

Towpath Times

Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association

www.meccainc.org

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MECCA Executive Director Neal Brady speaks to a large gathering recently at MECCA's Partnership Dinner.

Vision Shared at Partnership Dinner

*By L. Neal Brady
MECCA Executive Director*

Over 65 invited guests attended the Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association's First Partnership Dinner held on April 20, 2006 at the Speedway Lanes in New Bremen.

The evening's theme "Building a Shared Vision through Partnerships" highlighted the unlimited potential that exists for the future of the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Corridor. Mark Ogden, Administrator of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water spoke of the successful partnership that has developed with ODNR and MECCA and the successes that have promoted protection and development on the historic canal resource.

MECCA Trustee Jim Coons presented information of numerous towpath enhancement and canal restoration projects that were undertaken as well as local planned projects. The Partnership Dinner provided opportunities for MECCA Board of Trustees to network and communicate past accomplishments and discuss future

plans and goals with the guests that represented state, county, and local governmental and not-for-profit entities as well as private corporations and businesses.

Attendees were provided promotional information of the Heritage Corridor and an updated copy of the "Resources Plan, Future of the Miami and Erie Canal". The "Resources Plan" is a reference guide for those interested in the future of the Miami and Erie Canal and is a framework to a master-plan for the planned development and enhancement of the Heritage Corridor. Local communities and entities are encouraged to develop a local grassroots Master Plan that reflects their needs and desires for the Miami and Erie Canal in their local community.

The Dannon Company assisted MECCA in sponsoring this Partnership Dinner that focused on working together to assure a high quality of life exists in the communities and region in which we live.

The "Resource Plan" can be viewed and downloaded in PDF format from the Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association website; www.meccainc.org

Lock One Restoration Project Under Way

*From "The Towpath"
New Bremen Historic Association*

On Monday June 26, 2006 at Noon, the project of restoring Lock One on the Miami and Erie Canal to its 1910 appearance was begun.

A "Gate Opening" Ceremony, the first step of draining the canal in preparation for the reconstruction, was held at New Bremen Lock One North near the intersection of Monroe Street (St. Rt. 274) and Washington Street (St. Rt. 66).

The draining of the canal was to take 2 days, any fish left in the shallow water will be relocated to another location.

While the canal is drained, Saintignon Excavation will dredge the canal of two feet of silt and sediment and the eroded canal banks will be rebuilt back to canal construction standards. This will initially be done between Lock One and Plum Street and could be continued southward. Trucking, stone and clay for this project will cost an estimated \$30,000. This section of the canal was last dredged in the late 1970's.

The contractor for the lock restoration, Jutte Excavating of Fort Recovery, expects the heavy excavation and concrete work to be completed by the end of August.

Wooden gates matching the originals are to be made by Hoge Lumber Company of New Knoxville. A bypass to handle excess water will be constructed around the east side of the lock, similar to the 1910 arrangement.

A re-created spillway will empty into a 50' x 60' basin at the north end of the lock. This will be a

smaller version of the original basin that served Kuenzel Mills, etc. Work on the gates and other details will continue into the fall. Additional parking and landscaping work are planned for the spring of 2007. This will complete the project.

Total cost of the project is expected to be \$841,000. A

grant secured in September 2004 from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) will cover the \$280,000 of the costs with the New Bremen Historical Association providing an additional \$70,000 per the grant's requirements. The balance will be paid by the Village of New Bremen.



GATE OPENING ATENDEES -- (from left) Don Kuck, Wayne York, Kevin Koesters (back) Dennis Klingler (front), Lawrence Egbert, Carl Roediger, Ned Danmeyer, Joyce Holdren, Gen Conradi, Delores Stienecker, Jim Coons, Joyce Ruedebusch, Neal Brady, Larry Dicke and Dru Meyer.

Delphos Area Presents Strategic Plan

The Delphos Canal Commission, Canal Development Committee presented to the public on June 14, 2006 at the Jefferson High School a report for the Strategic Plan for Canal Restoration that the committee has been developing. Nearly 40 individuals attended the presentation that offered a vision and potential enhancements of the Miami and Erie Canal in the Greater Delphos Area that could be realized in the next 1 to 10 years.

The "Strategic Plan for the Restoration of the Miami and Erie Canal in the Greater Delphos, Ohio Area June 14, 2006" is a 14 page document (in Word or PDF format) is available for review. Email MECCA Executive Director Neal Brady, meccadirector@nktelco.net to request the report.



Delphos Canal Commission Cleanup Chairperson Sue Lang speaks at National Trails Day celebration.

Trails Day Celebrates Delphos Restoration

The American Hiking Association's National Trails Day theme "Experience Your Outdoors" speaks to all Americans and encourages them to get outside, get active, and experience the wonders of trails in their own communities and throughout the country.

In celebration of the 14th Annual National Trails Day on June 3, 2006, members of the Delphos Canal Commission, Canal Cleanup Committee and volunteers were saluted by The Miami and Erie Canal Association (MECCA) for their restoration efforts of the Miami and Erie Canal in Delphos. MECCA Executive Director Neal Brady coordinated the celebration event and stated to the nearly 35 individuals in attendance, "Today offers an opportunity to celebrate the success of grassroots community efforts in building partnerships and initiating projects that create an improved quality

of life in the local community and promote healthier lifestyles for their Citizens."

Delphos Mayor Jerry Neumeier, City Council President Bob Ulm, Delphos Canal Permanent Trustees Lou Hohman, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water Supervisor Steve Dorsten and Canal Clean up Committee Chairwoman

Sue Lang all spoke on the efforts to refurbish the canal banks and keep the waterway free of debris and as a point of pride in the city.

Chairwoman and MECCA Trustee Sue Lang thanked everyone who helped with the canal cleanups. "We had seven cleanups with more than 450 volunteers amassing of 3,500 man-hours. This is a tremendous feat for a town of 6,900 strong."



National Trails Day hikes on towpath in Delphos.

The restoration of the portion of canal and towpath from Fifth Street to Seventh Street was the focus of the celebration event.

Canal Mile Markers Still Visible on Towpath

Individuals following the canal towpath trail will observe what looks like a gravestone. These stones are actually mile markers that were as important to the operation of the canal traffic as signage on our modern highways.

Mile markers were placed along the canal towpath at one mile intervals beginning in Cincinnati. The stones were generally about 4 foot total height with 2 foot exposed above ground level.



Mile marker near New Bremen.

The exposed faces (front, back, and sides) were “finished” or worked by a stone mason. The mason would create semi-smooth surfaces and the mile number would be chiseled into the front face. The numbers were approximately 2 inches in height.

There are several mile markers existing in their original locations. Between New Bremen and St. Marys, mile markers 124, 125, 126, and 127 can be located. Approximately 100 yards north of the intersection of Lock 2 Road and New Bremen- New Knoxville Road mile marker 124 can be found. This location is 124 miles north on the canal from Cincinnati.

In downtown Fort Loramie in the Canal Park, mile Marker 116 can be found. Lockington, the southern terminus of the Loramie Summit, was the location of the 100 mile marker. This marker was removed from its original location and its current location is unknown. Others mile markers are still in their original location generally in very remote areas on the canal towpath.

Many mile markers have been taken and used as lawn ornaments and fireplace stones. Others were pulled and discarded to allow for farming access. All mile markers and canal related objects are the Property of the State of Ohio. Mile marker 149, that was located between Bloomlock Road and Landeck Road in Allen County was recovered and is currently on display at the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Center.

Canal Society of Ohio Fall Tour 2006

North of the Summit

Join fellow gongoozlers from around Ohio and spend a weekend learning more about the Miami and Erie Canal. Beginning on Friday October 13 through Sunday October 15 presentations and tours will highlight the rich canal resources that still exist nearly 100 years after the last canal boat plied the waters of the “Ditch that brought the world to the wilderness”. Tour headquarters will be the Comfort Inn in Piqua, Ohio. On Friday evening a short program will highlight the stops on the Saturday tour as busses carry participants north along the canal to Delphos. Along the way, you will view the canal, locks, aqueducts, mill sites, and the towns that owed their early prosperity to the man-made marvel. On Saturday evening a catered banquet will feature a speaker and fun back at tour central. Sunday morning concludes the weekend with a mini-tour before participants head home.

For more information, or reservations, contact Andy Hite, Fall Tour Chairman, at 800-752-2619 or ahite@ohiohistory.org.

Reservation Information

Complete Tour Package:	\$62.50
Saturday Tour Only:	\$45.00
Saturday Banquet Only:	\$20.00
Tour Book Only:	\$10.00
Hotel: Per room, Per night	\$52.00

- Reservations are responsibility of the individual and may be made by calling 937-778-8100 prior to **September 22, 2006** to guarantee rate.

Towpath Being Converted to Buckeye Trail



Lock 32 of the Miami and Erie Canal in Northwest Ohio.

Recently representatives from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Office of Real Estate and Land Management, the Division of Water, volunteers from the Buckeye Trail Association and MECCA Executive Director Neal Brady toured and viewed several sections of the Miami and Erie Canal Towpath in Putnam, Paulding and Defiance Counties.

The tour began in Ottoville with a driving tour to Junction and into Defiance County. The Wabash and Erie Canal passed through the northern townships of Paulding County and the Miami Canal entered south and had a course through the eastern townships of the county. They united at the Village of Junction.

The Buckeye Trail association, under the direction of current President Herb Hulls and Statewide Trail Coordinator Rick Adamson, are interested in enhancing the quality and safety of the designated trail network through Paulding and Putnam Counties. To improve the trail network, it is anticipated that approximately 20-plus miles of trail that currently follows county roadways will be moved onto the State of Ohio

owned canal towpath.

What was observed on the tour was several unique canal related structures that included locks, mile markers, aqueducts and the prism of the old canal. Two hand-laid stone aqueducts in remarkable good condition were located in the immediate Junction area. Very few sections of the towpath are currently accessible due to heavy tree, shrub and brush undergrowth.

To aggressively pursue their goal, a

crew of Buckeye Trail Volunteers worked on the canal Trail in the Junction area between July 2 and July 6, 2006. From reports over 6.5 miles of towpath trail was opened for foot traffic beginning in southern Defiance County south to Brown Township Road 38 in Paulding County. Their work continued through daily rainstorms and hot weather temperatures.

The workers were extremely pleased with the length of trail opened with exceeded original expectations. The workers were visible working on the trail and were able to meet several adjacent landowners and trail friends. Additional trail project work is being planned for Fall 2006 through Late Spring 2007 on the trail section. Additional crews are continuing to work on trail improvements on sections of trail through put Ohio.

The Buckeye Trail currently extends over 1,435 miles circling the state of Ohio and is identified by blue blazes on trees and trail structure. The Buckeye Trail Association is a non-profit volunteer organization established in 1959 to maintain and promote the designated trail.



Stone aqueduct Junction near towpath that is being converted to trail.

Cotton Mill Coming Down in St. Marys

The St. Marys City Council approved and authorized the demolition of Glass Bock Building and a portion of the Cotton Mill building in the downtown canal corridor.

The Glass Block Building was severely damaged by fire October 31, 2004. The deed to the building was recently turned over to the City. The portion of the St. Marys Cotton Mill to be demolished has been vacant for numerous years and is in unsafe condition. With the demolition, the City plans to open up the former Miami and Erie Canal that lies beneath the 2 structures and landscape the area.

The original location of Lock 13 was somewhere underneath the Cotton Mill structure. It is unknown if any of the original structure is in place. During demolition, care will be taken to preserve and protect any remaining canal lock structure that may exist



Lock 13 in St. Marys before structure was built.

10-Mile Hike Planned

The Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District (JAMPD) is sponsoring a 10 Mile Canal Towpath Hike on Saturday October 14, 2006. The Towpath Hike event will start at Deep Cut Historical Park located on SR 66 south of Spencerville with hikers meeting in the parking lot at 9:00AM. Hikers will then car pool to St. Marys and begin the hike near the Cotton Mill. The 10 mile hike north will take 4 to 5 hours ending at Deep Cut Historical Park. Interested hikers are requested to register for the Hike by contacting JAMPD at 419-221-1232.



Beginning of new towpath Walk Path in St. Marys.

Final Phase of Walk Path Begins

*By Steve Dorsten
ODNR Division of Water*

The Miami and Erie Canal Towpath weaving North of High St. in St. Marys to U.S. Rt. 33 is the project site. Construction includes a base of a geo-textile fabric that creates a barrier that prevents soil from working up through the aggregate layers and provides stone stability.

Three levels of various sizes of compacted stone comprise the walk path. The fabric and stone are sandwiched in an 8" deep by 10' wide soil trough. Approximately 1,300 linear feet of the walk path and a 45' by 25' parking lot are complete.

An additional 1,400 linear feet of towpath shows the fabric and first layer of stone installed. The all-weather trail surface is now ready to be enjoyed by non-motorized traffic. Funding has been provided through an Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Recreational Trail Fund. Construction is being completed by the ODNR Division of Water, St. Marys staff.



Parking lot at the beginning of the Walk Path.

Schedule of Upcoming Canal Corridor Events

- **August 11-13, 2006**

St Marys "Summerfest"

For More information; www.stmarysohio.org

- **August 11, 2006**

"Dinner and an Evening" with legendary folk artist and Civil War buff Jason Ringenberg.

7 p.m. at Rythm & Brews.

Contact the Auglaize County Historical Society at 419-738-9328 or 419-394-7069

- **August 18-20, 2006**

New Bremen "Bremenfest"

For more information; www.newbremen.com

- **August 19, 2006**

7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

"An Evening on the Canal"

Johnson Historical Farm

RESERVATION ONLY event,

Contact 937-773-2522 or 800-752-2619 to book your passage

- **September 7, 2006**

"Andrew's Raiders", lecture by Larry Huffman

7 p.m. at the Olive Branch Church, Shinbone. Contact

Auglaize County Historical Society 419-738-9328 or 419-394-7069

- **September 8-10, 2006**

Shelby County Applefest

For more information; www.shelbyapplefest.com

- **September 15 -17, 2006**

"Old Fashioned Delphos Canal Days" - Delphos.

For more information; www.delphos-ohio.com

- **September 23, 2006**

9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

"Following the Feeders: Where does the water come from?"

RESERVATION ONLY event, Ohio Historical Society, contact 937-773-2522 or 800-752-2619 to save your spot for this canal excursion.

- **September 29, 30 & October 1, 2006**

"Minster Oktoberfest"

For further information, call 419-629-0313

- **October 5, 2006**

Bus Trip to the Hayes Presidential Center, Lyme Village, and other sites in Sandusky County.

Contact Auglaize County Historical Society at 419-738-9328 or 419-394-7069

- **October 13 -15, 2006**

Canal Society of Ohio, "Fall Tour 2006, North of the Summit".

See article in this issue.

For more information, or reservations, contact Andy Hite, Fall Tour Chairman, at 800-752-2619 or ahite@ohiohistory.org.

- **October 14, 2006**

"10 Mile Canal Towpath Hike, St. Marys to Deep Cut"

See article in this issue.

- **October 15, 2006**

"Walk with Nature, St. Marys"

- **September 20, 2006, 7 p.m.**

Bi-Monthly Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association

Board of Trustees Meeting

At Canal Heritage Center New Bremen

- **December 2, 2006, 4 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.**

"Christmas on the Farm with Charles Dickens", Johnson Historical Farm

RESERVATION ONLY event, Contact 937-773-2522 or 800-752-2619 to confirm your spot for this very unique holiday event.

MECCA

"Thank You"

- RE/MAX Select, Barbara and Lowell Ziegenbusch - printing of the "Towpath Times" newsletter
- The Dannon Company, St. Marys American Legion Post, Fraternal Order of Eagle 767 - St. Marys, The Delphos Herald, the St. Marys Community Improvement Corporation and the New Bremen Corporation, for financial support to continue the work and promote the mission of the Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association.

MECCA

"Wish List"

The following is needed for the operation of the Organization.

- Financial support for monthly operating expenses
- Copier
- Office Supplies
- Canal Educational Displays

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIVING TO MECCA

Many people consider making charitable contributions for income tax purposes. Remember, MECCA is a tax-exempt entity and contributions to it are tax deductible. Contributions can be in cash or "in kind". Appreciated stock can be given to a charity and the donor gets a charitable deduction for the fair market value of the stock on the date of the gift. If you are considering charitable gifts please consider a contribution to MECCA to help it continue promoting the historic canal corridor.

Miami Erie Canal Corridor Association (MECCA) Membership/Donation Form



Please check membership or donation level desired

\$10 Individual..... _____ \$20 Family..... _____

\$50 Sponsor..... _____ \$100 Partner..... _____

\$250 Corridor Partner..... _____

One-time tax deductible contribution of..... _____

Total amount enclosed..... _____

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ email _____

Clip and Mail This Form to: MECCA • P.O. Box 246 • New Bremen, Ohio • 45869

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