

Author: KEITH S MILLER at MONWKG01
Date: 3/24/95 2:19 PM
Priority: Normal
TO: DIANE B HERNDON at MONCOM01
CC: RUSSELL F SACKETT
Subject: Earth Day Event

----- Message Contents -----

Diane, here are the names and numbers of the key people involved with Operation New Spirit, the City of East St. Louis and USEPA. They are all aware of and are interested in some publicity around the \$10k we gave.

Operation New Spirit

Venessa Marion, Administrator 618-874-0312
→ Alandra L. Byrd, Neighborhood Organizer

✓ Venessa asked me about getting some Roundup for their garden project this spring. I told her to talk to you.

City of East St. Louis

Calvin Jones 618-482-6600

USEPA

John Perrecone, Public Affairs Coordinator
312-353-1149

Thanks for your help.

Keith



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF

MISSISSIPPI RIVER GATEWAY INITIATIVE UPDATE MARCH 1995

Background:

Welcome to the first of a series of updates on the Mississippi River Gateway Initiative. In 1994, U.S. EPA, the Illinois EPA and a host of other Federal, State and local agencies met to pool resources and programs in order to better protect public health and the environment. The initiative will focus on the western portions of St. Clair and Madison counties as well as certain environmental issues in St. Louis, Mo. (see attached map). The objective is to approach environmental protection comprehensively, and to focus government resources such that risk to human health is reduced and environmental improvement is secured in a timely and efficient manner.

You may have been involved in some recent meetings of the initiative or you may have seen some articles in the local newspapers regarding this new program. It is hoped that through these updates, you will learn more about it and choose to get involved in some way. The updates will provide short articles about recent programs and will state a contact name for you to call for information.

Gateway Partners:

You may be wondering what agencies are involved in Gateway. Currently, the major partners are U.S. EPA Region 5 (Chicago) and Region 7 (Kansas City), Illinois EPA, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regions 5 and 7, and the Illinois and Missouri Departments of Public Health. As the initiative progresses, other agencies at all appropriate levels of government will work with these partners. Whenever possible, we will work with community groups, local industry and any other groups that can assist in Gateway's goals.

Current Events:

Quite a bit of internal planning has happened over the last year. The agencies have formed a steering committee to provide direction to the initiative and a number of working groups have been formed to address specific environmental issues. We spent three months in early 1994 meeting with a variety of local individuals and groups to determine key environmental issues. We also convened in June and December of 1994, groups of citizen and business leaders to discuss the initiative and how these groups can become involved. In 1995, we will continue that dialogue to insure that the environmental and public health programs we undertake will be done in a meaningful and coordinated way.

Local Environmental Problems:

When we asked what were the most important environmental problems in the area, a variety of issues were raised. Local residents, community leaders, environmentalists and industry members told us that the aging, deteriorating sewer system posed a significant public health risk, especially during the spring

TO: *DIANE HERNDON* DATE: *3/21*

9 PAGES

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FROM: *KEITH MILLER*
EXT 6390

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DSW 135461

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rains. Also derelict and vacant housing, abandoned cars and illegal dumping posed public health, environmental and crime risks. Lead in older homes, contaminated waste sites and air pollution from major industries were also identified as problem areas. U.S. EPA historically has not dealt with sewer systems and abandoned homes and instead has dealt with larger issues like air and water pollution and the cleanup of hazardous waste sites. However, upon hearing of these local problems, U.S. EPA, working with the Gateway partners, will be taking the lead from the community and will work to bring whatever resources are available to address these problems. This is new way for U.S. EPA and our partners to conduct our work and one that we think will yield better public health and environmental results.

Coordination of Lead Contamination Issues:

Coordinating and working with existing programs is one way the Gateway Initiative insures that programs are effective. This is especially true in identifying environmental and public health problems associated with lead paint in older homes. There are several programs that are being implemented in the area:

- St. Louis University is training workers, inspectors and supervisors in abating and cleaning up lead paint in homes as well as providing money for taking lead out of homes of children who have elevated blood lead levels. In addition, they are working with the St. Louis Department of Health to develop an educational puppet show for children regarding household sources of lead and how to avoid them. These projects were funded by U.S. EPA Region 7 in Kansas City for \$201,000. Contact: Greg Evans and Kwezi Dugbatcy, St. Louis University School of Public Health (314) 977-8157.
- The Illinois Department of Public Health is working with high risk families to reduce lead exposure through aggressive housekeeping and lead dust reduction techniques. A video (in both Spanish and English) has been developed to aid agency staff in their initial and follow-up visits. They are also working on a unique multi-media investigation to evaluate human health exposure to lead and cadmium occurrences in various environmental media throughout the East St. Louis area. The first project was funded for \$21,000 from U.S. EPA's (Region 5) environmental education program and the second was funded for \$90,000 from U.S. EPA Headquarters. Finally, IDPH received \$800,000 from HUD to clean up lead in over 100 East St. Louis area homes where lead levels are too high. Contacts: Catherine Copley and David Webb, both at (618) 656-6680.
- U.S. EPA, Region 7 also provided \$20,500 of Environmental Justice grant funds to three St. Louis area groups to implement lead awareness projects and school-based asthma health education. U.S. EPA, Region 5 provided \$9,900 to the American Lung Association of Illinois (Edwardsville) to carry out asthma education programs for asthmatic African American children in the East St. Louis area. Contacts: Hattie Thomas, Region 7 (913) 551-7762 and Gina Rosario, Region 5 (312) 353-4716.
- St. Louis County received \$1.24 million for lead abatement activities from U.S. Housing and Urban Development, Region 7. The program focuses on providing financial assistance to individuals who contract for lead abatement within their homes. Contact: Valda Croskey, St. Louis County Health Department, (314) 854-6902.

In future editions, we will report on the status of these programs.

Monsanto-Community Partnership:

On December 13, 1994, U.S. EPA convened a group of local industries to outline the Gateway Initiative and how they could get involved in helping to solve some of the unique issues in the area. In response, Monsanto Company's W.G. Krummrich Plant in Sauget, IL recently provided \$10,000 to Operation New Spirit of East St. Louis for the demolition and removal of a number of abandoned homes in the Rush City neighborhood. This is an excellent example of how government, industry and the community can work together in addressing local public health and environmental problems.

Future Editions:

As you can tell, there is quite a bit of activity going on in the Metro East and St. Louis area. It is our goal to keep you informed on ongoing and future environmental and public health programs. We will seek to report on the successes and, in a learning effort, report on those projects that need further work. In so doing, we would like you to get more involved in the initiative. Please note the names listed below to get and give more information on any of the programs and projects discussed in these updates. Also, feel free to use the attached comment sheet to provide us with any comments or suggestions you may have on the Gateway Initiative.

For More Information:

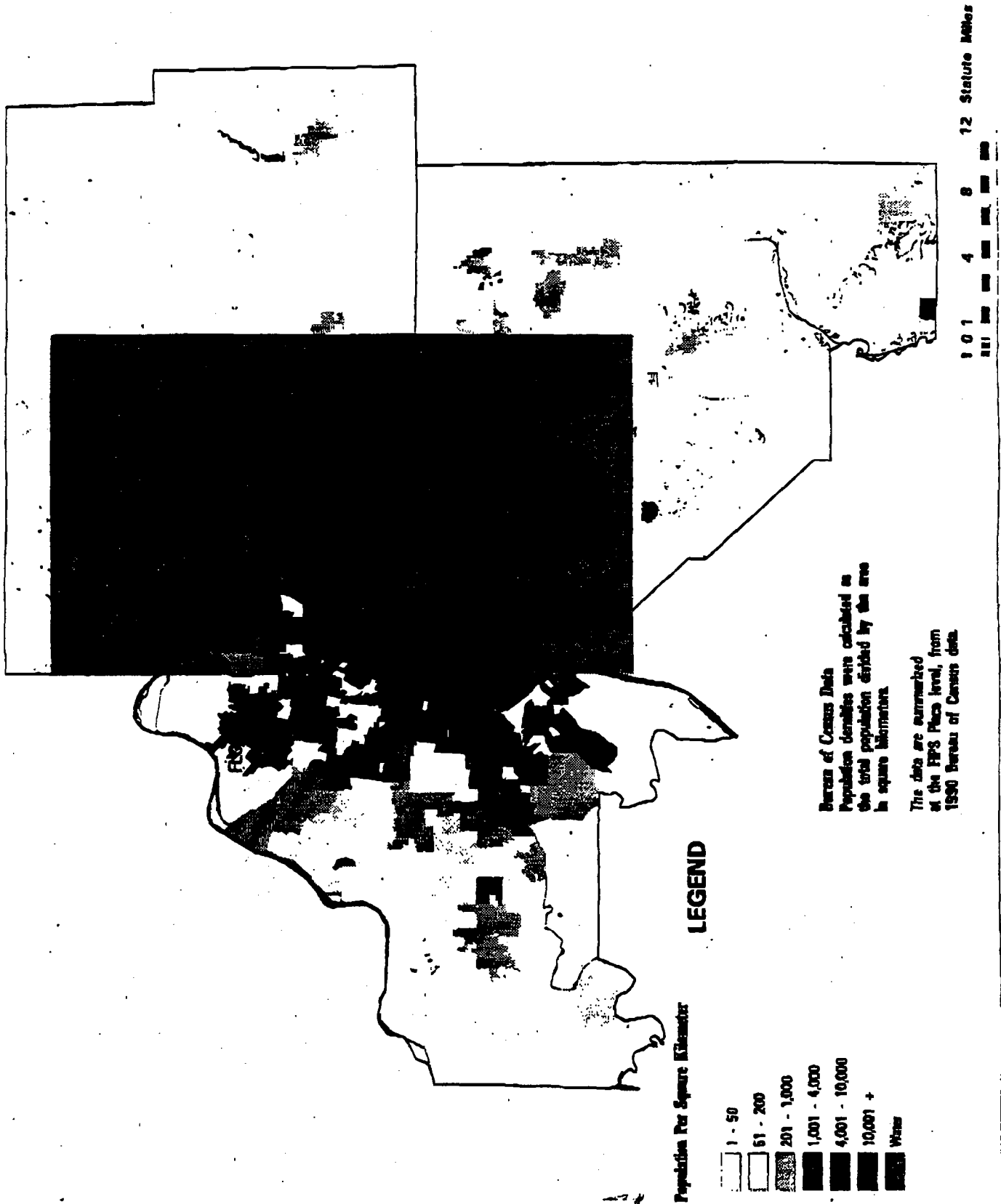
Feel free to contact the following individuals for more information:

Karen Lumino, Gateway Coordinator
U.S. EPA, Region 5
Waste Management Division
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 886-0981

Doug Elders
U.S. EPA, Region 7
Toxics and Pesticides Branch
726 Minnesota Avenue
Kansas City, KS 66101
(913) 551-7393

Ken Mensing, Regional Manager
Bureau of Land
Illinois EPA
2009 Mall Street
Collinsville, IL 62334
(618) 346-5120

Mississippi River Gateway Initiative



DSW 135464

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What Are Your Concerns?

Now that we have talked a little about the Gateway Initiative, what are your concerns? Feel free to use the space below and tell us your issues, comments, praise and criticisms of the Gateway Initiative. Tell us what you think is good about it and how it can be improved; we would certainly appreciate it. Also, if you have any comments on the format or layout of this update, feel free to discuss that as well. Please fold this paper in third and return it (with proper postage) to the address printed on the other side. Thank you.

NEW SPIRIT QUARTERLY

MARCH 17, 1995

EAST ST. LOUIS, ILLINOIS

VOLUME III

ISSUE II

ENVIRONMENT

This issue of the New Spirit Newsletter will primarily target on issues concerning preventative and practical ways of improving our environment. Also, with spring beckoning it's time to consider what measures we can take to make our community a cleaner and healthier place in which to live. We trust that you will find information within these few pages that will inspire you to environmental greatness!



Youth volunteers and their leader hard at work improving the environment.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Once again citizens gathered together to voice their concern and their vision for their neighborhoods. As the 21st century looms in the not too distant future residents want to ensure that their neighborhoods move ahead also. Fifteen of the twenty neighborhoods in East St. Louis have formed code enforcement committees. And 13 of those committees were in attendance at the code enforcement seminar that was hosted by the Operation New Spirit on Saturday, February 18, 1995 at the Pilgrim Temple C.M.E. Church. The code enforcement panel slated to be in attendance were: Mayor Gordon Bush, Lamar Gentry, city manager, Public Safety Chair, Councilperson Karen Cason; Public Works Chair, Councilperson Debra Powell; Police Chief Isadore Chambers; Fire Chief Virge Riley; Emergency Services/Disaster, George Foster; Building Department, Diane Williams; Public Works, Jesse Walker; Health & Safety, Bruce Stennis; Code Enforcer for the city Myron Cason. In attendance were Councilperson Debra Powell, Bruce Stennis, George Foster, Police Chief Chambers, and three representatives from the Building Department:

Each code enforcement committee was asked to prioritize and give the area in their neighborhood that needed the most immediate attention. Then they were to take those same areas of devastation and conceptualize what they would want to be there instead i.e., single family dwellings, flower gardens,

community gardens, commercial properties. Basically every problem that was of issue could be dealt with through code enforcement. Neighbors as well as the panel members were asked whether they felt that the city of East St. Louis could survive into the year 2000 without proper code enforcement and the answer came back a resounding "no"!

Representative neighborhood leadership have decided to form a coalition with the neighborhood organizations throughout the city to convince those in code enforcement that something has to be done to alleviate the problems of decay facing this city.



Emma Fox, Emerson Park Neighborhood and Nedra Byrd, CBD Neighborhood helping with the registration for the Code Enforcement Seminar.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER GATEWAY INITIATIVE

In 1994, U.S. EPA, the Illinois EPA and a host of other Federal, State and local agencies met to pool resources and programs in order to better protect public health and the environment. The initiative will focus on the western portions of St. Clair and Madison counties as well as certain environmental issues in St. Louis, Mo. The objective is to approach environmental protection comprehensively, and to focus government resources such that risk to human health is reduced and environmental improvement is secured in a timely and efficient manner.

QUARTERLY QUOTE

"Without struggle there is no progress"

—Fredrick Douglas

DSW 135466

STLCOPCB4035447

The New Spirit Quarterly

"IN THE SPIRIT"

Our roving spotlight this quarter has descended on the CBD-Downtown neighborhood and its not at the Casino Queen but at the doorsteps of Rev. Johnnie Davis. Rev. Davis has been a volunteer with Operation New Spirit Neighborhood Organization for the past three years. When one thinks of Rev. Davis, the word dependable has to come to mind. There has not been one event when Rev. Davis has been called on that he has not attended or makes sure that if he is unable to attend finds out what went on.

The CBD-Downtown neighborhood often is overshadowed by the goings-on at the riverfront. However, we are reminded that amidst the hustle and bustle of the riverfront there are still every-day folk like Rev. Davis who are taking care of business in CBD.



On the left Rev. Lyle Scott, Rush City Neighborhood and on the right Rev. Johnnie Davis.

Rev. Davis along with other neighbors in the CBD area are making sure that beautification and gardens are a part of the vision for their area. Another concern Rev. Davis shares with the neighbors in his area is that of the youth. With so many young people in the CBD neighborhood, his wish is to have some type of job training and employment.

Rev. Johnnie Davis' attitude of hope instead of hopelessness is most commendable and admirable. We salute him and his fellow laborers in the CBD-Downtown neighborhood and say "keep up the good work"!

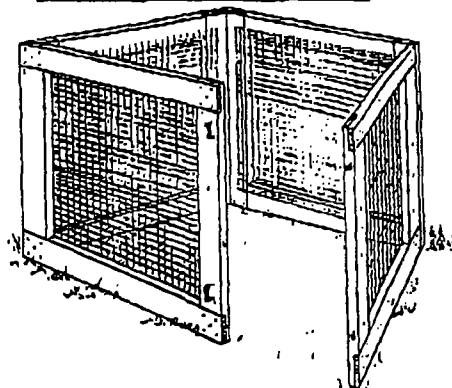
WANT NOT, WASTE NOT!

With Spring fastly approaching, many people are asking what to do with leaves and other yard waste that has accumulated in their yards. Here's a reminder: composting!

Composting allows your yard waste to decompose back into the soil. This is a great way to add nutrients to your soil and to make it easier for your plants to grow.

Constructing a compost bin is quite easy. You need to dig a hole about 3 feet deep and 3 feet wide. If digging isn't easy for you, then you can use a 12 foot piece of fence. Place the fence in the ground making a circle. Make sure you leave one side of the fence open to allow entrance into the bin. You can begin to add leaves and grass clippings. You may also add saw dust, ashes, hay straw and weeds.

PORTABLE WOOD & WIRE COMPOSTING BIN



Once your pile is 8 inches thick add 2 inches of fertilizer and 2 inches of soil. These materials will help the pile to decompose quickly and completely.

With your compost heap, you will have the pleasure of conveniently getting rid of yard waste, while providing a rich supply of nutrients for your planting efforts!

REDUCTION THROUGH RECYCLING

As we move toward the 21st century, there are no quick fixes to our environmental problems. The real solution lies within all of us. We must become wiser consumers and must demand that manufacturers become more responsible not only about what goes in a product but also what surrounds the product. Americans continue to generate more than twice as much garbage as citizens of Western Europe or Japan.

Consumers should shop wisely to reduce throwaway by buying big sizes, refills, etc. Much of our used paper, wood, glass, most metals and all types of plastics can be recycled in to useful new products.



The New Spirit Quarterly

REDUCTION THROUGH RECYCLING (cont.)

Recycling one aluminum can saves 95% of the energy required to manufacture a can from scratch. Glass bottles and jars contain at least 25% recycled content and like aluminum, can be recycled an infinite number of times.

Reducing, reusing and recycling are exciting concepts, new to many of us, but not new to Americans who lived as an integral part of this land for ten thousand years. Seathl, better known to us as Chief Seattle, spoke these words 150 years ago:

This we know
The earth does not belong to us;
we belong to the earth.
Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters
of the earth.
We did not weave the web of life;
we are merely a strand in it.
Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

If you would like to know more about recycling, contact Gerrie Jenkins at Make East St. Louis Beautiful 482-6621 or Bonnie Robinson of St. Clair County Health Department 233-7769.

COMMUNITY GET TOGETHER

Shoulder to shoulder, side by side, neighborhood gardeners will be getting together to do community vegetable gardens this spring. With the help of Lt. Saunders and the Sheriff's Alternative Work Offenders Program and the Americorps volunteers community gardens will be sprouting up all over East St. Louis.

Neighborhood organizations were encouraged to get gardening committees formed to change some of the vacant debris-filled lots into community vegetable gardens. This year it looks as if there will be gardens in approximately 12 of the neighborhoods in the city.



Gardens can provide a way to reduce your grocery bill and also be a source of profit. The Farmers' Market located on 14th & State offers booths for individuals to come and sell their produce. This in turn serves to spur on the economy of East St. Louis. For more information on this call Kirk Goodrich at 875-9113.

One of the exciting new things that will be happening due in part to the generosity of The McKnight Foundation, East St. Louis Community Fund and Union Electric is that of raised beds and composting. Our first site will be in the Rush City neighborhood. Because of some of the problems that this neighborhood faces with soil pollution, this is hopefully a way of providing healthy produce.

"EAST ST. LOUIS, THE BEAUTIFUL"

The "green thumb" committees are about to go to work this spring. Beautification members from neighborhoods all over the city, Don Beckman, Lincoln Correctional Center, Centralia Correctional Facility residents and Operation New Spirit Neighborhood office will be joining forces to beautify East St. Louis with flowers.



Each year since spring 1992, street corners, lots, and parks have been transformed into a gardener's delight with all types of colorful blooms. It is so exciting to see the yellow daffodils from the fall planting coming up, just as we begin to plant the spring and summer flowers.

All of the flowers have been grown and donated by the Lincoln Correctional Facility residents. Mr. Don Beckman, horticulturalist works with the residents during the winter months to prepare the thousands of flowers that are donated. Each year, summer and fall without fail, Mr. Leo Meyer, (Illinois Department of Corrections) has supplied us with such fine help.

Starting April 5, each Wednesday through the first Wednesday of June we will be going out planting, pruning and preparing for East St. Louis, the Beautiful.



The New Spirit Quarterly

Kerr

THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

The W.G. Krummich Plant of Monsanto located in Sauget, IL decided to show good neighbor relations by donating \$10,000 to MECCO/Operation New Spirit Neighborhood Office for the removal of derelict structures in the Rush City neighborhood.

In January of this year Mrs. Inez Gavin, secretary for the Rush City Improvement Association was on hand to accept the check from Mr. Russ Sackett, plant manager. Mrs. Gavin said the donation came at a time when the neighbors had begun to give up hope on anything positive happening in Rush City.



It is hoped that Monsanto is setting the tone for other industry and businesses to get involved with neighborhoods. If you truly want to be a "friend" to East St. Louis, why not show yourself friendly by adopting a neighborhood. There are 19 other neighborhoods in the city of East St. Louis just waiting for someone to adopt them and assist in making a better "home".

AROUND THE BLOCK

Fairlawn: If you are interested in gardening and would like to learn a few tips on what to plant and when, the Fairlawn neighborhood is sponsoring their annual spring gardening meeting with Dr. John Yopp, SIU-Carbondale on March 30 at St. Patrick's School Cafeteria located at 771 Vogel Place at 7:00 p.m.

South End: A group of citizens from the South End neighborhood have held meetings recently to discuss issues of concern for that historic neighborhood. Presently they are meeting at Shining Light Baptist Church at 1334 Colas Ave., where the Rev. Sims is the pastor. Look to see good things to start happening in that area.

Beacon Heights: This neighborhood has rallied together to try to prevent Attucks Elementary School from closing its doors. Neighbors feel since Attucks is the only school located in their neighborhood it should remain open. A meeting was held with District #189 board officials on March 10.

NEW "Q" BRIEFS

◆ The United Way of Greater St. Louis, Inc. and the St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) have collaborated efforts to produce the Literacy Service Center (LSC). The LSC supports the bi-state area literacy programs in their efforts to increase public awareness of the many services they offer. If you are interested or know someone who could benefit from these services call (314) 361-0381.

◆ MECCO/Operation New Spirit along with Americorp will be sponsoring the annual community gardening workshop on Thursday, March 23 at 11:00 a.m. It will be held at St. Patrick School in the cafeteria.

◆ Housing Authority Demolition Update: So far 160 structures have been torn down. We thank the Housing Authority for their progress so far and look forward to the day when all of these derelict structures will be down and new affordable housing will take its place.

The New Spirit neighborhood organizing is a MECCO effort funded primarily by the E. St. Louis Community Fund.

The New Spirit Quarterly is printed on recycled paper.

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