

Towpath Times



Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association

www.meccainc.org

Volume 9 • Number 3 • Winter 2007

Lock 13 “Uncovered” in St. Marys

*By Todd Fleagle
Manager of Industrial and Community Development
City of St. Marys*

The City of St. Marys’ demolition contractor, CRS Demolition, is nearing the final stages of the demolition of the former Glass Block building and portions of the Cotton Mill structure. The dilapidated buildings were razed in order to open the Miami & Erie Canal waters in uptown St. Marys. One of the buildings torn down was actually constructed over the Lock 13 area. The concrete flumes that were once part of the Cotton Mill process water under the Cotton Mill building are also being removed, with only the concrete walls of the Lock remaining. As part of the current project, the hole that remains after the demolition will be filled with soils to provide a 4 to 1 slope for access to the Lock and Canal area.



Lock 13 looking toward Spring Street in St. Marys.

The City of St. Marys is working closely with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources as it pertains to the Canal lands in this area to create an attractive landscape in and near the Lock 13 area without harming the hydraulic requirements for the Canal.

The project area also provides exciting opportunities with the remaining City owned structures and parcels adjacent to the Canal. The remaining 32,000 square

foot Cotton Mill building, west of the Canal, is being evaluated to determine the cost and viability of the structure for potential new commercial /professional space for the uptown area. In addition, the St. Marys Community Improvement Corporation has been authorized to market and sell the existing Glass Block parcel (fronts Spring Street, east of Canal) for a new commercial structure. Any commercial entity interested in the parcel must make a minimum \$850,000 investment in a new structure in order to be considered for transfer of the property.



The facing of Lock 13 remains largely intact.

The former Cotton Mill Boiler House that lies north of High Street, adjacent to the Canal, is also being evaluated for environmental abatement of the building. If no viable use for the structure is identified, the building may be torn down. The demolition of this structure would be the first step in cleaning up the area north of High Street that serves as the trail head for the Miami & Erie Canal Towpath area.

Lock One Restoration Project Progressing

Jutte Construction of Fort Recovery has been removing sections of the 1910 era concrete Lock 1 in New Bremen, and new concrete is being installed.

The concrete is being poured into formed walls following normal modern construction practices. The contractor is using steel framing to build forms and then concrete is pumped from large trucks into the constructed forms.

This project is requiring a few extra steps as the work being completed is attempting to create the look of what the original 1910 era lock exhibited. Construction methods in 1910 involved the use of varied width wood planks to form walls. Due to the extreme weight of the concrete and limited mechanical devices to assist with the work, short sections of concrete were poured by hand on a daily basis. The finished surface of the lock exhibited a wood grain pattern left by the varied width wood planks.

For restoration of the lock to its original 1910 look, Jutte Construction has developed a process of attaching a thin layer of dried wood sheeting to the inside of the steel forms. This process has created a wood plank



New concrete walls of Lock 1 have a wood plank texture appearance.

texture imprinted on the finished concrete surface. The finished lock will exhibit essentially the same appearance as in 1910 but the quality of construction will exceed what could be attained 100 years ago.

The remaining concrete work is projected to be completed by December, 2006 with landscaping of the adjacent areas to be completed by the Summer 2007.



Replacement concrete at Lock One in New Bremen is nearly completed.

New Tax Laws Assist Donations from Pensions

The tax laws are ever changing and they changed again this past July with the passage of the Pension Protection Act of 2006. If you have reached the age of 70, and have an IRA, we hope you will read about this change.

For the remainder of 2006 and all of 2007, individuals who have reached the age of 70 can make tax free charitable contributions from IRA accounts to The Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association or to your favorite charity. Donors can give no more than \$100,000 by the end of 2006 and another \$100,000 next year. This is the first time direct gifts to charity from IRA accounts, without taxing the withdrawal, has been available. As always, your tax advisor is the best resource for learning the limitations and requirements of the new law. Neal Brady, MECCA Executive Director will be happy to provide you additional general information about the new tax law. Just call at 419-733-6451

Grant Funds Towpath Upgrade at Deep Cut

The Johnny Appleseed Park District has received a \$78,000 Clean Ohio Trails Grant to enhance 1.6 miles of Miami-Erie Canal Towpath from Deep Cut Park to the village of Spencerville.

The project is a joint venture between the park district and the ODNR Division of Water. Trail enhancements will include widening and paving with a fine stone. A similar project was recently completed just north of St. Marys, and is under construction near Lock 14 in Auglaize County.

Construction is expected to begin in 2008 with some preliminary work beginning in 2007.

Canal Bump Bridge Remnants Recovered

By Neal Brady
Executive Director

Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association

This fall construction season, the Auglaize County Engineer's Department replaced the "Steinecker Road Bridge" as it crossed the St. Marys Feeder adjacent to the Goodyear Plant. Steinecker Road was originally State Route 66 as the route entered St. Marys from the South.

Upon removing the old bridge decking and structure, a concrete pillar and turn table apparatus from a "Bump" or automatic swing bridge was uncovered.

The St. Marys Feeder provided water to fill the main canal from Grand Lake but was somewhat unique that it was also utilized as a transportation link supporting canal boat traffic into the Lake. Canal boats entered Grand Lake through the Bulkhead Lock. The original "bump" bridge crossing the feeder was just a few feet above the water line of the canal. A canal boat would actually bump or push open the bridge. The bridge structure would pivot on a turntable pinion and on supporting rollers. The bridge was counterbalanced and would return to the closed position after the boat had passed.

When the bridge was fully opened, a 20' wide waterway would allow a 14' 9" wide canal boat pass.

The Engineer's Office crew removed the turntable apparatus from the concrete pillar and transferred it to the owner, The State of Ohio, Division of Water. The turntable is currently on loan to MECCA and is being

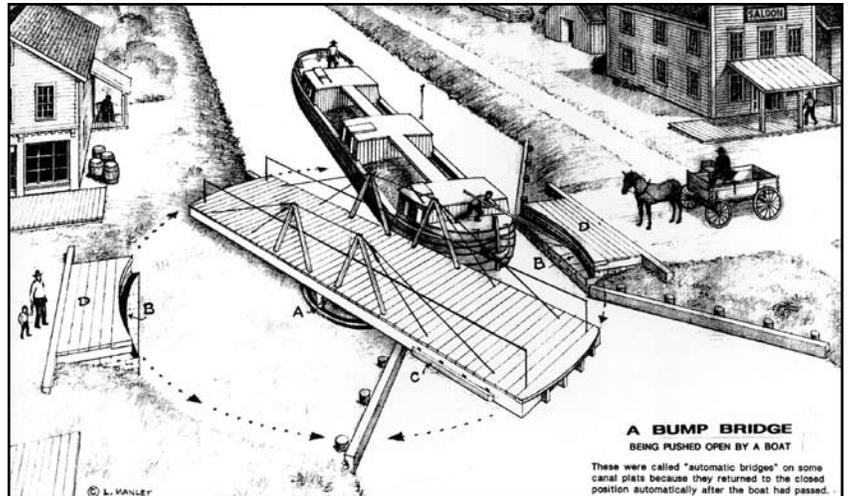


Illustration of how a typical canal bump bridge operated.

displayed at the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Center in New Bremen. The concrete pillar was left in place for historical purposes as it did not interfere with the installation of the new free span bridge structure.

The concrete pillar more than likely replaced a wooden pillar structure that supported the original bridge. Concrete became available in the 1880's and numerous canal renovations and improvements were completed around 1910.

The Auglaize County Engineer's Office recognizes the historical significance of the many structures that have served the citizens of the county for decades and are being replaced to satisfy today's transportation needs. It is appreciated by many canal enthusiasts and local history buffs that the Engineer and his staff take extra efforts to preserve and protect the unique items they locate.



The bridge turntable was recovered from the bridge pedestal (right) and is on display at MECCA's office.



Steve Dorsten of the ODNR Division of Water explains Lock 14 improvements to a canal society tour group.

Ohio Canal Society Enjoys Miami-Erie Tour

*By Andy Hite
Ohio Historical Society*

The Oct. 13, 2006 weekend saw 43 canal enthusiasts from Ohio and Pennsylvania gather in Piqua for a weekend of “gongoozling” along the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Corridor from Newport to Deep Cut.

On Friday evening the group met to receive its tour material and enjoy a slide presentation of the sites to be visited on Saturday by Canal Society of Ohio (CSO) Trustee, MECCA Board Member, and Fall Tour Chair Andy Hite.

On Saturday morning the group boarded their bus and began the journey north. The first stop of the tour was Lock 1 in New Bremen, where MECCA Board Member and Fall Tour Committee Member Tom Fledderjohann led the group in a visit to the lock rehabilitation construction site. It was a real treat for those on the tour to see a new lock being built in 2006.

As the group continued the tour north there were stops at Lock 8 and the St. Marys Aqueduct. Further north in St. Marys at the site of Lock 12, Steve Dorsten of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water started a walking tour of the canals in St. Marys. His discussions and explanations assisted the group to understand the extensive canal water power network that once existed in the community.

After lunch, the tour continued with a drive-by view of Forty Acre Pond and a stop at Lock 14. Dorsten discussed the rehabilitation work completed on the lock that functions as a water control structure. He remained with the group for the afternoon and interpreted the history and operation of the restored Six Mile Aqueduct and Deep Cut.

As the group headed back to Piqua, the afternoon concluded with a very enjoyable stop at the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Center and MECCA Administrative Office hosted by Neal Brady. This was very much enjoyed as many on the tour had never visited the office and many walked away with

a better appreciation of the efforts being expended along the Miami and Erie Canal in west central Ohio.

On Saturday evening the group enjoyed a banquet and were entertained by Piqua historian Jim Oda, who shared many humorous stories of Piqua during the canal era.

Sunday morning a short mini tour was a stop at the Piqua Historical Area. The group visited Lock 8 South, the guard lock, and a walk onto the cribbing of the State Dam in the Great Miami River.

Each year the Canal Society of Ohio hosts both Spring and Fall tour.

Join the Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association

What does the MECCA mean to you and your family? Being a member at the individual, family, sponsor, partners or corridor partner level will help the organization work building grass roots committees, building strategic initiatives and educating local, state, and federal elected officials of the get resources and assets in the Heritage Corridor. Be assured the MECCA will continuously promote the region as a travel and tourism destination. Much effort will be directed to educate and build a sense of ownership in the local community of the history of the canal as well as share a vision for the future. Your membership enables us to do important project work:

- Plan and conduct special events, tours, and activities to expand education of canal related activities and issues to the public, elected officials and community leaders
- Represent and promote the interests of the local community based committees in relation with State and Federal officials and programs
- Continue to support the needs of the canal and trails communities.

Visit us online: www.meccainc.org or contact us at 419-733-6451 or meccadirector@nktelco.net



Canal boat donated by Minster Historical Society.

Minster Historical Society Donates Canal Boat Float

By Neal Brady
Executive Director
Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association

The Minster Historical Society has graciously donated to the Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association a 25' long by 8" wide replica of a canal boat.

The attractive canal boat is constructed on a four-wheeled farm trailer frame and will be able to travel on roadways under "Slow Moving Vehicle" regulations. The Historical Society utilized the float numerous years ago in local parades and events to promote the Minster OctoberFest and other activities and purposes of the Society.

MECCA plans to use the canal boat promote the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Corridor and the Miami and Erie Canal Scenic Byway. Plans are being developed to establish static educational displays and decorate the boat to represent all Corridor Partners in promoting the assets and amenities of the region.

MECCA members and Partners are encouraged to participate in naming the boat and suggesting opportunities to use this boat as a promotional tool.

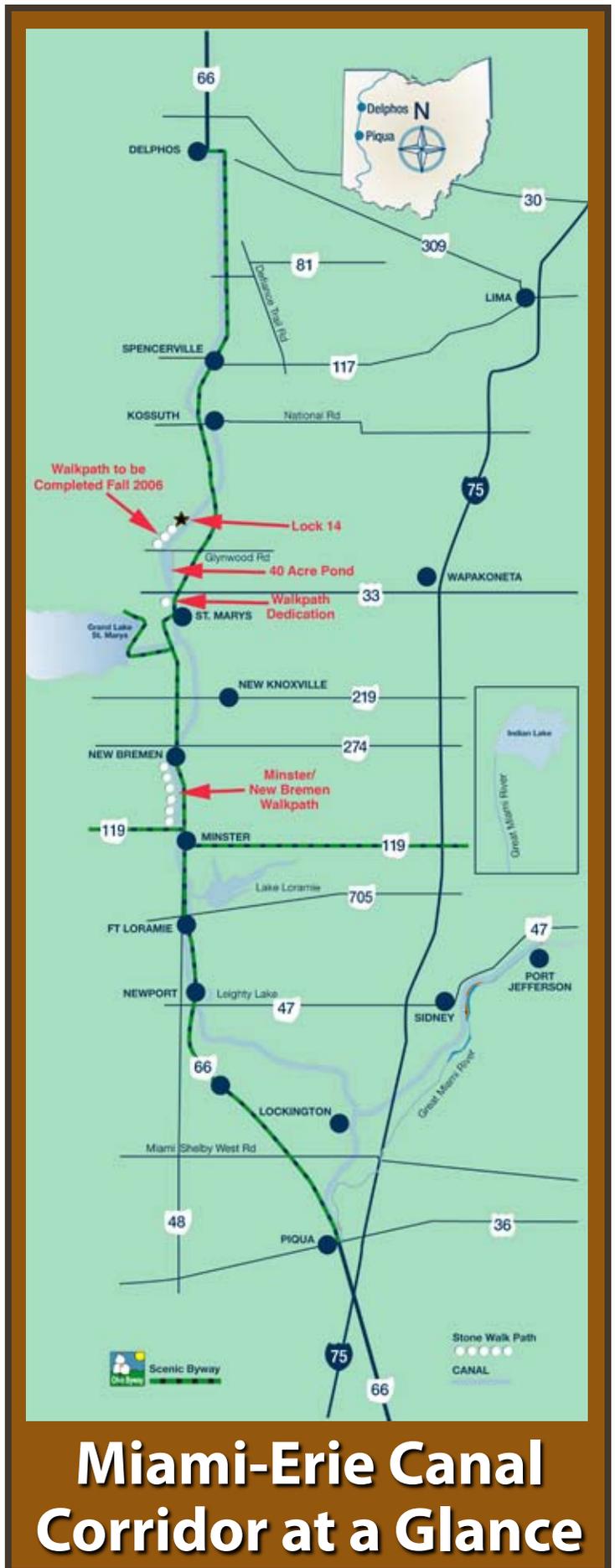
Upcoming MECCA Events

Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association Annual Membership Meeting

- January 31, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. at the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Center, New Bremen followed by bi-monthly Board of Trustees meeting.

Bi-Monthly Board of Trustees meeting at 7 p.m. on the following dates at the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Center and MECCA Office:

- March 21, 2007; • May 16, 2007; • July 18, 2007;
- September 19, 2007; • November 21, 2007



Miami-Erie Canal Corridor at a Glance

Delphos Seniors Learn About Canal

The Delphos Rotary Club coordinated and sponsored the 9th Annual High School Seniors Walking Tour on September 27, 2006.

Approximately 195 high school seniors from Delphos Jefferson High School and Delphos St. Johns High School were provided the opportunity to learn more about the town's history and community.

This year the students had more time in the downtown area to tour the Capital Theatre and visit the Delphos Postal Museum and the Delphos Canal Museum.

Beginning the day, presentation were made to the student group an overview of the city's founding and growth as well as a vision of how Delphos is a vital link in the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Corridor.

At Lock 24 located at the north edge of the city, Steve Dorsten, Supervisor with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water, discussed the history and working of the canal system and the maintenance activities that are required to maintain the present day water control system. The VFW and the VFW Auxiliary provided lunch for all participants and presented a closing presentation at the War Memorial.

The annual tour was the brainchild of Joann Smith of the Delphos Rotary Club and was formed as an effort to expose the community's youth, albeit briefly, to the community's history before they leave for college, some never to return.



Delphos students learn about Lock 24



Completed stone path north of St. Marys.

Final Phase of Walk Path Begins

*By Steve Dorsten
ODNR Division of Water*

Another section of canal bank now sports a newly completed improved walking trail with the one mile compacted crushed limestone walk path from High Street, St. Mary's across from the Power Plant to U.S. Rt. 33.

The 10 foot wide Miami and Erie Canal Towpath Trail is constructed with a layer of geo-textile fabric topped with two individually compacted layers courser sized limestone and a finish layer consisting of two inches of compacted finer sized stone. The completion of the trail is the final phase of the project to rehabilitate the section of canal between uptown St. Marys to the U.S. 33.

Work completed in previous phases included: 1) removing all trees, stumps and brush from the towpath to the waterline for improve canal bank stabilization; 2) hauling into the work site primarily clay type soils, compacting fill areas and re-contouring the canal banks to original design; 3) installing rip rap along the water edge for erosion control and longer term canal bank support and stabilization.

Some extra amenities were added during this project: a 30 foot x 40 foot parking area off High Street; a 30 foot x 30 foot staging area 100 yards south of U.S. 33; an enhanced approach to the access tile under U.S. 33; and bank stabilization and erosion control along the railroad bed.

Finishing this section of the towpath trail kicks off the beginning of the next trail stone walk path improvement, which begins at Gynwood Road at 40 Acre Pond to Lock 14 North. This project is a partnership with the Heritage Trail Park District and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water, St. Marys Office. Trail clearing work is scheduled to begin around the first of December.

Walk With Nature



Hikers enjoy the sunshine for the annual Walk With Nature, which was held in October.

Hundreds Enjoy Annual Walk on Trail

On Sunday October 15, approximately 500 walkers enjoyed a brisk sunny day to walk the Miami and Erie Canal Towpath in the St. Marys and New Bremen area. This annual organized hike has been conducted for 38 years and was the coordinated by Eldon Montague in the early years. In 1989, The St. Marys area Chamber of Commerce and the St. Marys Kiwanis Club took on the walk as a community project. In 1997 the walk merged with the New Bremen – New Knoxville Rotary Club Canal Walk.

This year's walk was the eight consecutive years of the combined walk and was co-chaired by New Bremen – New Knoxville Rotarian Tom Fledderjohann and St. Marys Kiwanian Leroy Goodwin. Steve Dorsten, Supervisor with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water established a contact center under the St. Marys Utility Building parking area where participants were greeted and an extensive collection of canal related pictures and maps was available for review. Tom Fledderjohann anchored the southern end of the walk route and discussed the history as well as the much potentials for development the Miami and Erie Canal Corridor offers today. 40 Acre Pond at Gynwood Road was the north terminus, where Leroy Goodwin greeted participants and provided historic and natural description of the canal structure.

The St. Marys City School System provided bus transportation with stops at Gynwood Road, Memorial Park in St. Marys and at the Canal intersection on State Route 219. Numerous Kiwanis Members were stationed at various locations along the trail to assure all participants experienced a positive experience in this annual event.

MECCA “Thank You”

- Thanks to Rick Hamilton, Culligan of Lima for supplying water coolers and supplies at the Auglaize County Fair booth
- Thanks to Lowell Ziegenbusch for storing the canal boat float.
- Thanks to the New Bremen and New Knoxville Rotary Club for the donation of a HP Laserjet printer.

MECCA “Wish List”

The following is needed for the operation of the Organization.

- Financial support for monthly operating expenses
- Canal Educational Displays
- Volunteers

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 promote the historic canal corridor.

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



Please check membership or donation level desired

\$15 Individual..... _____ \$25 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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