

Meeting & Event Dates

WPRA: WPRA - 3rd Thursday @ 6:30 p.m.* Oct 16 & Nov 20
City: City Council - 2 & 4th Tuesdays @ 7:00 p.m.*
 Finance - 1st Tuesday @ 5:30 p.m.*
 Land Use - 3rd Wednesday @ 6:30 p.m.*
 Plan Commission - 3rd Tuesday @ 5:30 p.m.*
 Public Safety - 3rd Wednesday @ 5:30 p.m.*
 Transportation - 2nd Thursday @ 6:30 p.m.*
Around the Town: Cub Scouts - 4th Wednesday @ 7:00 p.m.**
 Boy Scouts - every Monday @ 7:00 p.m.**
 Garden Club - 3rd Monday @ 7:00 p.m.*
 Lions Club - 2nd & 4th Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.**
 Neighborhood Watch - 3rd Thursday @ 6:00 p.m.*
 Township - 2nd Monday @ 7:30 p.m.*
What's Next: WPFH Hog Roast - October 19***
 WPRA Christmas Party - December 7

Location: *City Hall **United Disciples Christian Church ***See Article

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WPRA News

President's Corner

by David Pittman

At its August meeting, the West Peoria Residents' Association welcomed a full house, including 35 members and visitors, personnel from three TV stations, two radio stations, and the *Peoria Journal Star*. This crowd was on hand to watch as the two candidates for Peoria County State's Attorney—Kevin Lyons and Darin LaHood—provided 45 minutes of interesting, calm but intense discussion of their qualifications and differing points of view for the office they are both seeking.

Lyons, who is seeking re-election to the position he has held for nearly twenty years, emphasized his success rate and the thoroughness with which he has performed his office. LaHood, calling for change both in leadership and approach, said that change is needed because crime is increasing in Peoria County.

One noteworthy example from their debate that I particularly remember occurred when LaHood pointed out that all the county police unions have

endorsed him, but Lyons countered that he has prosecuted over twenty police officers over the years and that the job requires more than being popular with the police.

Our political season continued on September 18, when our WPRA membership meeting featured Joan Krupa, the Republican candidate for the 92nd District State Representative. Our guests at the October 16 meeting will be Jehan Gordon—the Democratic candidate for the 92nd District State Representative--and Colleen Callahan--the Democratic candidate for Illinois' 18th District Representative in the U. S. Congress. Callahan, who missed a scheduled July membership meeting, asked to be given the chance to speak to WPRA members before the November election.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the WPRA Candidates' Night of September 30 will also have occurred. If you are not yet registered to vote, you can do so in less than fifteen minutes at the City Clerk's office at West Peoria City Hall or at the Peoria County Courthouse, County Clerk's office (672-6070) until October 7. If you wish to vote early, read the details under City Election News in this is-



sue. Your vote is important.

Also in this issue you will find the story of the proposed development on Heading Avenue. Our City Council is discussing and will soon vote to accept or reject the project. Some residents are very opposed, and you may have seen the flyer that was handed out across town in late August. For more information, please read the inside story and contact City Hall or your alderman.



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The West Peoria Residents' Association is pleased to announce the names of several new 2008 members (see list below)—bringing this year's total memberships to 215 (single or family households). If you paid your 2008 dues and your name has not been published in the *West Peoria News*, please call Maggie Moore @673-0535.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| George & Sandra Andrews | Sharon McBride |
| Todd & Laurie Baker | Susan Pilon |
| Robert & Janice Becker | John & Diane Powell |
| Linda Capps | Sharon & Eilynn Resler |
| Jennifer Guppy | Steve Brandt & |
| Bob & Carol Harris | Margaret Brandt Rubin |
| Stephen & Judith Heintz | JoAnn Ruppman |
| Rosie Jorgensen | Beverly Seabeck |
| Michael & Elisa Keller | Sandra Sikes |
| Randy & Marilyn Kleist | Steve Sonnemaker |
| | Brian & Nancy White |



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Educational Excellence Committee

Enrollment figures for West Peoria students at the following schools are:

- 140 at Whittier (Kindergarten-4th grades)
- 116 at Calvin Coolidge (5th-8th grades)
- 24 at St. Mark (Kindergarten-4th grades)
- 25 at St. Mark (5th-8th Grades)
- 1 at Manual (7th & 8th Grades)
- 55 at Manual High School
- 7 at Peoria High School
- 17 at Richwoods High School
- 1 at Woodruff High School
- 34 at Peoria Notre Dame High School

Information for Peoria District 150 Schools was obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request. If our readers know of any other schools that West Peoria students attend, please contact Sharon Crews (676-8109) or SharonCrews@hotmail.com. For enrollment figures by grade level, visit the WPRA website.

Anyone interested in being a member of the Education Excellence Committee or anyone who has questions about educational issues in West Peoria, please contact Jeff Adkins-Dutro via e-mail at adkinsdutro@msn.com or at 672-9714.



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Proposed Heading Avenue Project

Mayor's Comments

*I truly appreciate the public interest in West Peoria and its future.
The West Peoria City staff and I are always eager to discuss issues on their merits.*

- ◆ Brief description of the status of the project:
 - Special Use Permit Application – not on the ZBA agenda yet.
 - PUD – has been passed by the Plan Commission but not on City Council agenda.
 - **Developer's plans** – still preparing documents.
 - There is nothing on the Plan Commission agenda in regard to this Heading Ave issue.
 - Initially we were moving this project on a fast track to accommodate the developer's construction time schedule. The completion date has now been pushed back to 2010 which provides us additional time to resolve issues.
 - I plan to visit other Oxbow projects to see for my self.
- ◆ Section 8 housing – full occupancy:
 - Based on the findings of an in-depth feasibility study commissioned by the developer, they are confident that all the available beds will be leased to Bradley students.
 - The developer will not lease any beds to individuals in the Section 8 program.
 - In addition, the developer is NOT required to lease to individuals in the Section 8 program and will agree to add this language to the PUD.
 - THIS WILL NOT BE A SECTION 8 HOUSING PROJECT.
- ◆ Traffic on Heading Ave:
 - In 2002 according to the Illinois Department of Transportation the traffic count on Heading Ave was 3350 per day – (at that time St Joseph's employed 140 people).
 - We will have a current traffic count soon.
 - According to Bradley 44% of their students have cars – 250 residents x 44% = 110 cars. In addition, 3rd party studies indicate a national trend – 40% to 60% of students have cars. Most students will NOT drive to campus.
- ◆ As your Mayor I have always looked-out for the "best interest" of West Peoria. This project will have tremendous economic benefits for our city:
 - The "land use plan" for West Peoria provides clear direction for most of the property in the

- city. The property in question has great development potential. However, the structure at 2223 Heading Ave contains a substantial amount of asbestos. This property will require a special type of redevelopment plan.
- The property currently does not generate any real estate taxes
- Real estate taxes – (a p p r o x i m a t e l y \$300,000 per year – this will provide funds for police and maintenance department equipment, and much needed street repairs, etc.)
- Tax sharing from the State of Illinois & the Federal government.
- Sales taxes.
- New businesses for the city.
- New jobs for the city.



Contact Information (e-mail addresses can be found on the City of West Peoria's website):

- Mayor: Jim Dillon,
2607 W. Belle Vista Ct. - 676-5394
- Ward 1 Alderman: Leroy Dohm, Jr.,
1601 Vaughn Ave. - 674-1014
- Ward 1 Alderwoman: Hazel Thomas,
2712 W. Richmond Ave. - 676-7882
- Ward 2 Alderman: Jerry Meisner,
615 N. Coolidge Ct. - 673-2334;
- Ward 2 Alderman: Merlin "Rocky" Mathewson,
3220 W. Alice Ave. - 674-6003
- Ward 3 Alderman: Brian Ganson,
2107 W. Barker Ave. - 673-7245
- Ward 3 Alderman: John Venzon, Jr.,
1920 W. Barker Ave. - 676-0667
- Ward 4 Alderman: Tom Dwyer,
108 N. Fairway Dr. -673-3310;
- Ward 4 Alderman: Phillip Roberts.
2126 W. Heading Ave. - 676-4386

Proposed Heading Avenue Project

Resident's Comments

Preserving West Peoria...No Second Chance

"West Peoria aspires to be the city of choice in Central Illinois for ourselves and future generations-- beautiful, clean, and safe." This is the first sentence of our West Peoria Action Plan's Vision Statement, which was created by the five Action Teams composed of forty of our friends and neighbors. They donated hours upon hours to create this plan for our community.

Many of us have second, third, and even fourth generations of our families residing in West Peoria. How would the Oxbow Development, Inc., multi-family housing project-- proposed for the former St. Joseph's Home property at 2223 West Heading Avenue-- impact our city for residents today and for our future generations? This housing project calls for a 352-bed, three-story, forty-foot high housing complex with parking spaces for 360--a parking lot nearly five times the size of Haddad's! What will happen to this park-like property, to all the trees and green space?

The developer says he is targeting students to fill this complex but when might that change? Our 2008 West Peoria Comprehensive Plan, which has been adopted by our City Council, states, "Additional multi-family housing should be discouraged and that a priority should be placed on attracting upscale housing, as well as senior housing to West Peoria." Further, "The Commission recognizes the importance of maintaining the character of existing residential neighborhoods." Does a development project such as the Oxbow multi-family housing project really comply with these goals? Is increased tax revenue really worth this price?

This is a once-in-a-lifetime decision. If we don't get it right, we don't get another chance. West Peoria and our way of life in our diversified community could be changed forever. Can we work together to identify and attract a project for this property that will enhance our entire community...one that will encourage people to move to West Peoria, not to move out?

As residents we can share our thoughts on this issue with our city council and mayor (contact information listed on page 4). We have entrusted these officials—who are also our friends and neighbors--to

represent us. They have the ultimate, final responsibility to make this decision with their votes.

The West Peoria Action Plan and Comprehensive Plan can be found on the city's website (www.cityofwestpeoria.com) under Development—Planning Commission.

Respectfully,

Gary M. Dutro (674-0131)

Lifelong West Peorian;

WPRM President 1989-1994;

Mayor's Liquor Commission Member 1993 – present



Meet Your City Council Members - Ward #3

BRIAN GANSON, West Peoria's Ward 3 Alderman, has lived in West Peoria at 2107 W. Barker Avenue for sixteen years with his wife of seventeen years.



The Gansons have a nine-year-old son Gus.

A Peoria High School graduate, Brian chose to raise his family in this community and, after moving here, decided to serve this community as an alderman.

Brian remembers that he had not even moved into his new house when neighbors knocked on his door to offer help with some minor repair jobs. Impressed by the generosity of these West Peorians, Brian vowed to have a positive impact in this community and to give back what the community has given to him.

A supervisor at Komatsu, Brian—in his leisure time—enjoys playing golf in the summer, coaching his son's Little League team, and just spending time with his family. He is also a fourth degree member of the Spalding Council Knights of Columbus.



JOHN VENZON, JR., is a Ward 3 Alderman, living at 1920 W. Barker Avenue.




November Election News

From the Desk of the City Clerk

Prepare to vote on Tuesday, November 4.

- Poling places for election day will be announced soon.
- October 7 is the deadline for registering to vote or to transfer registration for the November 4 election. To register, bring two forms of ID to City Hall
- Early voting will be conducted at City Hall from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on
 - Friday, October 17
 - Friday, October 24
 - Monday, October 27

Any registered voter can vote early. For further information, contact West Peoria's City Clerk Carole




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Stephens at clerk@cityofwestpeoria.com or 674-1993.

April 2009 Elections

Election of the following West Peoria officials will take place in April 2009: Ward 1 Alderman, Ward 2 Alderman, Ward 3 Alderman, and Ward 4 Alderman.

Anyone interested in running for one of these positions should contact the City Clerk at the West Peoria City Hall to pick up the packets. October 28 is the first day to circulate nomination petitions.

Filing begins 78 days prior to the election. January 19, 2009, is the 78th day prior to the April 7 Consolidation Election and is the first day of filing at those offices which will be open. However, any offices that are closed in observance of Martin Luther King's birthday will begin filing on January 20, 2009. The last day to file is January 26, 2009—regardless of whether or not the office was open on January 19.

The last day to file petitions for referenda is January 20, 2009.

Contact West Peoria City Hall (674-1993) with any questions, comments, or concerns.

Code Enforcement Reminders

- Please do not rake leaves into the street—which is a violation of city code. Leaves cause storm sewers to back up. Pick up for yard waste—included in your Waste Management contract at no extra cost--is every Friday morning until December 1.
- Remember that burning of landscape waste (leaves, grass clippings, etc.) is no longer allowed in West Peoria.
- Please keep alleyways clean. Be sure to mow or trim the grass, weeds, etc., and to place waste in cans with tight fitting lids to deter rodents and other animals.

Target Area inspections will continue until cold weather sets in. The City Code Enforcement Officer and a P.A.W.S. Officer will be inspecting area neighborhoods to issue violation notices and/or fines when necessary, to provide resources, and to answer residents' questions.

Anyone wishing to report a code violation or to make a complaint please email at: code-zoning@cityofwestpeoria.com or phone: 674-1993. (All information is confidential. You are not required to give your name when you report a violation).


To view the complete text of city ordinances, visit http://www.cityofwestpeoria.com/new_ordinances.asp.

Curbside Garbage Pickup Test Areas

The test area for curbside garbage pickup has begun and, according to city officials, seems to be going very well. The city applauds the good responses from residents so far and states that the following improvements in the alleys are already apparent:

- No more tipped over trash cans and trash strewn in the alley
- No raccoons or other animals roaming the alleyways at night
- No more windblown trash cans blocking alleyways.
- And best of all, for those whose garages are off the alley, the large potholes that have been filled are staying filled.

The test area includes both sides of Callender Avenue, the south side of Kellogg Avenue, and the north side of Ayres Avenue from Western Avenue to Sterling Avenue. The test, which will continue through November 21, is being conducted in an effort to promote a cleaner and safer community as well as to provide more efficient service.



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Special Programs for Improving Property


- Paint Program: Applications for this program offering financial help for residential property owners are available at City Hall or on the city website.
- Sidewalk Replacement Program: September 30, 2008, is the deadline for petitions to City Hall for sidewalk work to be considered for 2009. Please call City Hall or check the city website for petitions and guidelines for this program for which the city of West Peoria provides funding to assist participants.

Building permits from the city are required before a resident can build a fence, a shed, a new porch or a deck or before installing a new driveway. Most permits cost \$25.

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RESIDENTS

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West Peoria Township News

The West Peoria Township's Workfare Program helps to rid West Peoria streets of litter. According to Township Supervisor Bob DeSutter, "Revised guidelines for the Workfare program allow the supervisor to request that Workfare recipients perform some type of public service, which now includes picking up litter along the roadways."

With regard to these Workfare recipients, DeSutter states, "You can really gauge the economy by the number of requests I receive for public assistance. Most of the folks I talk to are grateful and eager to perform public service, if they are physically able."

Occasionally, West Peorians may see volunteers helping to keep the community clean. Some of these may be Workfare recipients, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, or just people interested in beautifying the environment. Supervisor DeSutter and his wife Sandy are often spotted picking up litter along Western Avenue or on Barker Street, where they reside. If everyone pitches in, we can win the war on litter.

MARK'S MARKET

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West Peoria 673-2590

Moms in West Peoria

Plans are underway for forming a group for working moms or stay-at-home moms to get a chance to network and to get together to share ideas about your common interest—kids—and to provide opportunities to "get out of the house."

The proposed start date for such a group is towards the end of October. A few moms have already signed up to be a part of this effort, which is in its early planning stages. All interested moms, please email WP Moms at west.peoria.moms@gmail.com and provide your contact information. Someone will get back to you with more details.

Boy Scouts News

Boy Scout Troop 11 will once again be selling holiday wreaths starting November 1. Delivery will be on November 22.

The Cub Scouts of Pack 11 are selling popcorn again this year. Sales started on September 2 with delivery to be on November 8. Anyone interested in purchasing wreaths or popcorn should call Bob DeSutter at 674-6668 or contact a scout from Troop 11 or Pack 11.

Recently, Boy Scout Troop 11 went on a campout at Coleman's Farm, located west of Peoria. As part of this event, the eleven scouts and six adults participated in a litter program--called Scout Sweep--in conjunction with Pheasants Forever. For four hours the group worked at the interchange of I-74 and the Kickapoo-Edwards exit, collecting fifteen pounds of aluminum cans to recycle and twelve bags of trash.

The area that the scouts cleaned up is only a small portion of the highway, so much trash was still left. The scouts would like to remind people that whenever somebody throws trash out a vehicle window, someone else will have to pick it up.

Although some of their time was taken up with picking up trash, the scouts still enjoyed the fresh air and had time to hunt for mushrooms for their supper.

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St. Mark's

St. Mark Grade School, located at 711 N. Underhill, welcomes its West Peoria neighbors to stop by any time to get acquainted with the school's staff, faculty and facilities.

West Peorians can help the school by donating the following items: Box Tops for Education, aluminum cans, used inkjet and laser printer cartridges, and Cub Food store receipts. Please bring any of these items to the school office or call 676-7131 to make arrangements for someone to pick them up.

Neighborhood Watch

West Peoria residents--if you are worried about crime in your neighborhood and feel that you can't do anything about it, Neighborhood Watch Groups have been formed and are doing remarkable things to help make our neighborhoods safer.

Help fight crime in your neighborhood by joining with Watch Group members, who are encouraged to serve as extra eyes and ears to help West Peoria's law enforcement officers and their neighbors by being alert, observant, and caring.

Remember that crime prevention is everyone's business.

Watch out for:

- Any unusual, suspicious, or unexplained noise
- Suspicious strangers going door-to-door or looking into residents' windows or into parked cars
- Any strangers who seem to be just wandering in the neighborhood
- Suspicious vehicles moving slowly with no apparent destination
- Business transactions conducted from a car—possibly involving drug sales or stolen items
- Strangers offering goods or repair work, especially at ridiculously low prices

Report crimes to the police! Remember it's better to be safe than to be sorry. For emergencies, call 911.

For a listing of local sex offenders go to the website: www.familywatchdog.us/ShowList

To be a part of this effort, all West Peoria residents are invited to attend the Neighborhood Watch meetings with Deputy Watkins on the third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

Lions Club

The West Peoria Lions Club's members and friends will be at Haddad's Market and South Side Bank on October 17 and 18, soliciting donations for Candy Day, a major fund-raising program. Anyone who wishes to help with this event, please call Carolyn or Jim McCarter 673-6207.

All the proceeds from this statewide Candy Day will be used for humanitarian services. Just a few of these Lions Club endeavors include giving hearing aids to the hearing impaired or eye glasses to the visually

impaired as well as sending children with vision or hearing impairments to Camp Lions Youth Camp.

More extensive financial help goes toward services such as conducting eye research and providing assistance to the blind through the Lions Club Leader Dog Program.

The West Peoria Lions Club is a part of an international network of 1.3 million men and women in 202 countries and geographic areas who work together to answer the needs that challenge communities around the world—with the primary goals of making the world brighter for the visually impaired and louder for the hearing impaired.

Also, members of the West Peoria Lions Club work together to make a difference in their own community by building relationships with local community and business leaders. Anyone interested in working to accomplish these worthwhile goals is welcome to join this organization.

Non-members as well as members can help the Lions Club with its recycling program by donating tabs from aluminum, old keys, aluminum, and eye glasses. Also, please provide the names and addresses of any families who could benefit from Christmas baskets provided by the Lions Club by calling 673-6207.

The Lions Club meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the United Disciples Church on Kellogg.



What's Been Happenin'

Night Out Against Crime



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CLEAN
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Farmington Road & Sterling Avenue

What's Happenin' Next

WPFDF Hog Roast

The annual West Peoria Firefighters' Association hog roast fundraiser will be held at Crusen's on October 19 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

West Peoria Firefighters will be going door-to-door selling raffle and dinner tickets. As always, firefighters will be in uniform while selling tickets.

A dinner ticket and five raffle tickets cost \$5. Be sure to bring the dinner ticket to the hog roast.

For those who are not at home, the visiting firefighter will leave a letter including his/her telephone number so that residents can call to arrange for a return visit to purchase tickets.

Prizes for the raffle include \$500 for first place, \$250 for second place, and \$100 for third place.



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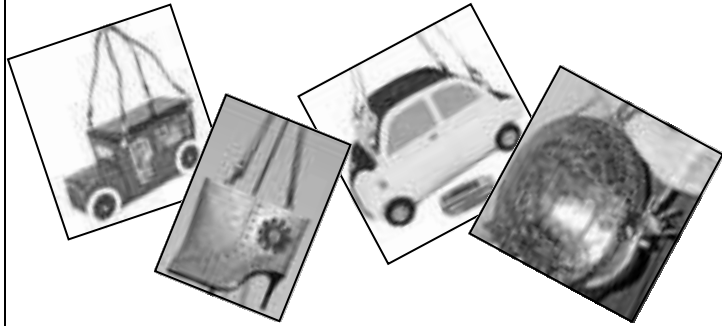


West Peoria
925 N. Western Ave.
676-4421

New Businesses

Absolutely Unique Boutique

The Absolutely Unique Boutique, a new West Peoria business located at 2319 W. Rohmann Avenue—offers a variety of “lifestyle” apparel including clothing, handbags, scarves, accessories, and more. Owner, Wenyi Franklin, plans to offer “hard to find” items and to introduce a new line of designs that cannot be found at other area shops.



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West Peoria Military



Last year, the WPRA's *West Peoria News* and its website began honoring those from West Peoria who have served or are serving in our country's military.

In keeping with the upcoming Veterans' Day celebration on November 11, we once again ask our readers to add names to those already mentioned on the WPRA's website. Also, the *West Peoria News* would like to encourage residents to display their American flags for this celebration. The flags displayed on street poles throughout the city will remain up until after November 11.

The *West Peoria News* and the WPRA's website will publish the names of all those West Peorians or their family members who are currently serving in the military. Please provide the following information:

- Name of the service person and his/her relationship to a West Peoria family
- Branch of the military in which he/she serves
- Place where he/she is presently stationed

The WPRA's website will also publish information about those who have served in any of this country's military endeavors in the past. We would like also to remember those West Peorians who may now be deceased. Please provide the following information:

- Name of the service person and his/her relationship to a West Peoria family
- Branch of the military in which he/she served
- The time period in which he/she served (a particular war, dates, etc.)
- The place where he/she served
- Any interesting anecdotes related to his/her service

Call or e-mail information to any of the *West Peoria News* staff listed on the back page.

Joan Krupa

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through a lifetime of leadership

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The History of West Peoria

By Sharon Crews

On November 3, 2008, West Peoria will celebrate its fifteenth anniversary as a city. Were it not for the West Peoria Residents' Association's persistent campaign to replace sidewalks in our neighborhoods, West Peoria would still be only a township governed by Peoria County laws and ordinances, thus unable to control its own destiny.

Starting in January 1991, the minutes of the WPRa Board of Directors and the newsletter reveal a steadily increasing effort to find a way to replace West Peoria's sidewalks, most of which were installed in the 1930's as a project of the Works Progress Administration, the largest New Deal agency created in 1935 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to provide jobs and income to the unemployed during the Great Depression.

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The initial focus involved overtures to the West Peoria Township government to help defray the cost of repairing and/or replacing the deteriorating sidewalks. The 1991 and 1992 communications between the township and the WPRa involved a constant back and forth effort to find out if the township even had the authority to allocate funds for such a project.

By April 16, 1991, the determination was that the township could only carry out a sidewalk project by levying a tax. Nevertheless, WPRa Board Member Bryant DeFrance and Peoria County Board Chairman Sharon Kennedy continued to research the possibilities. As a result, Kennedy presented a proposal at the West Peoria Township meeting in April, 1992. Endorsed by the WPRa under the leadership of President Gary Dutro, this proposal asked the township to reimburse homeowners—on a strictly voluntary basis--50% of the cost to replace unsafe and deteriorated sidewalks and curbs. The township's matching funds would be expended from the Township General Fund in a reasonable amount on an annual basis.

By April 21, 1992, Illinois General Assembly Representative David Leitch introduced a bill that would give the township authority to tax for sidewalk replacement. The bill was in committee--waiting for an opinion from the attorney general--and the township had set aside some money for sidewalk replacement.

During this delay, WPRa leaders began to have a more monumental aspiration—a desire for the people of West Peoria Township to have more than just new sidewalks; they wanted to control their own destiny, no longer dependent on other units of government for services that taxpayer money originating and remaining in West Peoria could buy.

Actually, this new dream—incorporation— was a dream revisited because in 1957 there had been a short-lived effort to create a city of West Peoria. The revitalized effort began at a WPRa meeting on June 16, 1992, when County Board Member Gary Stella from Peoria Heights spoke about the advantages and disadvantages of West Peoria's becoming a city.

Stella pointed out the possibility that incorporation could bring about a raise in the tax rate. Another financial disadvantage was that as an incorporated city, West Peoria would have to either hire police

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officers or pay the Peoria County Sheriff's Department to provide police protection.

However, on the positive side, incorporation would allow West Peoria not only to institute a sidewalk replacement program but also to establish and enforce its own ordinances, to have control over zoning issues, to receive state sales taxes, income taxes, and motor fuel taxes, to apply for federal or state grants, and to maintain sources of revenue by stopping further annexation of businesses by the city of Peoria. Peoria had already annexed Jumer's Castle Lodge, McDonald's, and Super Liquors on Western Avenue.

On June 16, 1992, the West Peoria Residents' Association unanimously voted to pursue means of incorporation of West Peoria Township.

By December 1992 both the proponents and the opponents of incorporation were making their positions known and presenting their arguments to the residents of West Peoria. However, most of the opponents came from outside of West Peoria. In West Peoria only the proponents were making headlines.

The WPRA set up a task force led by Bryant DeFrance to study information from other municipal governments in order to prepare a hypothetical budget for the proposed city. Presenting the information to a December WPRA meeting, DeFrance, Dutro, and Emil Jones—a certified public accountant who worked for West Peoria Township and sixteen other units of government—postulated that a new city of West Peoria could collect about \$390,000 in revenue and expend about \$262,000, leaving a surplus of about \$128,000 per year.

One big obstacle to incorporation—Peoria--soon surfaced. Illinois state law stipulated that an unincorporated area with a population of less than 7,500 could not seek incorporation without the consent of neighboring municipalities (specifically, within 1 ½ miles of a municipality). West Peoria had a population of 5,300 and was contiguous to Peoria. Permission was also needed from Bellevue and Bartonville.

Two solutions to the problem existed: either to work with state legislators in an effort to change the law or to convince Peoria to give its blessing to a new city of West Peoria.

Some members of the Peoria City Council—led

primarily by Councilman Edward Glover--saw this as an opportunity not just to prevent West Peoria from becoming a city but rather to sway West Peorians to consider annexation instead of incorporation. Even though Councilman Gary Sandberg agreed that annexation was a good idea, he—according to the *Peoria Journal Star*--warned that West Peorians generally distrust the city's motives.

A *Peoria Journal Star's* December editorial weighed in on the side of annexation—actually, declaring that West Peoria owed their tax dollars to Peoria because “most of the people in West Peoria work in the city, shop in the city, and play in the city. All geography, all demographics, all logic says the neighborhood should be part of the city.”

By January 6, 1993, West Peorian Dan Kern's letter to the editor made a very convincing argument—point by point attacking the *PJS* editorial's line of reasoning. Kerns answered the argument about West Peoria's “debt” to Peoria by stating, “This assumes that only the city of Peoria has employers for whom our residents can work. What about all the other non-city residents who work in the city? Ought their homes be annexed too? Pretty silly. Moreover, those nonresidents who shop and play in the city pay dearly to do so—with restaurant and hotel taxes, parking fees and user fees. Peoria ought not think they are doing anyone a favor. We



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could easily go elsewhere, too.”

Furthermore, in early January 1993, West Peoria’s dreams moved forward one more step when the township board, under the leadership of Township Supervisor John Seabeck, approved paying up to \$15,000 for legal services to study the issue and to prepare the petitions needed to put the incorporation question on the November ballot. DeFrance saw the township’s approval as an encouraging sign of support and stated, “I think it’s great. We’ve had new people at every (WPRA) meeting, and no one is walking out of these meetings saying we can’t do it or we’re not going to do it.”

The February WPRA newsletter informed residents that a subcommittee--called West Peoria INC—would be holding informational meetings through May 1993 to present both the pros and cons of incorporation. The main opposition, of course, came from the Peoria City Council. According to an earlier January *Peoria Journal Star* article, one Peoria City Council member had asserted that a sizable group of residents secretly longed for annexation to Peoria. That sizable group never surfaced in spite of Councilman Glover’s visit to speak on Peoria’s behalf and to present the “balanced view” that he believed “reasonable” West Peorians would embrace.

Meanwhile, West Peoria’s registered voters were being asked to sign petitions showing their support for the issue of incorporation to be placed on the November ballot. Non-registered voters were asked to come to a WPRA meeting to register to become eligible to vote in this crucial election.

By July 6 petitions with more than 1,000 signatures from West Peoria’s 3,000 registered voters were ready to be presented at the public hearing conducted by the Peoria City Council to decide whether or not to permit West Peoria to place the referendum for incorporation on the November ballot. Bartonville and Bellevue had already agreed to allow West Peoria to pursue its own destiny; only Peoria stood in the way.

At this meeting WPRA Attorney Sandra Birdsall, who had replaced Tim Bertschy due to a conflict of interest, presented the petitions to the Peoria City Council and predicted a November victory for incorporation. Bryant DeFrance, and Mary Matthews--president of the Moss-Bradley Residential

Association—also spoke at the meeting.

According to the *Peoria Journal Star*, in the end Glover--still disagreeing and wishing for annexation--stated he would not stand in West Peoria’s way. Peoria Mayor Jim Maloof agreed with Glover even though he stated that his conscience was against it and that annexation, not incorporation, was right for Peoria. The two “no” votes were cast by Councilwoman Camille Gibson and Councilman David Koehler, who stated, “In the long term I think it’s much better to be part of a whole than separate pieces.” Sandberg was absent and did not vote.

When the 8-2 Peoria City Council vote was cast, the West Peorians--who packed the council chambers—applauded this decision that paved the way for the final steps toward incorporation.

On August 6, 1993, Peoria County Judge John Barra granted the petition to place the referendum on the November ballot when the final decision would be made by West Peoria residents. A few WPRA resident members, present in the courtroom, shook hands as DeFrance announced, “In November, we’ll have the city of West Peoria.” WPRA President, Gary Dutro, predicted that 90 percent of voters would approve incorporation.

Between August and November, the WPRA held informational meetings, as Dutro stated, “to tell people that taxes won’t increase to run the city and that incorporation is probably the only solution for a brighter future.” Preparations for victory were well underway with community meetings to discuss the legal aspects and mechanics of running a city and to gather the names of those residents interested in becoming officials of this anticipated new city of West Peoria. The weekend before November 3, incorporation supporters were out knocking on doors, reminding residents to vote.

Then came victory at last! “West Peorians woke up Tuesday morning as rural Americans and went to bed residents of a brand-new city. By more than a 10-to-1 margin, residents of the 1 ½ square-mile area west of Western Avenue voted Tuesday to incorporate as a municipality. The vote was 1,480 to 144,” announced the *Peoria Journal Star*.

The December issue of the *West Peoria News* will report the history of West Peoria’s newly-formed government and the appointed officials who served in the early years of West Peoria’s history as a city.

West Peoria Residents' Association

WPRA

West Peoria Residents' Association
c/o 2305 West Ayres
West Peoria, IL 61604

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President	David Pittman	president@westpeoriaresidents.org	676-5237
Vice President/Webmaster	Lynn Dempsey	vp1@westpeoriaresidents.org	
Vice President	Beth Gilbert	vp2@westpeoriaresidents.org	339-9731
Secretary WP News Coordinator	Loretta Fehl	secretary@westpeoriaresidents.org wpnewscoordinator@westpeoriaresidents.org	637-0326
Treasurer WP News Advertisements	Maggie Moore	treasurer@westpeoriaresidents.org wpnewsadvertisements@westpeoriaresidents.org	673-0535
WP News Copy Editor	Sharon Crews	wpnewscopyeditor@westpeoriaresidents.org	676-8109
WP News Layout Editor	Nancy Carson	wpnewslayouteditor@westpeoriaresidents.org	676-5140
WPRA Photographer	Karen Adkins-Dutro		
TO JOIN WPRA, CONTACT MAGGIE MOORE			

Membership is open to all residents of West Peoria as well as those nonresidents who have an interest in supporting this community.

The West Peoria Residents' Association is a private, nonprofit community organization registered with the Illinois Secretary of State.

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