

January 13, 2010 BRAG Quarterly Community Meeting

Emphasis on Education

Guest Presenters—Nikki Woodson, Assistant Superintendent of Washington Twp Schools

Dr. Concetta Raimondi, Superintendent of Lawrence Twp Schools

Dr. Tony Bennett, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Indiana

New business update-- Active businesses at the corner of 71st and Binford have jumped from 15 to 51 since BRAG's inception 5 years ago. Donna Carr, property owner of the NW corner, introduced the owner of the new Subway store which will open January 14th, and announced that Happy Dragon will open within the next 2 to 3 weeks, followed by a new tanning salon which will open this spring. Chris Shepherd and Leslie Howard announced the opening of Stop & Shred at 62nd and Binford.

Fundraising—Treasurer, Kas Vargo, reminded attendees of the continuing need to support BRAG financially. Individuals and businesses can make a tax-deductible Pledge of Support at any time so that BRAG can continue beautification efforts, maintenance commitments, Crime Watch Coordination, and pay for our Community Coordinator position.

Education Within the BRAG Area--Dr. Tony Bennett outlined how educational focus and funding is drastically changing on both a state and national level. His goal is to see 90% of IN students graduating from high school (current state graduation rate is 81.5%, up 3.75%, with 24,000 drop-outs/year) and a 90% passing rate on both math and language arts ISTEPP scores. These goals parallel those of the current Democratic presidential administration and \$250 million dollars in federal money will be available in a "Race to the Top" incentive program. Money will be awarded to schools and states that creatively and competitively provide a higher level of education at a lower cost.

Nikki Woodson and Dr. Concetta Raimondi took turns highlighting successes, issues, and concerns in their respective school districts. Both are facing major funding cutbacks due to a loss in state revenues. Washington and Lawrence townships join other districts throughout the state in recognizing that school budgets will essentially be "re-set" in 2010 to a new, lower base-line. Both asked attendees to remind legislators to prioritize educational funding. A brief question and answer time followed each speaker.

Next Community Meeting—Wednesday, April 14th, at 7 PM at the Divine Savior Lutheran Church