

CLOCK TOWER TIMES

The Newsletter of the the Berne Community Development Corporation

Berne businesses excited about the clock tower



The Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower will provide an attractive gathering place for weddings, reunions and receptions, as well as for concerts and Swiss Days events. It will bring increased business, increased employee base, increased income, increased quality of life and increased community pride.

Berne has a reputation for being a friendly town that attracts people from all over the area. Visitors enjoy the laid-back lifestyle and friendly atmosphere, and they come to buy furniture, jewelry, cars and trucks and a variety of other items.

Like many small towns, though, Berne is feeling the pinch of today's economic squeeze. It is becoming increasingly difficult for businesses in Berne to survive, and while residents of the city would like to see things stay the same, with industry leaving, that isn't possible.

"Business is down," said Dwight Habegger of Habegger Furniture. "We can tell by the smaller number of customers coming to Berne. We need something that will bring more people through our doors."

Fred Clauser of Clauser Furniture said, "All cities have a choice—they can either stay the same and slowly die off—or they can invest some money and change—try new ideas that will help their town turn

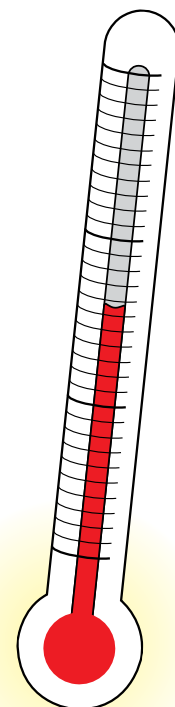
the corner and start to grow."

Attracting visitors is the key to the survival for Berne. Karleen Sprunger of richard's Jewelry said, "Retail can't survive on the business of local people alone. Sixty-five to seventy-five percent of our business comes from a 50 mile radius outside of town, and this outside business is crucial."

The Berne Community Development Corporation sees tourism as the answer to the future of Berne. That is why the CDC is spearheading the effort to construct of the Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower. More than half of the \$3,246,000 has been donated.

"We feel very strongly about the need for this project," said Ron Sprunger. "It will bring more businesses to Berne. It won't just improve the quality of life for us in the present, but it will help us look to the future of Berne as well."

"I am 150 percent in favor of the clock tower project," said Habegger. "This is the best thing that has ever happened to Berne."



TOWERING THOUGHTS!

"We're creating a new prosperity for Berne."

*Roger Muselman,
Steering Committee
Co-chairman*

One of the purposes of the Berne CDC is to assist in the ongoing development and beautification of downtown and US 27 businesses and public properties—making Berne a Community of Distinction and Charm.



Fred Lehman, left, board member for the Adams County Community Foundation, presented a grant check to former Berne mayors Blaine Fulton, center, and Gaylord Stuckey, right. Fulton and Stuckey are co-chairmen of the Foundation's subcommittee for the Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower steering committee.



Clock tower ties Berne to its heritage

Clock tower funded by private donations

The Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower will not take money away from other local projects, such as sewers and streets. The clock tower is being funded by private donations, with no money coming from tax dollars.

For nearly a year, pledges have been arriving from individuals and organizations who are interested in supporting the project.

“We want people to realize that this isn’t going to take money away from other projects,” said David Baumgartner, steering committee member and president of the CDC, “but it will add to the quality of life for all of us in the years to come.”

Business owners in Berne are excited about the economic boom that will result from the clock tower.

Several former residents of Berne are also interested in the project, and have contributed to its construction with sizeable donations.

“It has been very rewarding to see the large number of former residents who want to give back to the little city where they grew up and learned the values that still guide them,” said Fred Clauser of Clauser Furniture. “It’s a great tribute to Berne and its way of life.”

Rather than depleting tax revenues, the resulting tourism from the clock tower will bring additional funds to the city and improve the economic stability of the area.

“Visitors who shop in Berne say they’re excited about the clock tower,” said Roger Muselman, steering committee co-chairman. “They say they wish their towns had this kind of vision.”

Jerome Lehman, former Berne resident, and his wife, Barbara, see the construction of the Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower as an important element in linking Berne with its Swiss heritage. The couple met with Floyd Liechty, who serves on the Berne alumni division for the clock tower project, to pledge their support.

“The clock tower is a way to bring the heritage of Bern, Switzerland to Berne, Indiana,” said Lehman. “It’s all about paying respect to our ancestors who left their home country and endured hardship to come here and establish Berne. I think it’s a great idea for the town.”

Lehman grew up on a farm along the Wabash River bottoms about a mile north of Highway 218. He graduated from Berne French High School and then moved away to establish a career in electronics, but he held to the values of his upbringing in Berne.

“My ancestors came to America from Switzerland in the early 1800s,” he said. “They weren’t among the very first to settle in Berne, but once they came, they loved

the Swiss community and established strong family ties there.”

The history of his family’s Swiss heritage and their pilgrimage to Berne is what prompted Jerome to underwrite the Settler’s Statue for the Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower.

“It’s all about our Swiss heritage,” he said, “and the clock tower is part of our heritage.”



Floyd Liechty, center, a member of the clock tower steering committee, receives a donation from former Berne resident, Jerome Lehman, and his wife Barbara. The Lehmans consider the project an important element in linking Berne to its Swiss heritage.

Essay contest winners named

The CDC recently announced the winners of the Enduring Values essay contest, which highlighted the values of Berne’s founding fathers. The contest was open to all South Adams students, as well as to students in surrounding school systems and home-schoolers. Adams County youth in grades K-8 took advantage of the opportunity to learn about the history of Berne and the future construction of the Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower.

Winners were:



Kindergarten and first grades:

– Olivia Obringer and Caleb Sinn

Second and third grades:

– Noah Obringer and Heidi Sinn

Fourth through sixth grades:

– Sarah Eicher, Jacob Werst and Kara Haines

Seventh and eighth grades:

– Danielle Eisenmann, Carla Sinn and Alyssa Eisenmann

Because of the large number of participants in grades four through six, the following students received honorable mentions:

Dustin Wanner, Trevor Hunt, Joel Schmidt, Scott Hoepfner, Drew Litwiller, Hannah Moore, Isaac Werst, Adrianna Teeter and Kristen Muselman.



Moves mean progress for Berne



Berne U.S. Post Office



Yager-Kirchhofer Funeral Home



Moved from Franklin St. to 875 Sprunger Street



Moved from Main St. to 517 Compromise Street

In today's mobile society, moving is an everyday occurrence. But when a home moves, it becomes front-page news. Over the years, a number of homes have traveled down the streets of Berne, and in each case the move has meant progress for the city.

Moser Motor Sales became a Ford dealership in 1914 and today is one of the oldest dealerships in the nation. To accommodate expansion of the business, on Dec. 4, 1962, the home of Ed and Anna Ray was moved from its Franklin Street location to 875 Sprunger St.

In 1936, Walter and Ada Stucky were living on Main Street in a large rental

home that was owned by Judith Wittwer of Fort Wayne. When the government announced plans to build a new post office at that location, the home was moved to 665 High St.

Yager-Kirchhofer Funeral Home has been located in Berne since 1910. When they needed to expand in the 1950s, two homes belonging to Dr. Ernest and Leah Franz were purchased and moved from their Main Street locations. The first home was the doctor's residence, and the second was Dr. Franz's office.

More moves are being planned to make room for the construction of the Muensterberg Plaza and

Clock Tower, which will also provide an economic boost for the community.

Berne businesses and organizations have been careful to preserve existing structures as they have expanded their services to the community. As a result, area residents have enjoyed the benefits of expansion without having to sacrifice existing structures.

TOWERING THOUGHTS!

"It takes a big vision to draw people, and this is a big vision."

Keith Reinhard,
Honorary Chairman

Berne Council closes State Street

The Berne City Council agreed during its June 12, 2006 meeting to close State Street, the one-block thoroughfare located directly in line with the proposed site of the clock tower. Council members voted 4-0 in favor of the CDC's request to close the street.

State Street has been the subject of Council discussion for some time. The nearby busy intersection of US 27 and State Route 218 has caused the short street to become a quick and easy detour. But with the amount of traffic that flows through the area, it is a dangerous detour. When the CDC began discussion about the clock tower, and after the group purchased the parcel of land at the intersection, the Council decided to delay making a decision about what to do with State Street.

Over the past few months, several important events have transpired that have moved the clock tower project forward. The old Shell gas station, which was located on the site, was razed and the underground tanks removed.

The CDC purchased three residential lots adjacent to State Street which will eventually become part of the Muensterberg Plaza. One of the homes has already been demolished, and plans are to remove or raze the two remaining homes by the end of the summer.

"This plaza project is going to happen," said David Baumgartner, CDC president. "We're not sure of the entire scope of the project yet, but a clock tower will be built." He went on to say, "We're starting to have a lot of potential entrepreneurs come forward with interest in starting businesses because they anticipate an influx of customers to Berne due to the clock tower."

Once State Street is closed, the CDC will remove the asphalt, fill the area with dirt and plant grass at the site. A fundraising thermometer will be erected so that passersby can follow the progress of the project.

"People in Berne are starting to understand the need for this project," said Baumgartner. "We have had numerous individuals who were skeptical at first become believers, and then even become advocates for the project."



Moved from Main St. to 665 High Street



Moser Motor Sales

Razing paves the way for progress

The intersection of US 27 and State Route 218 in Berne has a new look since the razing of a deteriorating building known as the old Shell gas station, which had been empty for some time and was beginning to buckle.

When the CDC formed in 2002, the Berne City Council asked the group to plan and build a plaza at the intersection as a gateway between Berne's two business sectors, so in the spring of 2005, the city sold the land where the Shell station was located for one dollar. It was understood that the CDC would pay for the proper removal of the underground tanks and the decaying building.

"We knew the cost of

removal was going to be substantial," said David Baumgartner, CDC president, "but we were willing to invest the money to improve the look of Berne and to take care of any contamination from underground storage tanks."

Initial estimates for the removal of the building were set at \$8,000, but the cost of removing the tanks was uncertain, since no one was sure how many tanks might be buried at the site or how much contamination, if any, was present.

When work began, three tanks were located; two storage tanks and one unregulated heating oil tank. As was expected, there was leakage, mean-

ing that the contaminated ground needed to be removed too.

The final cost for removing the building, the tanks and the contamination was about \$35,000, but as Baumgartner said, "It was worth it to make positive improvements to the city of Berne." He went on to say, "From this point forward, people will begin to see many changes at the intersection."

With the building and tanks removed, and with plans moving forward on the purchase and relocation of four nearby homes, progress toward the construction of the Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower has taken a giant leap forward.



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(260) 589-3139

TOWERING THOUGHTS!

"We believe the clock tower will further establish Berne as a unique destination, and it will strengthen our economic base."

*Jim Beitler,
Steering Committee
Co-chairman*

If you're interested in making a commemorative gift, visit the web site or call 260-589-3139.

Clock tower budget

Total cost estimate, \$3,246,000

- **Component one, \$1,968,000**
Acquisition, Site preparation, Tower and glockenspiel, Settlers statue, Component one endowment.
- **Component two, \$855,000**
Acquisition, Site preparation, Promenade, Fountain with bear statue, Component two endowment.
- **Component three, \$423,000**
Utilities, Earthwork, Brickwork, Masonry, Seating, Lighting, L w andscaping.

Commemorative opportunities and gift values: Feature and amount

- Clock tower \$1,000,000
- Endowment \$500,000
- Glockenspiel \$400,000
- Event lawn (2) \$200,000
- Clock face (2) \$100,000
- Promenade \$100,000
- Fountain/bear statue \$100,000
- Tower column (4) \$50,000
- Settlers statue \$50,000
- Carved value stone (8) \$25,000
- Historical marker (Multiple) \$15,000
- Arch (4) \$15,000
- Low wall, pedestal (Multiple) \$6,000
- Icon (Multiple), \$6,000
- Lamp post, Bench, Tree (Multiple) \$3,000
- Flower garden (Multiple) \$3,000

Elkhart Products supports Berne clock tower

Elkhart Products Corporation announced its support for the Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower project with a \$12,000 donation.

In making the donation to the project, James E. Stone, head of operations management for the Geneva industrial division of Elkhart Products, said, "I visit Berne almost every day, and I think the clock tower will draw sightseers, which will ultimately help the local economy."

He went on to say, "As a member of the Berne Chamber of Commerce, EPC always tries to support the area, and some of us here at EPC think the clock tower will be a beautiful draw."

With the creation of the clock tower, Berne and Adams County residents will be able to capitalize even further on their established

Swiss brand, and with its donation, EPC is helping to move the community closer to the completion of this unique branding.

"We appreciate the support EPC has given to the Berne community, both in being a member of the Chamber of Commerce and in contributing generously to the clock tower project," said Jim Beitler, project co-chairman.

Private donations have been received from more than 100 donors from the agricultural community, retailers, industry, senior citizens, professionals and contributors at the international level. Additional donations have been received from interested individuals living outside of the community—many from outside of the state.

www.berneclocktower.org



Indiana's Lt. Governor, Becky Skillman, visited Berne to tour local attractions and to view the future site of the Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower. Skillman spoke with members of the steering committee and expressed a strong interest in the clock tower project, saying she would like to return to Berne when the tower is completed.



Elkhart Products Corporation recently donated \$12,000 to the clock tower project. Pictured from the left are Dave Burson, representing the industrial division of the clock tower committee; James E. Stone, head of operations management for the Geneva industrial division of Elkhart Products; and Nancy Brown, public relations coordinator for the clock tower project.

Mission Statement

The Muensterberg Plaza and Clock Tower create a time-honoring tribute at the crossroads of our community by fostering an abiding legacy of the faith of our ancestors, refreshing the common spirit of the community, and inspiring a vision of hope for future generations.