

## COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT: BEECH BOTTOM

Located in southern Brooke County, West Virginia, the Village of Beech Bottom is a quiet community rich in history and opportunity. In the early 1700's, people were drawn to the area to take advantage



of the rich land for farming and the opportunities the Ohio River afforded them for industry.

According to a book compiled by Gwen Hubbard on the history of the village, boats traveling from Pittsburgh to New Orleans would stop at the Beech Bottom landing for wood to use in the steam engines. Beech Bottom had one of the first one mile race tracks making it a popular source of entertainment. With the arrival of the steel mill, came more housing and a company store. Transportation improved with the arrival of the streetcar.

Through the years, the town grew, and on November 17, 1953, the village was incorporated. Then, in 1992, Paul Phillips, a former coun-

cilman, was elected mayor. He had a vision for the community and presented the idea of annexation. However, it wasn't until February, 1999, with the village facing bankruptcy, that the process was complete.

Annexation brought many improvements. Increased population brought opportunities to apply for grant program for various projects such as a new roof for the city building. The village paid for street lighting for Route 2 and within the town. Each house has been given a number for 911 emergency calls and to make it easier to receive UPS deliveries. The streets have all been named rather than being referred to as "Stop 48" or "Stop 49" as they were called in the days of the streetcars.

Mayor Phillips is enthusiastic about the future of Beech Bottom. The opportunities for growth available so many years ago are still there. In fact, Waldorf Distributors will be relocating to Beech Bottom with construction to start by

spring. There are 100+ acres of land along the riverfront that could be further developed. If the area is chosen for a new bridge, Mayor Phillips sees endless possibilities. Speaking for himself, as well as the village council, the mayor said, "We just want to build our town. We want to have the best little town on the river."

For more information about Beech Bottom, contact Susan Phillips, village recorder, at the mayor's office (304-394-5545).



Susan and Mayor Paul Phillips

### BHJ SUBMITS APPLICATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

BHJ received confirmation they have been selected to submit a final proposal for a brownfields assessment grant for \$200,000.

One of the criteria used to evaluate an application is the extent to which a project reduces threats to the health and welfare of children, pregnant women, minorities, low income populations or other sensitive groups. Local governments may use up to 10% of the grant to monitor population health effects or enforce institutional controls. Once approval is official, health issues that will be studied include cancer, asthma and birth defects.

The remaining funds will be used to inventory and characterize those sites recognized as brownfields, conduct planning and

community involvement to increase public awareness and strategically build working relationships with current property owners.

On March 5, 2003, the Brownfields Task Force will hold a workshop session in preparation for a public meeting to be held in mid-March. For further information, contact Doris Davis, BHJ Economic Development Specialist at (740) 282-3685.