

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  
George L. Earle

3 March 2006

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

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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 2005, Activities of the Commission for the year 2005; and the Plans of the Commission for the year 2006.

Sincerely,

LaPorte County Pioneer Cemetery Commission

*Kenneth Baker*

*George L. Earle*

*Dale Ellis*

*Patricia Harris*

*Wilma Marsh*

Enc.

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**Budget and Expenditures for Calendar Year 2005**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
Office Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$ 174.89
Postage	50.00	25.35
Paint-Painting	700.00	900.00*
Mileage	500.00	448.56
Landscaping	1,100.00	1,075.00
Tombstone Repair	4,000.00	6,000.00*
Cemetery Maintenance	15,000.00	12,803.23 **
Fencing & Gates	2,000.00	-0- **
Board Members	924.00	924.00
Head of Department	5,417.00	5,158.92
Social Security & Medicare	<u>486.00</u>	<u>394.68</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 30,677.00</b>	<b>\$ 27,904.63</b>

**Unexpended Balance** ..... \$ 2,772.37

\* Although some of these items were over individual budget, funds were transferred among accounts to meet specific needs – postage to paint & painting; cemetery maintenance to tombstone repair - while staying within our total budget.

\*\* Cost of signs \$733.23 was mistakenly taken from cemetery maintenance rather than fencing & gates.

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### 2005 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 one of our monthly meetings visitations, as a board, to five 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. A second visit was cancelled due to weather.

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

Stone Restorations – Stones were restored and cleaned at Morgan Cemetery by Mark Davis of Stone Saver Cemetery Restoration bringing the restoration at that cemetery to about 75% complete.

Fencing – A contract work on the repair of the Morgan Cemetery fence continued with completion scheduled for June 2006. Fences at Eahart-Reed and Miriam Benedict cemeteries were painted.

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. Documentation of the Old Buryal Ground (1832) within the Michigan City corporate limits where some human remains were discovered was completed and compiled.

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 continue to use a 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. We also contacted all township trustees as to the specific amount of funding they give to their township cemeteries and what, if any, funds are available for stone restoration.

New signs were obtained for Nickel Plate, Morgan, Foster, Lambs Chapel and replacements for those stolen at Eahart-Reed and Posey Chapel and will be installed as soon as weather permits.

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**2006 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.

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 and stating a specific amount budgeted for the work from Commission funds.
2. Contract with lawn care services for cemetery maintenance for those cemeteries who do not have caretakers.
3. Many of our tombstones are in need of repair. We have contracted for additional repair and restoration of stones at Morgan Cemetery, which will complete the stone restoration at the cemetery, and will do others as funds allow.
4. Paint fences at Nickel Plate and Posey Chapel cemeteries and the flag pole at Low.
5. Repair needed fencing in cemeteries, specifically finishing Morgan Cemetery which is scheduled for completion by end of June and securing bids for Hudson Lake cemetery enclosures.
6. Work with a 4-H group to piece damaged stones together for possible restoration.
7. Install new cemetery signs for Morgan, Nickel Plate, Foster and Lambs Chapel cemeteries and replace the signs stolen from Posey Chapel and Eahart-Reed cemeteries. Seek bids for new signs at Wills Baptist, Sauktown, Norton, Maple Grove and Shippeeburg.

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.