

Merry Christmas!

\$1 Each Week

Bloomfield Free Press



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'Your Independent Hometown Newspaper'

Week of December 20, 2006

\$12,959,330.88 SPENT

Building Corp. Project Manager paid \$257,661.66 Still receiving mileage to come to work and lunch money from county

By Michael Johnson
Free Press Editor

BLOOMFIELD - After combing through hundreds of pages of payment requisitions held by the Greene County Auditor's office, and compiling a seven-foot-long spreadsheet, the final figures are in.

The Greene County Building Corporation has spent \$12.9 million on the courthouse building and renovation project - as of Dec. 15.

The *Bloomfield Free Press* - at its own expense and using its own manpower - obtained the appropriate records and compiled them late last week.

The figures were then audited by an independent, out-of-area Certified Public Accountant hired by the newspaper.

Although another county publication this week reported that there was nearly a half-million dollars left in building accounts, in fact, there should be only \$40,699.12 remaining out of the \$13 mil-

*A complete and
accurate break-down of
all accounts paid appears
on Page 6 of this week's
Bloomfield Free Press.*

lion allotted for the project as of last week.

Originally, there were \$10.5 million worth of bonds issued. Then, the county authorized a \$2.5 million line of credit in February 2005 with Main Source Bank.

At a Greene County Council meeting on Monday afternoon, the council approved an additional \$4 million increase in the line of credit to hopefully finish the project and proceed with lawsuits against United Consulting Engineers and DLZ Corp. for problems encountered early in the project. (SEE SEPARATE STORY, PAGE 5.)

Perhaps one of the most glaring amounts in the paperwork from the county

is a line item for payments to Project Manager James R. Corey.

Corey was hired originally as a consultant to help oversee the construction project on a daily basis.

Since the first pay-out to Corey on Nov. 18, 2003, the man has been paid a total of \$257,661.66.

Corey was later hired as an employee of the Building Corporation. His first "payroll" payment shows on a requisition paid on Feb. 2, 2005.

Although an "employee," for nearly two years, the Building Corporation has continued to pay him mileage at 34.5 cents per mile, expenses and a per diem of \$35 per day through his most recent requisition for payment.

A per diem is typically a daily amount of money paid for meals while on the job.

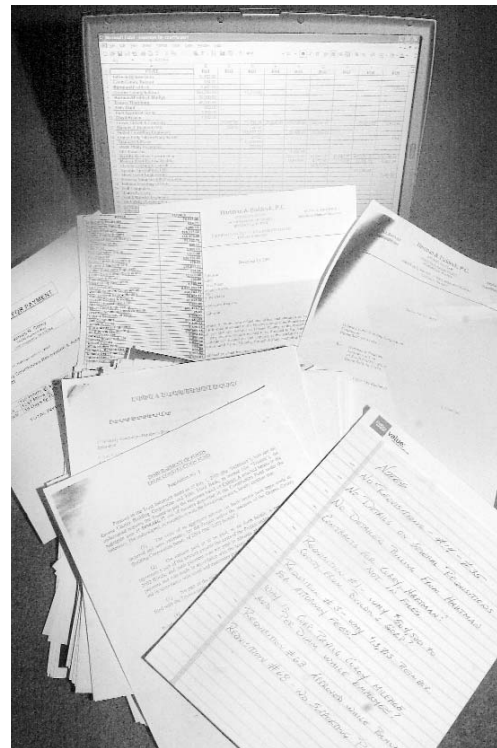
Corey's payments so far work out to an average monthly payment of \$6,780.57 over the course of his involvement with the county.

In his employment contract, Corey is contracted to be paid \$83,196 per year, plus his other "expenses."

Although not technically a county employee, if he was on the actual county's payroll, he would be the fourth-highest paid county worker, behind the judges and prosecutor.

Another large item found in the pay-outs is a total of \$609,472.73 paid to the litigation firm of Drewry, Simmons, and Pitts and Vornehm of Indianapolis.

The firm is in charge of the county's pending lawsuits in connection with construction problems.



Staff photo by M. Johnson

PILE OF PAPERWORK - After literally days of sorting through county documents, the *Bloomfield Free Press* has managed to get answers to a question that no county official had been able or willing to answer accurately - "How much has the county spent so far on the courthouse project?"

In investigating the breakdown for the additional \$4 million approved by the county council, one line item is for \$800,000 additional for the firm.

If the money is actually used, the county will have paid its litigation attorneys a

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Local residents want investigation

BLOOMFIELD - A group of local residents calling itself the Committee for Accountability in Greene County has scheduled and paid for a full-page advertisement in this and next week's *Bloomfield Free Press* seeking support in petitioning the Indiana Attorney General's Office for an investigation into the Greene County Courthouse construction project.

The advertisement appears on the back page this week.

In part, it tells county residents that the group feels the "Greene County Building Corporation has been operating without any real oversight or guidance, and ...

Greene County officials have failed in their task to oversee the Greene County Courthouse construction project."

The group is asking residents to fill out a form asking the Attorney General to investigate the project from its beginning and send it to a Bloomfield Post Office box.

Members of the group who paid for the advertisement have asked to remain anonymous for the immediate future, or at least until a petition is presented to the state. They have also declined interview requests, saying their advertisement "speaks for" them.

COURTHOUSE PAYOUTS

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WEEK OF DECEMBER 20, 2006

<u>PAYEE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1stSecurity Insurance	\$75,607.00
Court/Comm. Record	\$834.77
Hartman & Paddock	\$9,806.98
Greene County Indiana	\$578,213.00
Hartman/Paddock Marilyn Hartman	\$119,460.39
Barnes/Thornburg	\$73,102.70
Fifth Third	\$950.00
First Appraisal Group	\$2,000.00
Floyd Heaton	\$1,500.00
Crowe Chizek & Company	\$539,531.42
Rhonda J. Deckard CPA	\$175.00
United Consulting Engineers	\$235,511.30
Linton Daily Citizen/Daily World	\$114.94
Standard & Poors	\$12,000.00
SM&P Utility Resources	\$200.00
SBC DataCom	\$4,155.44
Weddle Brothers Construction	\$8,841,333.64
Monroe Bank Escrow/Weddle	\$464,752.77
Cleaver Cabling & Consult.	\$39,904.57
Spartan Specialities, LTD.	\$87,825.00
Silver Creek Engineering	\$1,260.00
Drewery Simmons Pitts&Vornehm	\$609,472.73
Indiana Secretary of State	\$25.00
Dell Computers	\$3,044.00
James R. Corey	\$257,661.66
Soil & Material Engineers	\$5,529.94
Alt & Witziq Engineering	\$5,529.94
Safway Services	\$177,805.15
Safway Steel Products	\$6,574.43
Robert Crooks	\$2,090.00
Bank of New York	\$2,850.00
Robert L. Ralston Esq./CPA	\$789.00
Indiana Department of Revenue	\$554.64
Internal Revenue	\$3,763.02
Strand Associates Inc.	\$696,960.01
Greene County Building Corp.	\$35,000.00
London Witte Group	\$18,675.03
Xact Inc - Indy	\$5,221.41
SBC	\$7,625.52
Eastern Heights Utilities	\$896.88
Clicks	\$869.60
Cornwell Communications	\$30,154.00

TOTAL **\$12,959,330.88**

ORIGINAL BONDS:
\$10,500,000

FIRST LINE OF CREDIT:
\$2,500,000

SECOND LINE OF CREDIT:
\$4,000,000

***TOTAL
PROJECTED
COSTS:
\$17,000,000***

NOTE OF INTEREST: A total of \$33,396.12 in payments to United Consulting Engineers are being shown as "rescinded" on the Greene County Building Corporation's requisition for payment sheets. It is unknown if the payments were actually made.

* These figures were obtained by the *Bloomfield Free Press* at its own expense and manpower through public records held by the Greene County Auditor's Office. They were reviewed by a *Certified Public Accountant* prior to publication.

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COURTHOUSE

FROM PAGE 1

total of \$1.4 million.

On a more local legal front, County Commission Attorney Marilyn Hartman, who also acts as legal counsel for the Building Corporation and the Greene County Redevelopment Commission, has been paid \$119,460.39 for her work on the Building Corporation alone.

Although Hartman was originally contracted for \$50,000 in legal fees for the entire project, she said the additional monies were for extra work she performed in connection with the pending lawsuits.

None of Hartman's invoices for legal services contain breakdowns of actual work done or time spent on various legal tasks.

All of Hartman's requests for payments contained in the auditor's files contain one line seeking payment for "professional services rendered."

An additional amount of \$13,713 was paid to Greene County by the Building Corporation for "reimbursement of attorney's fees," but it was not clear whether Hartman received that money originally - while acting as the county commission's attorney.

Another red flag which a thorough search of the records

brought up was two missing requisitions for payment.

Requisitions numbered 14 and 35 were not in the files at the auditor's office.

Hartman said the requisition numbers were missing because of a sequential numbering error.

A secretary at Hartman's office seconded that theory.

Also missing from the auditor's files is a copy of Hartman's contract for services to the Building Corporation, according to Bailey.

"If it's here, I sure haven't seen it," he said Monday afternoon.

The general contractor for the project, Weddle Brothers Construction, has received \$8,841,333.64 to date, with an additional \$464,752.77 deposited in an escrow account with Monroe Bank.

By state statute, at least five percent of monies paid to the general contractor has to be held back, pending the project's completion.

The records also show a payment from the Building Corporation to Greene County in the amount of \$564,500 at the beginning of the project.

Hartman explained that the Building Corporation had to purchase the courthouse property -

including the actual courthouse - in order to secure bonds and manage the construction project.

When completed, the county will make lease payments to the Building Corporation until the \$10.5 million in bonds are paid off.

United Consulting Engineers - one of the parties the county has filed suit against - received \$235,511.30.

However, there were notes on several requisitions, requesting they be rescinded.

It is unclear whether those payments - totalling \$33,396.12 - were actually paid or refused.

The *Bloomfield Free Press* has filed an open records request with the financiers and bond companies involved in the original bond transactions seeking a comprehensive list of all bond holders - many of whom are Greene County residents.

Bond information repositories have responded, saying they are not the keepers of those particular records. They all referred inquiries to the Bank of New York.

James Schultz, an Indianapolis-based representative of the Bank of New York, has yet to respond to requests for the records, which was submitted in the middle of last week.