LAPORTE COUNTY PIONEER CEMETERY COMMISSION
COURTHOUSE SQUARE
LAPORTE, IN 46350

---Board Members---
Dale Ellis, President Wilma Marsh, Vice President
Kenneth Baker, Financial Secretary Patricia Harris, Recording Secretary
Richard Lute, Sr.

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7 March 2009

Indiana Historical Bureau
140 N. Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Sir or Madam:

Attached please find the annual report of the LaPorte County Pioneer Cemetery Commission to be filed with your office under Indiana Cemetery Law IC 4-23-7-3. The attached contains the Commission budget and expenditures for the year 2008, Activities of the Commission for the year 2008; and the Plans of the Commission for the year 2009.

Sincerely,

LaPorte County Pioneer Cemetery Commission
Kenneth Baker
Dale Ellis
Patricia Harris
Richard Lute, Sr.
Wilma Marsh

Enc.

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Budget and Expenditures for Calendar Year 2008

Category	Budget	Expenditures
Office Supplies	$ 500.00	$ 160.50
Postage	75.00	53.54
Paint-Painting	1,000.00	515.92
Mileage	750.00	741.35
Landscaping	1,100.00	488.55
Tombstone Repair	10,000.00	13,000.00 *
Cemetery Maintenance	20,000.00	15,941.00 ++
Fencing & Gates	3,000.00	3,000.00 **
Board Members	1,004.00	878.50
Head of Department	5,773.00	5,772.78
Social Security & Medicare	442.00	441.74
Totals	$ 43,644.00	$ 40,993.88

Unexpended Balance . . . . . $ 2650.12

* Although this item was over individual budget, funds were transferred among accounts (++) to meet specific needs, while staying within our total budget.

** Actual cost for fencing & gates was $4,266.00 and difference was paid from cemetery maintenance.

++ Cemetery Maintenance costs were less than budgeted because of changes from contracted maintenance to a caretaker in some cemeteries.

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2008 Activities

Monthly Meetings – Structured monthly meetings for board members.

Availability to the Public – We are available 10:00 – 3:00 p.m. first Friday of each month.

Cemetery Visitations – We incorporated with two of our monthly meetings, visitations as a board, to eight pioneer cemeteries. This was done to acquaint all members with the La Porte County cemeteries and to determine individual cemetery needs as an aid to determining priorities on maintenance, repair and restoration.

Historians/Liaisons Volunteers – Volunteers watched over our cemeteries and reported any act of vandalism or cemetery need.

Stone Restorations – Stone restoration was completed at Nickel Plate Cemetery and ½ of Norton Cemetery by Mark Davis of Stone Saver Cemetery Restoration.

Fencing – One half of the old fence was restored and replaced by Rustic Fencing. One fence was painted with contract help and two others by community service persons.

Documentation/Photographs – We continued to photograph and document tombstones before they become illegible or vandalism occurs. We have also continued to seek out locations of old cemeteries not known to us previously and then research and document.

Written Reports on Cemeteries – Board members are assigned certain cemeteries that are to be checked by them for caretaking condition and other items throughout the year and they then report their findings on a Cemetery Inspection Report Record.

Request for Bids and Contracts – We revised and continue to use standardized forms for Request for Bids for Cemetery Maintenance and Contracts for Cemetery Maintenance as well as for Uncontracted Maintenance of Cemeteries.

Cemetery Maintenance – Pioneer Cemeteries without any funding were maintained by contracted firms. Others that had caretakers and/or some funding for maintenance were aided with funds budgeted by the Cemetery Commission.

New signs were installed at Sharp, Norton, Foster and Posey Chapel and signs were procured for Hudson Lake and Tuley and will be installed as weather permits. In addition a sign telling the history of Eahart-Reed Cemetery was installed.

We attended the first annual County Cemetery Commissions Annual Meeting in Indianapolis.

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2009 Cemetery Commission Plans

Monthly Meetings – Structured monthly meetings for Board Members.

Availability to the Public – Available to public 10:00 am – 3:00 pm first Friday of each month and otherwise by e-mail, phone or mail.

Cemetery Visitations – Continue to visit various cemeteries as a group to acquaint all members with the La Porte County cemeteries and to set priorities.

Historians/Liaisons Volunteers – Continue to have volunteers watch over our cemeteries and report any act of vandalism or cemetery need. Encourage the continuation of transcribing all gravestones, photography, writing histories and identifying veterans graves with the aid of volunteers.

Discovery and Research – Seek out the locations of old cemeteries not known to us previously and then view, research and document, especially Allen Toney Family Burial Ground and Bowell Cemetery.

Continued Preservation of Our Cemeteries – Caretaking is extremely important in our cemeteries as it can affect the safety of individuals visiting the cemeteries.

1. Communication with sexton/caretakers to allow them to make the needs of their individual cemeteries known to the board and discuss ways to prevent vandalism. Enter into written agreements with them detailing the work to be performed in the cemeteries stating a specific amount to be budgeted for the work from Commission funds.
2. Contract with lawn care services for cemetery maintenance for those cemeteries who do not have caretakers. Seek aid of County Highway Dept. for needed removal of trees, etc.
3. Many of our tombstones are in need of repair. We have contracted for completion of repair and restoration of stones at Norton, Coulter, part of Eahart Reed and repair broken stone at Miller-Griffin.
4. Paint fences at Miriam Benedict and others as need is determined.
5. Complete the restoration of fence at Coulter Cemetery.
6. Seek bids for new signs at Coulter, Pike & Teeter and install signs at Hudson Lake & Tuley.
7. Continue to work with the LaPorte County Community Service and perhaps the Indiana State prison to provide labor for fence painting, etc.
8. We have begun a program of historical research to install signs at the cemeteries telling about their history. We have installed one at Eahart-Reed and plans others this year as research is completed.

Written Reports- Continue using the Cemetery Inspection Form a written report for board members to report on the condition of our cemeteries throughout the year.