

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT COOPERATION AWARD**

**TOWN OF PLAINFIELD AND PLAINFIELD RE-ENTRY  
EDUCATIONAL FACILITY**

**Submitted by:**

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The Town of Plainfield is a community of 24,000 located in Central Indiana directly west of the City of Indianapolis. Plainfield officials at all levels of government have striven to develop an extraordinary quality of life for its citizens. Vision and planning has resulted in an ideal mix of residential, commercial and industrial growth. Plainfield has developed approximately 27 million square feet of industrial space and its schools system consistently scores in the top ten in the state in scholastic achievement testing. Plainfield's retail sector is anchored Metropolis Lifestyle Center.

Plainfield is home to four separate State of Indiana institutions including the Plainfield Adult Correctional Facility, Indiana Reception and Diagnostic Center, Indiana State Law Enforcement Academy and the Plainfield Educational Re-Entry Facility.

Under the Daniel's Administration, the Indiana Boys School has been converted to the Plainfield Re-Entry Educational Facility (PREF). Click on link for additional information about PREF and its mission: <http://www.in.gov/idoc/reentry/2546.htm>.

This new mission developed by the Indiana Department of Corrections was also a big change for the Plainfield community. The Indiana Boys School (IBS) was established in Plainfield in 1867 and the first boy enrolled at the facility was in January 1868. The Plainfield community and IBS had a strong mutually beneficial relationship with the facility. Local churches and residents volunteered untold numbers of volunteer hours annually for mentoring residents.

### **Plainfield Re-Entry Educational Facility**

Under the leadership of former Department of Corrections Commissioner J. David Donahue and PREF Superintendent Michael C. Lloyd the Plainfield Town Council has entered into a new era of interlocal cooperation. Town and Department of Corrections (DOC) officials held numerous meetings to discuss how change in Mission could be beneficial both for Plainfield and PREF. These discussions have resulted in agreements for development of the Plainfield Youth Athletic Fields (PYAC) and a unique program for PREF residents to learn real life skills that will help them obtain employment once they are discharged.

### **Town Center Revitalization**

For several years, Plainfield has focused on revitalization of its town center and surrounding neighborhoods that together comprise Original Town of Plainfield. An agreement was developed by Plainfield and PREF officials to use offender labor force to reconstruct broken, uneven and damaged sidewalks in Original town center neighborhoods. The area selected is North Center Street from US 40 to Depot Street. A "Memorandum of Understanding" was approved by Plainfield and PREF which is summarized below:

- Make town supervisors available for specialized training by PREF.
- Town provides all safety equipment and materials for various projects.

- Train all PREF participants in the proper use of equipment and tools prior to issuance.
- All work by PREF work crews shall be performed on town owned property.
- PREF agrees to provide up to three work crews consisting of four to five members (4-5) five (5) days a week for eight (8) hours. PREF Superintendent shall determine days to be worked, taking consideration the weather, security needs, general welfare of crew members and other pertinent factors.
- PREF provides transportation to and from work site.

For 2007, the Town budgeted \$125,000 and \$100,000 for 2008 towards the sidewalk replacement and skills enhancement program.

### **Accomplishments**

PREF was created to enable resident to make a successful transition to society once they are released from incarceration. This transition includes skills training that should enable residents find a job in the work force. Reducing recidivism rate is of paramount importance both for the offenders as it is for taxpayers of Indiana. To date, we are aware of four (4) participants from the 2007 program that have been released and obtained fulltime employment.

The new sidewalks have benefited Plainfield by improving the streetscape in an area of the community that needed additional infrastructure investment. A total 2,500 lineal feet of five (5) foot wide sidewalk was constructed by PREF work crews. Additional support was provided by Plainfield's Public Works Department. Additional skills taught to the work crews were setting and tearing down forms, landscaping and hydro seeding.

The 2008 project will remove and reconstruct sidewalks on South Center Street from US 40 to Stafford Road. Beyond 2008, Plainfield hopes to continue the program to other areas that are underserved by sidewalks or in heavily traveled areas where sidewalks are in poor condition.

### **Plainfield Youth Athletic Fields**

Another area of cooperation between PREF and Plainfield involves leasing DOC property located in the town center on west side of White Lick Creek south of US Hwy 40. For decades Plainfield youth athletic teams including soccer, baseball and football were located on Duke Energy property located at Dan Jones Road and US Hwy 40. Approximately, 2 ½ years ago Duke Energy sought developers for this prime piece of real estate. The property was eventually sold to a real estate development company that entered into an agreement for a Meijer's department store that may break ground in 2009.

Plainfield officials met with DOC officials including former Commissioner J. David Donahue about leasing a portion of the PREF property for youth athletic fields. The result of these efforts is that Plainfield entered into a land lease agreement with State of Indiana for 58 acres for a period of 30 years with an additional 30 year renewal period.

In addition to Plainfield Youth Athletic Fields (PYAC) there are other benefits that will be derived from this agreement. The town center will benefit because hundreds of young athletes and their families having direct access to businesses along US Hwy 40 through a newly constructed pedestrian bridge that spans White Lick Creek. Central location of athletic fields will enable most residents to eschew their vehicles and walk or ride bikes to PYAC. By mid 2009, Plainfield Trail system will connect 95% of all major residential areas of Plainfield without having to crossing US 40 and SR 267.

Some unique features of the agreement include:

- Repair and renovate Garden House and Apple House original building of the former Indiana Boys School.
- Rebuild retaining wall on east side of the facility.
- Authority to use offender labor for various projects with approval of the Superintendent.
- When possible purchase DOC Prison Industry products e.g. picnic tables, recreational equipment, signage, concessions unless items can be purchased less expensively elsewhere.

The first phase of the PYAC project has been bid and includes construction of drainage, water and sewer facilities, grading and construction of soccer fields. Soccer fields will be playable in Spring of 2009. Additional phases including football, baseball and a challenger baseball field will be built when funds are available.

### **Summary**

The 138 year relationship between Plainfield and Department of Corrections continues to grow and evolve. It has grown into a symbiotic relationship that benefits both parties. DOC's creation of PREF created opportunities for Plainfield in regards to enhancing the quality of life with construction of sidewalks and other improvements. PYAC will also be another opportunity for offenders to learn skills that give them a chance at a normal life outside of prison. The youth of Plainfield benefit from construction of new athletic fields that will provide a healthy and competitive environment, team work and sportsmanship. Finally, Plainfield community benefits from these initiatives by making the town center a destination location for resident and visitors that should stimulate additional investment and retail activity.