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Officials on hot seat at Bright 74 open house Study down to one concept

BY DENISE FREITAG BURDETTE Assistant Editor

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The third and final open house for the Bright 74 Study Wednesday, Sept. 14, at East Central High School, St. Leon, started off with more of a calm vibe near its 4 p.m. beginning.

The focus of the study, being managed by OKI Regional Council of Governments, at the request of Dearborn County commissioners, is "a year-long, transportation planning study to investigate options for improvements to existing roadways, potential new roadways, and/or a combination of both to improve safety, access and other travel needs between the unincorporated Bright Area of northeastern Dearborn County and Interstate 74," according to OKI.

But by the time it wrapped up at 7 p.m., small crowds of people had gathered placing county commissioner and OKI Board of Directors president Kevin Lynch, OKI strategic planning manager Robyn Bancroft, and county engineer Todd Listerman on the hot seat, asking questions about the study, the latest concept and how the surveys have been conducted.

Bright business owner and resident Brian DeBruler said he was disappointed that the open house SEE BRIGHT PAGE 8



DENISE FREITAG BURDETTE/THE JOURNAL-PRESS

Bright resident and business owner Brian DeBruler, left, speaks with OKI strategic planning manager Robyn Bancroft, center, and Dearborn County commissioner and OKI Board of Directors president Kevin Lynch during the Bright 74 open house Wednesday, Sept. 14, at East Central High School. Bancroft holds a copy of a petition against the study that has reached at least 1,084 signatures.

Woodland Hills therapy gives man new start

BY JOE AWAD Managing Editor

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Brett Duenhoft doesn't talk much, but behind his bright brown eyes and broad smile it is easy to tell his mind is active, and he knows he will not be in a power chair for the remainder of his life.

The former Hidden Valley Lake resident was involved in a horrific traffic accident in St. Leon that killed his grandfather, and, according to University of Cincinnati Hospital, left Brett, then 24, without hope of recovering from a comatose, lethargic existence.

But dedicated employees at Woodland Hills Care Center, Lawrenceburg, changed that grim prognosis into a story of success and hope, said Sue Duenhoft, Brett's grandmother

"They were going to Minnesota to take a dog up there. It was their first trip together and they were very excited. My husband was a Teamster truck driver for 48 years, and he never had one accident over a million miles. That night, though, he was up in St. Leon, and, for some reason, went down the exit, and a semi was coming at the same time SEE THERAPY PAGE 8





JOE AWAD/THE JOURNAL-PRESS The Duenhoft family agrees the road to full recovery will be a long one, but are certain Brett Duenhoft will regain use of his legs. Behind Brett, from left: Grandma Sue Duenhoft, girlfriend Cheyenne Winters, and mom Carissa Harrell.

Gabbard building is coming down

BY CHANDRA L. MATTINGLY Staff Reporter cmattingly@registerpublications.com

An 1875 building in Aurora's Downtown Historic District is slated for demolition, city manager Guinevere Emery told the city park board and city council at their Monday, Sept. 12,

meetings.

Known as the Gabbard building, the structure at 106 Judiciary St. and adjacent empty lots will be replaced with a riverfront park in a cooperative effort between various city and county enti-

SEE GABBARD PAGE 2

Fallen firefighters will be honored



CHANDRA L. MATTINGLY/THE JOURNAL-PRESS Efforts to stabilize the Gabbard building were unsuccessful.

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Jeffrey William Reick

The U.S. Fire Service in honoring the lives of 79 firefighters who died in the line of duty in 2015 and 33 firefighters who died in previous years during the 35th National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service Sunday, Oct. 9.

Dearborn County fallen firefighters being honored are Jeffrey William Reick of the Aurora Fire Department and Tom D. Stevens Sr. of Bright Volunteer Fire

Company.

Reick was 35 years old when he died in 1998 of a gastric hemorrhage while setting up for a live fire training exercise. Stevens died in 2014 of a heart attack within hours after responding to a carbon monoxide alarm activation.

The service begins at 10 a.m. at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg,

SEE HONORED PAGE 8



Tom D. Stevens Sr.

WEATHERforecast Today: High: 86 Low: 61

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BRIGHT

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did not provide an open forum

this time around, as suggested

by residents during a study

advisory committee meeting

swered were ones asked by

people while viewing the dis-

plays. ... Questions outside the

scope of what was presented

were answered vaguely or not

at all. And no one from OKI

or the advisory committee was

witnessed taking any notes

regarding people's concerns,"

In a string of emails ex-

changed with some residents

against the Bright 74 study

prior to the meeting, OKI stra-

tegic planning manager Robyn

Bancroft said "Throughout the

entire Study, OKI has greatly

desired and needed citizen

participation to result in a rec-

ommendation that has public

DeBruler started the Face-

book page Bright Indiana - I

74 Road Project, that has over

1,225 members. Most people

commenting on the page are

against the Bright 74 Study.

A petition started against the

study currently has over 1,080

house in June, four possible

concepts were presented to

better connect Bright to I-74

including improving exisiting

roads, a Whites Hill Road con-

nector, a Carr Road connector

and a State Line Road con-

nector. During the Wednesday

open house, only one concept

was presented with three com-

ponents

During the previous open

signatures on change.org.

said DeBruler.

support."

"The only questions an-

in August.

HONORED FROM PAGE 1

Md., and is open to the public. During the service, a bronze plaque bearing the names of the fallen will be officially added to the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. These firefighters will also be remembered in a special Candlelight Service at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 8.

Although the number of firefighters honored this year is higher than in recent years, the number of line-of-duty deaths that occurred in 2015 is actually lower. The increase reflects the new ruling that Public Safety Officer Benefits recognize deaths caused by illnesses from 9/11 as line-of-duty. This year, the names of 22 FDNY members who died before 2015 and two who died in 2015 from 9/11-related illnesses will be added to the Memorial.

"The Federal Government conducted a thorough review to ensure that deaths related to 9/11 illnesses can now be recognized as line-of-duty deaths, and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation is very pleased with this decision," said Chief Dennis Compton, Chairman of the NFFF Board of Directors.

Just prior to Memorial Weekend, leaders of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus will help launch the annual tribute. They will present 112 American flags flown over the U.S. Capitol to the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. This ceremony will occur on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 28. The flags will be escorted by the honor guard to the National Fire Academy and flown over the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. They will then be on display at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Chapel until being presented to the survivors during the memorial service.

traordinary blend of courage and compassion which allows them to willingly face tremendous risks to help those in need," said Compton.

More than 5,000 people, including families, friends, members of Congress, Administration officials and firefighters are expected to attend on Sunday. Firefighter Honor Guards and Pipe & Drum units from across

NFFF provides live satellite feed and streaming of ceremonies along with video of events for downloading courtesy of VISTA Worldlink and WUSA9.com. For a complete list of fallen firefighters being honored go to http://weekend. firehero.org.

sored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Fire Administration and is possible through the generous support from Motorola Solutions, Department of Justice, State Farm Insurance Companies, Tyco, VFIS, Provident and the National Society Daughters of the American

played songs to Brett through-

THERAPY FROM PAGE 1

and hit him head-on," she said. The pair had left their HVL home only minutes before the dreadful accident occurred at midnight July 22 last year.

Larry Duenhoft, 66, was killed instantaneously, but Brett who was stretched out in the back seat resting in preparation for driving back home would have been killed also if he had been in the passenger seat, said Sue Duenhoft.

'They had Brett on life support," said his mother, Carissa Harrell, who stressed her son's brain injury was characterized as irreversible.

"They said he most likely wouldn't be able to talk or anything, due to the severe TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) and the bleeding in his brain," she said.

For five weeks at University, Brett made no recovery, unconscious with his arms contracted against his chest. He did not respond to voices or other stimulation. University Hospital pressed to have him dismissed, and the family decided on Woodland Hills, Lawrenceburg, where the young man's fate would be changed by determined physical therapists and others who took on the task with compassion and fervor. A year at Woodland Hills was a year well spent. Two week's after his stay began, the young man was responding to his name. Carissa Harrell made quick contact with Julie Borgemenke, Woodland Hills rehabilitation manager, who assured her she and her staff were up to the challenge. "It was miraculous. They went over and above what anybody would expect," said Sue Duenhoft, Brett's grandmother. Brett said his children, daughter Chloe, 6, and son, Cooper, 2, were the forces that drove him to work exceptionally hard at regaining movement in his right arm, head, neck and other parts of his body Chloe especially was at her father's side, pulling for him all the way. Julie and the other therapists would take Chole's picture with them for every session, and continuous prayer played an enormous part in his recovery, said Sue Duenhoft, as her daughter nodded in agreement. "They were so awesome, and they took their time there, everyone; so much caring," said Carissa Harrell, with Grandma chiming in that Brett was spoiled into recovery by the many elderly residents who took him under their wing. His girlfriend, Cheyenne Winters, who was an employee at Woodland Hills at the time, also played a major part in Brett's recovery.

"Firefighters possess an ex-

the U.S. will participate.

The annual tribute is spon-Colonists.

The concept is improving existing roads with: Component one- enhanced mainte-

nance of North Dearborn and Whites Hill Roads. Component two- North Dearborn

Road improvements Component three- Whites Hill Road

improvements

The presentation displayed during the open house also is online at http://bright74.oki. org and will be on display at the North Dearborn Library in Logan Township.

During the open house, a total of 10 groups of people took a live survey, at least 57 people, on the concept, plus additional questions.

The survey, the exact same one that appears on the above OKI web page for 30 days after the open house, asks eight questions, then gives the option to provide additional comments. The questions start by inquiring where the survey taker lives. The majority indicated that they lived in the Bright study area.

The next three questions basically focus on whether people agreed, disagreed or were not sure about the imporantance of enhancing the maintenance of North Dearborn and Whites Hill roads. A few survey takers expressed their frustration about how the survey is structured. One person commented "of course the roads need to be maintained," but some disagreed with plans on how that should be accomplished. More than once someone asked how big the shoulders would be if improvements were made to North Dearborn Road.

During the Bright 74 advisory committee meeting last month, residents expressed



DENISE FREITAG BURDETTE/THE JOURNAL-PRESS Dearborn County Engineer Todd Listerman, center, explains the reality of available road funding to maintain current county roads. He suggested citizens can stay in touch with what is happening with the county at https:// www.facebook.com/Dearborn-County-Planning-and-Zoning-486601638066706/

concerns about possible plans to widen North Dearborn Road, especially in areas where homes are already located near the road.

When asked the importance of making general enhancements to the two roads, most people during the live survey felt this is important. But the numbers started dropping when survey takers were asked specifically about improvements to North Dearborn and Whites Hill roads. Then the opinions were mixed between those marking it as important, not sure or unimportant for North Dearborn Road. But most appeared to label improvements to Whites Hill Road as unsure or unimportant.

When asked how survey takers felt about the possibility of roundabouts being installed anywhere in the county, most were not in favor of it, but some would take it under consideration. But when asked about roundabouts at North Dearborn Road interections with State Line Road and Whites Hill Road, few thought that is a good idea, especially at the Whites Hill intersection.

The last question asked if survey takers were "open to future public review and consideration of a local funding increase" to help pay for any of the concept recommendations. That led to the most frequent question expressed by survey takers during the open housedoes that mean a raise in taxes? Few people agreed that is a good idea.

After the 30-day comment period, study advisory committee members are scheduled to meet again in October before the final recommendation of the study is presented later this year.

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out his recovery, which resulted in him beginning to move his mouth, which led to him speaking a single word at a time, then partial sentences, and now an occasional complete sentence.

"I just think that music inspires everybody," said Cheyenne Winters. "Having music played makes your brain try to vocalize music, and stimulates your brain."

Brett enjoys the Justin Bieber and Taylor Swift, but said he prefers acoustic music.

"He has a song for everything. If you say one word, he has a song for it. He loves music," said Cheyenne.

Brett can now move his right arm, but he "has trouble with my legs" and his left arm does not function.

The family agrees the road to full recovery will be a long one, but all remain optimistic. No, they are certain Brett will regain use of his legs.

Brett's recovery began with

Her magic wand was, and continues to be, music. She prayer, then he took a decisive step through the Woodland Hills treatment. If every journey begins with the first step, then the odds are on his side.



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