

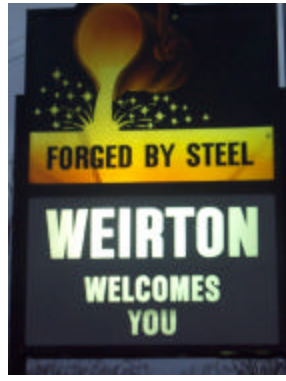


REGIONAL REVIEW

Volume 1, Issue 1

**Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson
Metropolitan Planning Commission**

Winter 2004



DAWN OF ANOTHER DAY: THE WEIRTON STEEL BUYOUT

BY JOHN BROWN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On February 18, the Weirton Steel Corporation announced it had agreed to sell the majority of its assets to Cleveland-based International Steel Group, Inc. (ISG) for approximately \$255 million consisting of cash and the assumption of liabilities.

The announcement marked a nearly year-long wait to form a recovery strategy for this giant employment generator in the Northern Panhandle. In May 2003, Weirton Steel, the nation's sixth largest integrated steelmaker, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. It was preceded by the bankruptcy of 38 other American steel companies, many of which were larger. For residents of the Northern Panhandle, where 38 percent of all jobs are

manufacturing related, the pending Weirton Steel buyout accents the need for regional economic diversification. Steel, according to the West Virginia Development Office, creates 2.5 to 3.0 other regional jobs for every steel job. The layoff number of 1,000 to 1,250 jobs ("Weirton Steel Accepts Bankruptcy", The Associated Press, February 18, 2004) for this buyout will bottom out a spiraling unemployment downturn. In 2001, the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan area's full-time and part-time employment declined 2.4 percent, the single greatest decline since 1981.

According to Gary Folden, chairman for the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission, "Manufacturing employment follows no municipal boundary." People who live in Steubenville work at Weirton Steel.

People who live in Weirton work at the Steubenville Wheeling-Pitt plant. We need to look to our future and commit ourselves to a responsible path of recovery.

An example recovery strategy may lie with ISG's recent purchase of Bethlehem Steel in 2003. ISG bought Bethlehem Steel's assets for \$1.5 billion last year. In its heyday, Bethlehem Steel employed more than 30,000 people. In November 2003, the Lehigh Valley's development authority, known as Lehigh Valley Industrial Park, Inc., announced a plan to redevelop 256 acres of former Bethlehem Steel land in a 32-lot industrial park. Another 160 acres of the brownfield site has been earmarked for Bethlehem Works, the entertainment district planned for the area, and was to be developed by Delaware Valley Real Estate Investment fund.



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From the Executive Director

In late January, BHJ held its annual open house at our Fourth Street office in Steubenville. Over sixty customers attended to rub shoulders with other citizens and officials while reacquainting BHJ staff with their communities.

While the conversation was informal, an underlying theme of discussion was how to do more with less. While local service needs have not declined, how do we do we increase this service with less money or local dollars?

We hope the Upper Ohio Valley views BHJ as a participant solution to this struggle. Our regional mantra of "communication, cooperation and collaboration" has a positive bottom line. We are good for public business. We know federal and state investors will return our fair share of tax dollars when the need and priority is clear.

Over the last year, with the leadership and support of local communities and counties, we obtained \$891,000 for public works investment in the center of Weirton. Since 1996, we've worked in cooperation with a multitude of local Jefferson County entities to finance over \$5 million in road improvements to the Jefferson County Industrial Park. Through our brownfields assessment program, we've only just begun a long missing effort to redevelop strategic but forgotten industrial sites. Our regional bridges (i.e., Ft. Steuben, Market Street and Veterans), our true business and community life line, and their replacement have a combined price tag of \$200,000 million. Both state departments of transportation understand our bridge replacement need and hopefully will fund the final location study to solicit funding for this project. Whether you are a community of 200 or 20,000 citizens, these projects make job creation and return on investment sense.

In sum, the 27 incorporated areas and three counties in the BHJ region contribute \$92,000 annually in local funds to create regional opportunities. In many cases, BHJ when requested by local governments will help research and document a need and coordinate a grant application. Many local government struggling with the "less with more" funding scenario, have forgotten BHJ's support role and how we may pick up this banner for your community. We look forward to working with you and creating future regional opportunities.

John Brown, AICP
jbrown@bhjmpc.org

THE CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

With each New Year comes a new chairperson, and I am pleased to accept that position for 2004. Since I am a relatively new face to BHJ, I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself to those of you who don't know me and refresh the memories of those who do.

I am a life long resident of Jefferson County and currently reside in Brilliant, Ohio. In 1974, after graduating from the Franciscan University of Steubenville with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and business administration, I accepted employment in downtown Steubenville and worked 29 years in the public and private sectors.

During that time, I worked in the corporate world and simultaneously held elected and appointed positions in local and county government serving 19 years as the elected Wells Township clerk and 22 years as a part time investigator with the Jefferson County Coroner's office. In June 1996 I accepted the position of secretary, treasurer, and fiscal manager of the Jefferson County Regional Airport Authority. The Village of Wintersville, Ohio



hired me to fill the administrator's position in August 1999. I remained in that position until the end of 2003 at which time I retired to start my own government consulting company.

Throughout my career, I have been active in many local charitable, business, and government boards. However, it was during my Wintersville employment that I became acquainted with BHJ.

Upon my retirement from the Village, the Jefferson County Commissioners appointed me to represent them on the BHJ Full Com-

mission. I am truly honored to serve the citizens of Brooke, Hancock, and Jefferson counties, and I am looking forward to working with the boards, committees, and staff of the organization. BHJ is a vital link to the entire tri-county area as it works to improve transportation, extend water and sewer systems and bring economic development to the Upper Ohio Valley.

One of the most significant issues facing BHJ is seeing the implementation and completion of the recommendations of the Bridge Study Advisory Committee. As two of the current three bridges located in Steubenville approach the end of their useful lives, it is extremely important that the Ohio and West Virginia Departments of Transportation dedicate funding and manpower to achieve the goals set by the bridge committee.

Thank you for the confidence you have in allowing me to lead this fine organization. Best wishes to all for a happy, healthy and prosperous year.

Gary R. Folden

BUILDING THE NEW AND PRESERVING THE OLD

Now that Phase 2 of the BHJ Regional Bridge System Study is complete, where do we go from here? On December 18, BHJ Executive Director John Brown and Transportation Study Director Mike Paprocki traveled to Charleston to meet with Jack Pflum (Edwards and Kelcey bridge consultant) and representatives from ODOT and WVDOT to overview progress and make further recommendations for the three priorities established.

Priority One is the construction of roadway and intersection capacity improvements to better access the Veterans Memorial Bridge. Mr. Fred Van Kirk, WVDOT's secretary of transportation and highways, agreed to preliminary and final design work on Freedom Way. ODOT agreed to initiate a traffic study with an expected completion date of June 2004.

Priority Two calls for the construction of a new Ohio River bridge crossing south of Wellsburg to connect WV State Route 2 and Ohio State Route 7. BHJ staff will prepare a scope of work to advertise and hire a consultant to prepare a specific location and environmental impact study.

Priority Three is the construction of a new Ohio River bridge crossing to connect WV State Route 2 and Ohio State Route 7 at Washington Street. BHJ staff recommended this third priority should be contingent upon the completion of the first two.

It may appear as though everyone's focus is on a new bridge. The Phase 2 study was supported locally, and it is agreed a Phase 3 location study is the next logical step. However, the Market Street and Ft. Steuben bridges also warrant attention. Residents of the tri-county area have utilized access to these two river crossings for well over a hundred years. Although it is presumed that the bridges are now likely nearing the end of their life cycles, local officials believe it is of the utmost importance to maintain and preserve them for as long as possible. ODOT and WVDOT, therefore, have been asked to commit to a continued maintenance program. Greg Gurney, district administrator for ODOT Planning & Programs, reported that just recently Burgess and Niple Consultants took several coupons (biopsy samples) from the Ft. Steuben bridge to evaluate its structural integrity. An analysis will be available in late spring. Efforts such as this will ensure the safety of the 6,700 cars that daily travel the Market Street Bridge, as well as the 5,320 that cross the Ft. Steuben.

Perhaps the greater concern is with the Market Street Bridge. Within the last year, the bridge's upper support beams were hit twice. Mr. Randy Epperly, WVDOT Assistant Deputy Director has stated that if another hit occurs, *consideration* will be given to closing the bridge.

In light of this, BHJ staff is committed to moving forward with the next phase of the study. Another meeting is scheduled for March.

NEW HELPLINE FOR SMALL BUSINESS

The Brooke-Hancock Community Development Coalition (CDC) is a community of people doing “things” for people in the community. The concept arose from the leadership of Doris Davis, BHJ Economic Development Specialist, recognizing that there are needs in the community which have not been addressed; there are assets in the community that have not been realized; and there are resources in the community that have not been tapped.

Ms. Davis called together a group of local economic development leaders last January to introduce, as she identified, *a different way of thinking*. She expressed to the group the importance of *growing a community from within* by utilizing the skills, talents, abilities and desires of existing community residents. In her experience successful communities are places where the capacities of local residents are identified, valued and used. This process begins with:

- Building relationships within the community
- Involving the community in visioning
- Leveraging resources from outside the community and
- Identifying the capacity of the community

On April 29, 2003, approximately thirty people from the community attended the first Brooke-Hancock Community Development Coalition meeting. The objectives for the meeting were:

- To establish a regional vision to encourage an entrepreneurial culture and community development
- Create a structure to inventory the skills, talents and abilities of local residents
- Determine how to convert the information collected into small business ventures
- Decide how to match residents’ interests with community organizations and
- Discuss the next steps to foster a regional vision

Over the next couple of months, the CDC evolved vision and mission statements. The CDC’s vision is to foster an entrepreneurial culture and partner with business, industrial, educational, economic and workforce development agencies, and the community as a whole to promote and integrate resources to support an entrepreneurial culture in the region. The CDC’s mission is to proactively champion entrepreneurial development throughout Brooke and Hancock counties.

The CDC then worked to take the goals and objectives from the initial meeting and structure them into a system that will foster entrepreneurial development. These initiatives include:

1. A Small Business Helpline
2. Distribution of information and resources
3. Partnering with the Small Business Development Center
4. Small business start-up workshops
5. Mentoring assistance

Anyone wanting or needing small business assistance can contact the Small Business Helpline at 304-723-6591. The Small Business



Doris Davis, Economic Development Specialist

Helpline, sponsored by Lattamus Communications, is answered twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Small business information is being distributed through resource cards and the Small Business Helpline. This includes the book Going into Business in West Virginia which is published by the West Virginia SBDC.

Recognizing the importance not to duplicate efforts, the CDC is partnering

with the local SBDC which provides small business one-on-one assistance at no cost to clients. In addition to the SBDC counseling, small business start-up workshops will be offered on a regular basis the third Thursday of the month at the Weirton Chamber of Commerce, 3200 Main Street, Weirton. Two sessions will be provided. The morning session will run from 9:00 – 11:00 AM and the evening session will be held from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. Those interested in attending must register by contacting the Small Business Helpline.

There are currently several mentors who have stepped forth to assist with this initiative; however, the CDC is inviting members of the community to volunteer their time to share their skills, experience and energy with this endeavor. Those interested should call the Small Business Helpline.

The CDC is *BLAZING THE TRAIL FOR TOMORROW*. These initiatives are the beginning of revitalizing our community. History shows that successful communities are communities where the capacities of local residents

BROOKE-HANCOCK
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COALITION
*WORKING TO PROACTIVELY CHAMPION
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT
THROUGHOUT BROOKE AND*

HANCOCK COUNTIES

*Have you ever thought about starting
your own business?*

*Are you already in business
and need additional assistance?*

**CALL THE
SMALL BUSINESS HELPLINE
304-723-6591**



BROOKE-HANCOCK
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COALITION

- Assists with converting ideas into successful business start-ups
- Partners with the Small Business Development Center
- Serves as a network of information
- Helps locate valuable resources to support entrepreneurial development and growth
- Shares business incentives
- Provides information pertaining to funding sources
- Offers informative training
- Addresses challenges

are identified, valued and used. Today the CDC is extending an invitation to all of those in the Brooke-Hancock region to *grow the community from within*.

CUMMINGS/RITER CONSULTANTS, INC. CHOSEN FOR BROWNFIELDS PROJECT

BHJ is pleased to announce the selection of a consulting firm as a partner in the economic revitalization of Brooke and Hancock counties. Cummings/Riter Consultants, Inc. of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has been retained to complete an assessment of the counties' brownfields. Brownfields are defined as real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. This project, which is funded by a \$200,000 grant awarded to BHJ by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, involves the evaluation of brownfield properties in terms of environmental and other aspects, and represents a major step toward economic redevelopment in the region.

Cummings/Riter is an 11-year old environmental consulting and engineering firm specializing in the remediation and redevelopment of contaminated properties, landfill design and remediation, and environmental compliance. Their staff of 30 professionals includes engineers, geologists, scientists and other specialists, many of whom were involved in some of the first major environmental remediation projects in the U.S. in the 1970s. "We're excited about the opportunity to support both environmental and economic restoration in the valley", said Pat O'Hara, president of Cummings/Riter. "We're fortunate to have been involved in other successful land redevelopment projects, and we see tremendous opportunity for success here in Brooke and Hancock counties." With over 30 years of experience in land redevelopment, Mr. O'Hara maintains that community involvement is crucial to a project's success, and he will support BHJ's efforts to seek participation from the citizens of Brooke and Hancock counties.

Cummings/Riter's project team is led by Project Manager Bob Hendricks, P.G. Mr. Hendricks has 18 years of experience managing

site assessments for property transfers, refinancing agreements, and redevelopment purposes and supervising the remediation of contaminated industrial sites. He brings to this project many "lessons learned" from successful projects with other redevelopment authorities, as well as completed under brownfields programs in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, New Jersey, and Maryland.

Key to marketing brownfield properties will be the development and implementation of a Geographical Information System (GIS). This portion of the project will be directed by Bryan Maurer, P.E. In addition to his background in civil engineering, Mr. Maurer has more than 12 years of experience in the use of networking software, drafting, website development, and GIS programs for the compilation, management, and presentation of data. Bryan noted that, "A key to any redevelopment effort is having knowledge of the characteristics of the available properties, and getting that information into the hands of potential developers as quickly and easily as possible."

The initial step of this project is to identify and prioritize potential brownfield sites. Peg Farrell, who brings 17 years of experience in the environmental industry, will work closely with BHJ on this task, providing the support and guidance needed to evaluate properties in terms of both environmental and economic aspects.



BHJ's Executive Director John Brown and Economic Development Specialist Doris Davis with Cummings/Riter staff members Bob Hendricks, Peg Farrell and Patrick O'Hara

2004 BHJ ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The BHJ Full Commission began the year by unanimously electing Gary R. Folden as its chairman for 2004. Mr. Folden is no stranger to BHJ. He has been a member of the Commission since 1999 and for the past two years, has been a member of the Executive Committee.

Other officers elected at the reorganization meeting on January 21 were Vice Chairman Jeff Davis (Hancock County Commissioner), Secretary Norma Tarr (Brooke County Commissioner) and Treasurer Norm Schwertfeger (Brooke County Commissioner). Each year the BHJ executive director and newly-elected chairman establishes a list of



**Norma Tarr
Secretary**



**Jeff Davis
Vice Chairman**

goals to be met for the year. In 2003, BHJ met and completed over 95 % of those goals. During the year, BHJ administered or planned for over \$28 million in transportation improvements, over \$18 million in water-sewer improvements and expanded its economic development/brownfields program.

This year brings many challenges. Dr. Brown stated, "Similar to many public agencies, we must discipline ourselves to do more with less. Our revenues are flat and customer expectations are high. Key agency projects for the upcoming calendar year include (1) a final location study for a new bridge crossing, (2) leverage and plan for sewer investments adjacent to Brooke County's Mahan Lane and Hancock County's Route 8 corridor, (3) evaluate increased access to the Veterans Bridge and (4) carry-out the assessment of Brownfield sites and their potential for redevelopment."



2003 Chairman Norm Schwertfeger passes the gavel to incoming Chairman Gary R. Folden.

READY FOR ANOTHER 90 YEARS OF STEEL MAKING

by Mark Glyptis



Mark Glyptis

You might say Weirton Steel is my life. My grandfather came to this country and community to work at Weirton Steel. My father followed him into the mill and after attending and graduating from West Virginia University, I proudly joined the ranks of working people at “our steel mill.”

The fact the mill really became “ours” was even more evident with the employee purchase of the Weirton Steel

Division in 1984 and the Weirton Steel Corporation was born.

Our mill has been in Weirton for approximately 90 years and without a doubt, the steelmaker has a dominant impact on our immediate community and the Ohio Valley as a whole. Our workforce, now approximately 3,500, lives in Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

The economic impact the mill has on the valley was most evident in late 1997 and early 1998.

Approximately 1,000 employees were on lay off status due to illegal foreign steel imports. When the Independent Steelworkers Union and Weirton Steel Corp. joined the Stand Up For Steel coalition, we were quickly recognized as a major player in the national campaign.

The local unity and solidarity was on display in November 1997 when 3,500 steelworkers, their families and supporters marched through downtown Weirton to a Stand Up For Steel Rally at the Cove Field baseball field behind the Millsop Community Center. There, three United States Congressmen and the governor of West Virginia joined local elected officials as well as representatives from the Independent

Steelworkers Union and Weirton Steel Corp. to demand relief from the illegal imports.

That effort was exceeded in January 1998 when local organizers took 6,500 people from the Ohio Valley to a rally and march in Washington, D.C. again, demanding relief from the illegal tariffs.

Through the years the working people at Weirton Steel have witnessed good times and bad times.

With the decision to file bankruptcy in 2003, the Union at Weirton Steel immediately took a leadership role to find ways to help Weirton Steel successfully emerge from federal bankruptcy court.

I believe we will continue making steel in Weirton, West Virginia for many years to come.

We have a strong, loyal and highly educated workforce that has proven time and time again we are motivated to keep steelmaking alive here in the valley.

Weirton Steel has one of the finest Hot Mill facilities in the world. Put that fact with our ranking as the Number Two tin plate producer in the United States and you have an excellent base in Weirton.

We are currently seeing our Number One Blast Furnace undergo a major maintenance rebuild which will enhance production for many years in the future.

Weirton Steel maintains an excellent galvanizing operation in our Sheet Mill. And overall, Weirton Steel stands ready for another 90 years of steelmaking operations. Our future may include changes. But that has been the story of Weirton Steel for many years now. We change, we adapt and we survive.

WINTER 2004 EVENTS

February 16	Office Closed—Presidents Day	
March 2	BHJ Executive Committee	Noon
March 14—16	ARC Conference—Washington D.C.	
March 17	TAC Meeting Full Commission	10:30 a.m. Noon
April 9	Good Friday—Office Closed	
May 4	BHJ Executive Committee	Noon
May 19	TAC Meeting Full Commission	10:30 a.m. Noon
June 16	Annual (Dinner) Meeting—The Rose by Clara’s Catering	12:00—2:00 p.m.

COMMUNITY PROFILE: MT. PLEASANT, OHIO

It was a primary stop on the Underground Railroad. The first abolitionist newspaper in the United States, the "Philanthropist," was published there. It was the site of Ohio's first abolitionist convention. It was home to Moses Fleetwood Walker, the first African American to play major league professional baseball.

Originally known as Jesse Bob Town, the Village of Mount Pleasant was established in 1803 by Robert Carothers, an Irishman from Virginia, and Jesse Thomas, a Quaker from North Carolina. Incorporated in 1814, the village was home to many Quakers who came to the area to escape the slavery controversy.



East Main Street Early 1900's

As early as 1817, slaves were making their way to Mount Pleasant where they knew they would receive help in their quest for freedom. The number of slaves crossing the Ohio River working their way towards Mount

Pleasant increased to the extent the village became a well-known station of the Underground Railroad.

The local residents built a school for free black children, and established a Free Labor Store in 1857. The store sold no products that were produced by slave labor. By 1820, the village was a center for pork packing and shipping and for the milling industry. It also boasted the largest wheat market in the state.

Many historical buildings line the streets of Mount Pleasant including the Free Labor Store which is thought to be the only one of its type still in existence. Several stations of the Underground Railroad – the John Hogg Home, the George K. Jenkins Home, as well as the Free Labor Store – are still standing. The Quaker Meeting House, built in 1814, is listed on the National Register.

The residents of this small village of 535 (2000 Census) can certainly be proud of the major historical contribution made to not only the state, but also the nation.



The Quaker Boarding School



The Quaker Meeting House, built in 1814, was the first yearly Quaker meeting house west of the Alleghenies.

The building which can hold up to 2,000 people, has an auditorium with a balcony. Because the Quaker men and women met separately, the auditorium can be divided into two rooms by lowering a wooden partition.



First opened in 1867, Mount Pleasant High School was the first public high school in the area.

The first public school, however, opened in 1835. Previously children attended private or Quaker schools.

The Mount Pleasant Historical Society offers tours conducted by costumed guides from April through October. Reservations are required. For more information, call the Historical Society at 1-800-752-2631 or (740) 769-2893.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Related Web Sites

Appalachian Regional Commission
www.arc.gov

Brooke Pioneer Trail Assoc. Inc
www.brookepioneertrail.org

Business Development Corporation of the
Northern Panhandle
www.bhbdc.org

CHANGE, Inc.
www.changeinc.org

City of Steubenville
www.ci.steubenville.oh.us

Hancock County Convention and Visitors Bureau
www.hancockcvb.com

Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce
www.jeffersoncountychamber.com

Ohio Department of Transportation
www.dot.state.oh.us

Progress Alliance
www.progressalliance.com

State of Ohio Government Information
www.state.oh.us

State of West Virginia Government Info.
www.state.wv.us

State Route 2 & Interstate 68 Authority
www.route2andi68.com

U.S. Census Bureau
www.census.gov

U.S. Department of Transportation
www.dot.gov

Village of Wintersville
www.wintersville.net

Weirton Chamber of Commerce
www.weirtonchamber.com

Weirton Steel Corp.
www.weirton.com

West Virginia Department of Transportation
www.wvdot.com

West Virginia Development Office
www.wvdo.org