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BOONE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

New housing construction grows in county

BY ROD ROSE
The Lebanon Reporter

LEBANON — While the housing industry in much of central Indiana remains in a slump, it's booming in Whitestown.

Performance bonds for another 73 homes in the Walker Farms subdivision were approved by the Boone County Commissioners Monday.

When completed, those would bring to 453 the number of homes built in the Whitestown subdivision, APC Executive Director Rachel Whittington told the Boone County Commissioners Monday. More than

1,000 homes are proposed for the subdivision.

A dozen permits for new homes were issued in May by the APC, Whittington said.

The APC won permission to dispose of a 1996 pickup truck, with 168,000 miles, which is now owned by Boone County 4-H. Whittington told the commissioners none of her staff use the truck, which she said was in "fair at best" condition. 4-H officials had said they could use the truck, Whittington said. Since it was worth less than \$1,000, the commissioners declared the truck surplus and donated it to 4-H.

Whittington was one of several persons giving semi-weekly updates to the commissioners.

While Whittington was upbeat, John Stansell, giving the information technology department report, was not.

He has, Stansell said, lost patience with Comcast crews installing Internet service to a county office building and the Boone County Community Clinic on West Camp Street.

Stansell accused Comcast of "incompetence," for installing a cable "pedestal" not at the county annex, but at a nearby building

owned by Witham Health Services. Witham had not given permission for the installation, he said.

A Comcast crew boring a cable tunnel under West Camp Street earlier this year triggered an emergency incident when they ruptured a high-pressure natural gas main under the street, forcing the evacuation of several square blocks and

a detour of Lebanon Street traffic that led to an epic traffic jam.

Stansell said that, despite repeated attempts, he has been unable to get acceptable answers from any Comcast representative.

The delay in hooking up Internet service is delaying the county's reassessment, Stansell said, because subcontractors on that project are using offices in the 404 West Camp Street annex.

"It's holding up the assessment project," Stansell said, "because we can't increase personnel out there" without additional computer access.

Stansell said he has talked to other Internet vendors, including AT&T, to provide Internet service for the Boone County Clinic at 404 W. Camp St. He said AT&T has confirmed that DSL service is available, but hasn't told him what access speeds are available.

Also Monday, the commissioners reluctantly agreed to pay a \$125 bill from the American Arbitration Association. Calumet Construction wanted to mediate a dispute with the county, but the county had no interest in mediation, said County Attorney Bob Clutter.

The AAA charged \$250 to create a mediation file, however, and split the bill between Calumet and the county. "What they're saying is that if we don't pay it, they'll turn it over to (a) collection (agency)," said County Attorney Bob Clutter.

Since it would have cost more to fight the issue, the commissioners opted to pay the bill.