

NIRPC's 2040 Plan Wins Prestigious National Award

2013 Daniel Burnham Award Received at National Conference

On Tuesday, April 16, NIRPC's 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan took the top honor in receiving the prestigious *2013 Daniel Burnham Award for a Comprehensive Plan* from the American Planning Association (APA). This award is an exceptional national honor, representing best in category among nationwide submittals. The award was presented at a special luncheon during APA's National Conference held this year at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago

APA's National Planning Excellence Awards honor the best planning efforts that create communities of lasting value. The Daniel Burnham Award recognizes a comprehensive plan that advances the science and art of planning. The award honors America's most famous planner, Daniel Burnham, for his contributions to the planning profession and to a greater awareness of the benefits of good planning.


This national recognition follows the National Association of Regional Councils' *Outstanding Achievement* and the Indiana Chapter of the American Planning Association's *Outstanding Plan* awards the NIRPC 2040 Plan previously received.

The 2040 Plan is the first plan with a comprehensive vision for sustainable growth and revitalization for Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties in Northwestern Indiana. Generally, NIRPC is responsible for and most focused on long-range regional transportation planning. The



Plan serves as a required update of NIRPC's Regional Transportation Plan, but with the 2040 Plan - this expanded planning effort, NIRPC looked well beyond transportation to how the elements of growth in northwestern Indiana interrelate. During the planning process, NIRPC included local governments, regional stakeholders and the public as they worked together to identify regional land use priorities and to translate these into strategies for smart growth and urban revitalization, multimodal transportation investment, economic development, and protection of green infrastructure.

The 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan is a blueprint for the future that builds upon the vision of a vibrant, revitalized, accessible and united three county region. It represents many hours of public engagement, commission deliberation, and hard work collaboratively shaping the future of Northwestern Indiana. The Plan is the first of its kind to integrate key comprehensive regional planning principles and provide valuable recommendations and strategies to the local context.

It is truly an honor to be nationally recognized among our professional peers. The challenge we now face together is to make this vision into a reality...but with the encouragement and momentum from this national award, the NIRPC region is well-positioned to confidently take the next steps into its future. 

Deep River-Portage Burns Waterway TMDL Study Underway

By: Joe Exl

On March 13th the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) kicked off a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study for the Deep River-Portage Burns Waterway Watershed with public meetings being held in Lake and Porter Counties. Over the coming year IDEM will be collecting water quality data from




35 stream sites strategically located throughout the watershed. The draft 2012 303(d) List of Impaired Waterbodies includes nearly 124 miles of stream in the watershed with the most prevalent issues being impaired biotic communities and *E. coli*.

The water quality data collected by IDEM along with information provided by local stakeholders during the process will be used in the TMDL report to identify probable pollution sources, determine reductions needed to meet water quality standards, and most importantly help set a path for restoration opportunities. If you were unable to attend one of the two kickoff meetings held in March, IDEM has created webpage to help stakeholders stay up to date as the

project progresses. This page includes information on project location, history, water quality parameters to be addressed as well as a project timeline and meeting presentations.

Please contact Cory Fischer, TMDL Project Manager at IDEM if you have any of the following information to assist the study:

- Water quality data
- Possible pollution sources
- Potential stakeholders
- Studies, reports, documents
- Projects that have improved water quality

IDEM anticipates the TMDL report will be completed by Fall 2014. Please visit <http://www.in.gov/idem/nps/3893.htm> for further information about the TMDL. 

Joe Exl is NIRPC's Senior Water Resources Planner. He can be reached at jexl@nirpc.org or by phone at 219-763-6060, ext. 137



Congratulations to Four New Tufford Award Winners

Four Norman E. Tufford Awards were presented at NIRPC's full commission meeting on January 17, 2013. The awards were presented by NIRPC Executive Director Ty Warner, NIRPC Executive Board Chairman Geof Benson, and retired Executive Director John Swanson. Counter clockwise from top, the honorees were former staff members Hugh (posthumous) and Lauren Rhein, Representative and Governor's Appointee to the Commission Chet Dobis, and Commissioner Stanley Dobosz of Griffith. NIRPC whole-heartedly thanks these newest recipients for their tireless dedication to the agency, helping it to evolve and advance its plans for a better Northwest Indiana.




Meet the Commissioner. . .



Michael Griffin is the current Clerk-Treasurer for the Town of Highland and represents Highland on NIRPC's commission. He is also the chair of the Pathway to 2040 Committee.

A graduate of Indiana University Bloomington, Mr. Griffin was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree, with a double major in religious studies and political science, eventually going on to earn a Masters of Public Administration degree from Indiana University-Northwest.

Prior to being elected to his current position in 1992, he served as a staff aide to Congressman Pete Visclosky. In his current position, he has earned many certifications and honors, most recently being presented with an Award of Financial Reporting Achievement by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for an award-winning comprehensive annual financial report.


In 2009, Mr. Griffin and his wife Christy had their first child, Abigail Christina. A founding member of the Highland Community Band, he still plays the baritone horn regularly. 

Meet the NIRPC Staff. . .



Belinda Petroskey is NIRPC's transit planner and has been with the agency since 1975. In her current role, she is responsible for implementing the required transit planning and programming functions under the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) regulations. This helps NIRPC maintain its certification for MPO funding and meet long range and transportation improvement plan requirements.

Born in Mackinaw City, Michigan, Belinda moved to the region as a child, and has lived throughout Lake and Porter Counties. She is a graduate of Portage High School, and holds a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Indiana University-Northwest. After working her way through college, she started at NIRPC soon after graduating. Belinda currently resides in the Portage home that has been in her family for 54 years.

Belinda avidly follows current events. In her free time, she loves to work outside in her garden and read. In a nod to her Mackinaw City roots, she has done the Labor Day Mackinac Bridge walk five times. 

Air Quality Action Season is Almost Here

By: Amanda Pollard

The beginning of May brings with it the beginning of Air Quality Action Season.

With Air Quality Action Season right around the corner, May 1st to September 30th, now is the perfect time to start thinking about what can be done on an air quality action day. Air Quality Action Days are days in which ground level ozone and particulate matter are predicted to reach unhealthy levels. The Air Quality Index recognizes unhealthy levels as between 151-200 and during days that these levels are reached there are a few things that we can do to help improve the quality of the air in the region.


Having an Air Quality Action Plan at work and at home can help us all breathe a little easier. When at home, try limiting your driving by carpooling or using public transportation. If your trips are short, walking or riding your bike is an option. If you have



to drive, avoid fast takeoffs and idling and if you have to refuel on an Air Quality Action Day (AQAD), do so after 7:00 p.m.

While at work notify employees via email that an AQAD is coming and encourage them to carpool, or work from home if possible. If you

have to attend a meeting, do so via teleconferencing instead of driving to your meeting location. If your office has a fleet, ask drivers to schedule deliveries that are near each other together so that one trip is made instead of multiple trips.

For more information on Air Quality Action Days and the Air Quality Index, please visit www.nwcleanair.com. 

Amanda Pollard is NIRPC's Environmental Educator. She can be reached at aperegrine@nirpc.org or 219-763-6060, ext. 142.