 31, 2008

By Don Jovich

Record-Courier staff writer

MANTUA -- Preserving the past, protecting the present and preparing for the future are all goals the Downtown Mantua Revitalization Committee wants to achieve.

Committee President Edie Benner said Wednesday's community meeting at the Mantua-Shalersville Fire Department was designed to educate the community about their revitalization effort. More than 50 village and township residents turned out for the presentation.

"We want to garner the support from all of the citizens of Mantua," she said.

Prior to the meeting, Benner said every business and resident was invited to share their thoughts on the future look of downtown.

"This is an excellent project for the Mantua community," Village Mayor Donna Hawkins said. She and her husband, Councilman Roger Hawkins, both attended the meeting.

During the presentation, revitalization consultants E. G. & G., Inc. Showed preliminary sketches of possible downtown improvements and solicited further input from those in attendance.

"Downtown Mantua has many assets -- historic buildings and its location to the Cuyahoga River -- makes Mantua an attractive community to live and work," project manager Rod Garrison said.

He said by establishing a stronger downtown image, Mantua could enhance its economic opportunities and improve the quality of life for residents.

"Improvements would add to the historic downtown appeal and create a stronger sense of place," Garrison said.

The committee's idea is to make downtown more "walkable" and "bikeable" with more spaces for people to gather.

Additional beautification plans included using more planters, flowers, trees, green space and natural materials like brick, stone and wood.

Other goals are to renovate historic buildings and fill them with businesses and services the area needs, as well as attracting jobs.

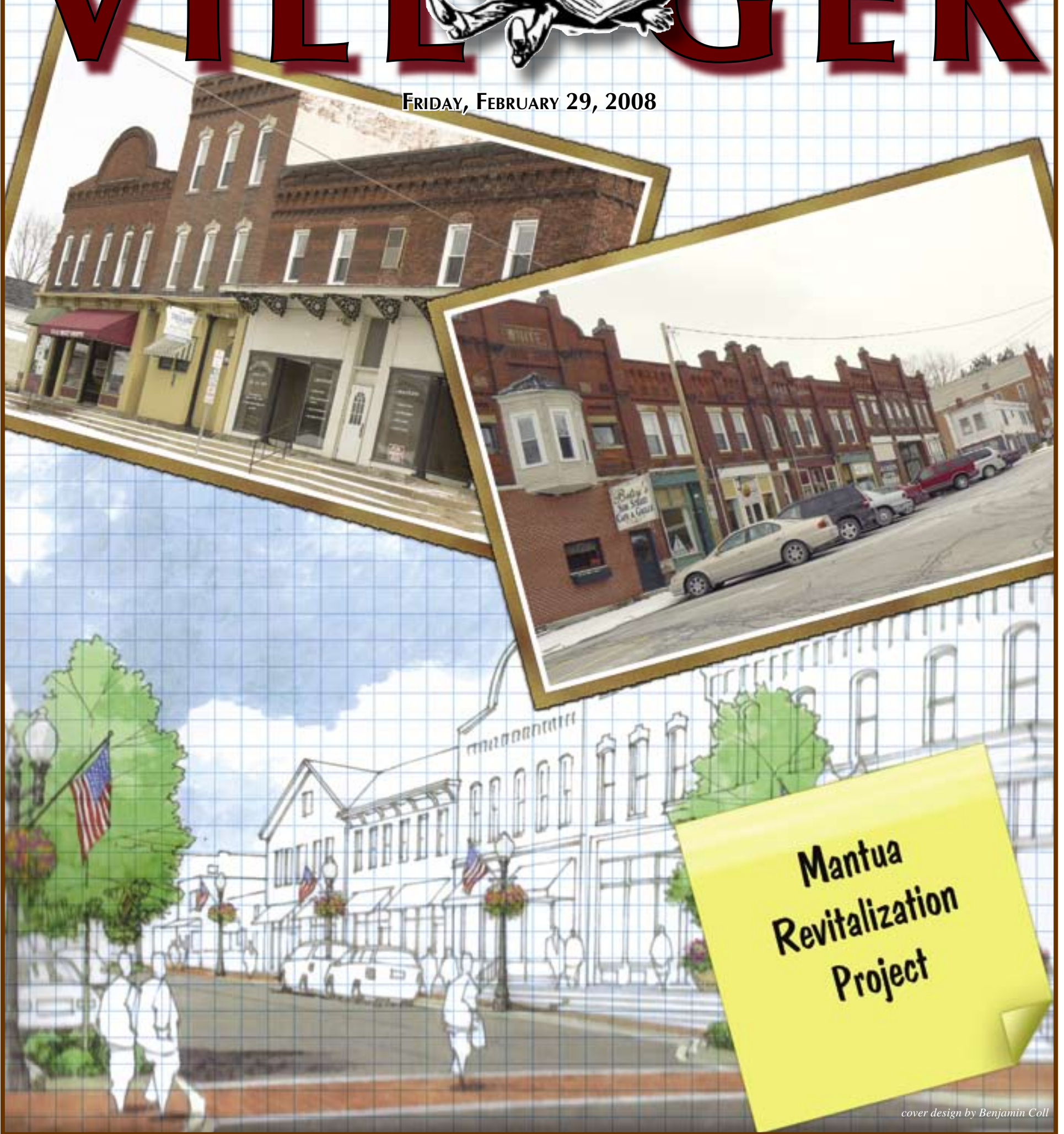
"We want to make downtown reflect the unique character of the area, serve the community and maintain and promote a 'Mayberry' type of lifestyle," Benner said.

Garrettsville Middlefield Newton Falls Windham Freedom
Burton Mantua Nelson Hiram

VILLAGER



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2008



cover design by Benjamin Coll

Mantua: "Preserving the Past--Protecting the Present--Preparing for the Future"

COMPILED FROM SEVERAL DMRC RESOURCES BY KIM BREYLEY

The Downtown Mantua Revitalization Committee is moving forward with an ambitious, visionary plan.

Following public input meetings, sponsored by the Mantua-Shalersville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Mantua Village Planning Commission, several civic-minded residents conducted research and visited other communities, met with area non-profit organizations, interviewed several consulting firms and, as a result, formed an organization to carry on with the initiated work-in-progress. This group, named "The Downtown Mantua Revitalization Corporation" was incorporated April, 2007 and is awaiting finalization of their 5013C status. Their goal is planning, financing, and implementing capital improvements to create a Mantua downtown district and gateways that are favorable to economic growth, resulting in the improvement of life in Mantua and surrounding area. Their mission is to empower people, government, organizations, and business and property owners to develop and implement a consensus-based plan to enhance the appearance of downtown Mantua. The plan's intent is to bring shoppers, pedestrian traffic, and residents downtown to enjoy the historic district. They envision a village bustling with eateries, professional offices, niche stores, and downtown living spaces, which support the river and plan growth to preserve its rural character.

Represented on the committee are members of Rotary Club of Mantua, Mantua Historical Society, Mantua Village Council, the Mantua-Shalersville Area Chamber of Commerce, business owners, property owners, and residents.

This group organized with the purpose of revitalizing the commercial district because all around the village Mantua property values are on the rise, high-priced homes are being built, and new businesses are opening. Yet, downtown Mantua is not benefiting from the growth of Northern Portage County. The commercial district of Mantua is aging ... businesses are moving out, assets like the hike/bike trails and the Cuyahoga River are hidden...

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Mantua revitalization project

continued from front page

When left to decay, towns die. Property values fall, businesses fail. The belief of the committee; downtown Mantua needs a makeover to protect its culture, its people, and its assets.

The Revitalization Committee selected E.G.&G. Inc, a planning, landscape architecture and civil engineering firm out of Akron, as lead consultant to assist with planning of public improvements within the village. E. G. & G made several recommendations. They suggested that the committee visit several towns and cities that had accomplished parts of the revitalization process.

Some of the cities that were visited were Wooster, Salem, Kent, and Seville. The total cost of the planning process is \$75,000. The village of Mantua pledged \$25,000 toward this development

which will be budgeted over the next 2 years. An ODOD (Ohio Department of Development) grant was received in the amount of \$15,000, along with other private donations. E.G. & G. recommends the remaining funds (\$25,000) be solicited from larger corporations dedicated to area growth and success. The committee is hoping such a corporation will step forward with the contribution. Smaller businesses will have opportunities to fund benches, lighting etc. further into the streetscape construction process.

The President of the Downtown Mantua Revitalization Committee is Edie Benner; she can be reached at 330-274-2747.

The website for the project is www.mantuashalersvillechamber.com/revitalization.

EG & G'S CONCEPTUAL DRAWINGS FOR DOWNTOWN HAVE BEEN ON DISPLAY IN SEVERAL AREA BUSINESSES. PRESENTLY, THEY CAN BE VIEWED AT THE VILLAGE TAVERN ON MAIN STREET.



January Town Meeting Draws a Crowd; Audience Asks Insightful Questions

Village residents arrived in droves to see sketches of possible improvements for downtown's commercial district on January 31st at the fire station. E.G.&G., Inc project manager, Rod Garrison, spoke about the Downtown Mantua Revitalization project before asking for feedback and questions from the audience. Part of his presentation, along with the Q&A that followed is below. Visit www.MantuaShalersvilleChamber.com and click on Revitalization for ongoing updates to the project and look for the large sketches displayed in businesses downtown.

Mantua Village has many assets including its status as the traditional center for local government and commerce, its stock of historic buildings, its location along the Ohio River and the Headwaters Trail, and its convenient access to the Ohio Turnpike. These assets and others make Mantua Village an attractive community in which to live and work.

However, the deteriorating, worn out, and unattractive appearance of Mantua's downtown district street corridors communicate a negative image of the Village to visitors and adversely affect the community's economic development potential and quality of life.

Economic Development "Truths":

- Private investment is attracted to areas of perceived opportunity
- The perception of opportunity is heavily influenced by location image
- Downtown is the area of the community most often seen by visitors
- Downtown must project a strong and positive location image in order to attract investment to the community

The Mantua Downtown Revitalization Project is addressing the need to improve the location image of the downtown district. The design drawings describe a comprehensive program of street corridor capital improvements that will help Mantua Village re-establish a stronger and more positive downtown district image, attract new business investment, create jobs, address infrastructure needs, support property values, re-create an environment conducive to economic development, and enhance quality of life for the entire community.

Q&A

What are prices of bike racks, waste receptacles, benches? Depends on style, material, construction, typical metal bench expected to last 20 years costs about \$900-\$1,100.

Could we consider artistic alternatives to traditional trash receptacles (ex. Concrete with recycled glass as used in Canton)? Yes; possibly in just a few locations; try to maintain overall historic look in revitalized area.

What portion of costs can be covered by grants vs. local funding? Typically 30% local, 70% grants (ODOD, OPWC, other)

Who writes grant applications? E.G.&G.

How have private owners responded in other areas? Positive response and efforts to keep up with improved look.

Will private owners be charged for upkeep? Usually by choice of the local government; however, that is NOT considered an option in Mantua due to existing financial burdens of many businesses and residents.

If utility wires are moved underground, where will the work start? First phase area; often dictated by available grants.

Whose name is on the grants? Project sponsor – the Village

What about cost overruns; typical in construction? Only if unforeseen; rare because budget anticipates 10% over bids.

How will the project address the floodplain area south of town, east of St. Rt. 44? The project addresses public areas, specifically the street right-of-way areas; the floodplain is private property.

Will there be dealings with the Army Corps of Engineers? Unlikely, due to the focus on public/street areas and not wetlands.

What about annual maintenance costs? E.G.&G. will provide a summary of anticipated costs for upkeep. Revitalized areas often see savings in the long-run because less “band-aid” maintenance is required.

How long will each phase take and who will pay for future phases? Each phase should take 1½ construction seasons and the same funding/grant sources will be approached for each phase; they expect and welcome future requests as they like to give money to successful endeavors.

Will businesses be wheelchair accessible after project? Depends on threshold of each building; sidewalks will be brought as close as possible to level with entrances.

How will traffic be re-routed during construction? One lane will always be open and access to businesses will be maintained. The goal of the project is to improve business, so every effort will be made to minimize inconvenience for everyone.



JULIE SMEILES

JANUARY

Hiram--Public meeting presents the case of a farmland preservation program to residents. Cooperation between the Township and Village is critical.

Newton Falls--Congressman Tim Ryan seeks justice for slain veteran Major Karl Hoerig. Ryan met with Brazilian officials to plead the case for extraditing Claudia "Chris" Hoerig to stand trial for the murder of her husband.

Windham Twp.--County Auditor Janet Esposito swears in Trustee Brian Miller and Fiscal Officer Jayme Neiker. Trustees receive notification of a lawsuit from the Village of Windham and C. James Moore questioning the legality of the fire department.

Windham--State Rep. Kathleen Chandler swears in 26 year old Robert Donham as Mayor.

Burton-- Council appoints Darren LaForce to fill seat left vacant by James Koster.

Garrettsville--Newly-elected Councilman Rick Patrick was sworn in and Mayor Craig Moser took his second oath.

Newton Falls-- Former Mayor Tom Moorehead appointed to fill the vacant 4th Ward seat over controversy concerning other applicants.

Regional--CART, (child abduction response team) members from district 5 meet at the Newton Falls Community Center to run thru a high profile child abduction scenario. 76 members from surrounding communities attend.

Troy-- Historic Welshfield Inn, built in the 1840's reopens. New owners, Gamekeepers Hospitality made extensive renovations and restorations to the historic site.

FEBRUARY

Regional-- Brigadier General Matt Kambic, Assistant Adjutant General for the Army presents a brief outlining plans for 26 million dollar expansion project at the RTLS, (Ravenna Arsenal), National Guard site.

Garrettsville-- Porter Lyons earns Eagle Scout rank at 13. Nationwide only about 4% of Scouts earn the Eagle rank and most of them take until they are 18 to achieve it.

Newton Falls-- High School seniors apply for spot on the Charter Review Commission. Andretti Ford tells employees that they will close their doors for good on Feb. 4th due to financial difficulties.

Mantua-- Ronald Scala publishes his first e-book, entitled "Beckoned". The book is classified as horror/paranormal romance.

Newton Twp.--Senior housing project gets second life as Senior Condos. Developers apply for

zoning permits.

Newton Falls--Jr. High School students build a 3D 36' long, 16' high replica of Suchomimus, a Cretaceous-period dinosaur, using their math skills, recycled cardboard, pvc pipe and lots of twine, Elmer's and hot-melt glue.

Garrettsville-- Aaron Yonker represents Garrettsville Youth Wrestling Club and wins the Ohio Youth Wrestling Associations' State Wrestling Championships in the 110 lbs. class.

Hiram-- Council meets opposition when residents crowd meeting and voice their concerns over the proposed annexation and retirement housing project.

Newton Falls-- Officer Mike Laswell challenged his 3 day suspension he received for failing to correctly log in \$9,438 that was to be used as evidence in a rape case.

Mantua-- The Downtown Mantua Revitalization Committee placed architectural concept drawings in area businesses for residents to view. The Committee wants to preserve the past, protect the present and prepare for the future and is working towards drawing more businesses to the downtown area.

MARCH

Nelson Twp.-- Kyle Ferrell was awakened by his 4 year old grandchild to find that his living room was in flames. The family of five escaped the fire but the home sustained \$80,000 in damages and the family lost an additional \$15,000 to \$20,000 in contents of the home. The Red Cross responded and put the family up in a hotel until other arrangements could be made.

Brimfield-- Never Rest Ranch owner Diane Silbaugh had her bond revoked after the court found 5 horses on her property. Silbaugh was charged with multiple counts of animal cruelty after humane officers found several dead horses on the ranch.

Regional--Ohio voters turn out for primary elections despite rain, ice, snow, flooding, wind and very cold temperatures. Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner filed injunctions to allow voters in Jefferson County to vote using provisional ballots, 3 precincts had to change locations because of flooding, and allowed Cuyahoga County polling places to remain open until 9pm because of ballot shortages. Remaining counties were under a gag order not to release the results of the vote until after 9pm.

Regional--Power outages strike Cuyahoga, Portage, Geauga and Ashtabula Counties as a late winter storm sweeps through the area. 12" to 20" of snow blanketed the area causing downed power lines. Ohio State Highway Patrol reported 1,914 accidents and one fatality.

Nelson Twp.-- Former Turkey Farm to become ethanol plant. US Liquids Inc. owners Mark Fuerst and brother in law Gordon Schirm purchased the farm with the intent to begin production of ethanol gas.

Newton Falls-- Jim Luonuansuu, dispatcher for the Newton Falls and Lordstown Police Departments, testified before the State 9-1-1 Council. Luonuansuu charged that Trumbull County Commissioners were using delaying tactics and not moving forward with setting a meeting of the County 9-1-1 Planning Committee to develop a plan to spend 9-1-1 cellular phone surcharges to update equipment and software for the County's 8 PSAP's, (public safety answering points.)

Newton Falls-- Embarq hardware failure disables Newton Falls 9-1-1 System for nearly eight hours.

Garrettsville-- Larry Roach and family lose their garage and a large portion of their home from a fire that broke out early Saturday. A neighbor preparing to leave for work noticed flames and woke the family up. Damages were estimated at \$150,000. No injuries were reported.

APRIL

Newton Falls-- Drive-thru weekend in Newton Falls! Dan Smallwood leads police on a high speed chase through town ending when his vehicle plows into the basement of 79 yr. old Betty Schilling's home. In another incident, Samantha Pigg drove through the plate glass window of the Circle K store -- no one was injured in that accident.

Garrettsville-- Resident Dottie Howells wins \$100,000 in the Ohio

Lottery. Dottie purchased the ticket at the Save 4 Store.

Brimfield-- Diane Silbaugh was sentenced to 6 months in jail after a judge found her guilty of animal cruelty. Cruelty charges were filed after 7 horses died in her care. After an investigation she was also charged with forgery and grand theft relating to horses that were sold to different individuals sometimes without the original owner's knowledge of the sale.

Windham--Trustees approve funding for new fire equipment. The Fire Department will replace their outdated Scot Air Packs after receiving approval from trustees to spend the \$9,350.00 needed to purchase them.

Garrettsville--Main Street Grille and Brewing Company turned back the clock to November 7th 1935 when it hosted the Candlelight Players who presented their interpretation of the great train robbery that occurred in Garrettsville. Over 100 guests participated in the interactive play. Alvin Karpis, a former member of the Ma Barker Gang, was eventually convicted of the crime.

Newton Falls-- Council hires new Finance Director, Tracy Reimbold.

Regional-- Power House 6 smokestack hits the ground at the Ravenna Arsenal. 35 lbs. of strategically placed explosives bring down the 60 year old 176' chimney from an old coal powered electric generating plant on the site.

West Farmington--Council holds special meeting to explain to residents an EPA mandated sewer system. Council is considering a decentralized system that utilizes septic systems that would be shared by multiple users. An income survey was to be sent out and Council urged selected homeowners to fill them out in order for the community to be eligible for low income grant monies to construct the system.

Windham-- Brick by Brick