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Friday, January 15, 2010 • JANESVILLE, WI



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## Lake Leota project reflects successes as well as problems

By GINA DUWE (Contact) Monday, Nov. 2, 2009

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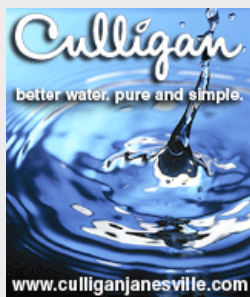
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EVANSVILLE — The dredging and refilling of Lake Leota was only the start for improving Lake Leota Park and its recreation options, officials said.

### Landscaping design

The city is working with John Gishnock of Formecology on a landscaping design on the shoreline, thanks to grant money from the Antes Fund, a component of the Evansville Fund.

While nothing is firm yet, park board chair Janis Ringhand said the shoreline restoration and beautification likely will include habitat for wildlife, fish habitat and possible fishing ledges such as limestone paths.

The city is receiving \$4,670 annually from the Antes Fund for improvement and beautification in Lake Leota Park. The park board just found out about the grant this summer and decided to spend about \$2,000 on the landscaping design and \$1,000 for a planted "showcase plot," Ringhand said. The planting likely will wait until spring.

"We knew we wanted to do the landscaping along the lakeshore and thought that was a very good place to start," she said.

### Weather affects business

This summer's cool weather didn't help attract customers at the new boat rental business, resulting in the owner owing the city back rent, City Administrator Dan Wietecha said.

Robert Tierney of R&A Canoeing owes the city \$225 in rent, Wietecha said, though the city has a \$100 security deposit.

The Gazette could not reach Tierney for comment.

The city's contract with R&A Canoeing was only for the past summer, so officials are hopeful they can find someone—whether it's Tierney with a better plan or someone else—to provide recreation next year.

"I'm optimistic that something can happen there next year and in the future. I do know he had a tough time of it," Wietecha said.

Tierney presented his plan to the park board and city officials in spring. Officials at the time said it looked like a good business plan, and everyone was encouraged and enthusiastic about it.

"Any new business is hard to get off the ground, and the summer was not very weather friendly," Ringhand said.

### Photo



Photo by Kyle Bursaw

Several Evansville residents embark on a paddleboat parade after making the reopening of Lake Leota official with a ribbon cutting ceremony at the lake in July. The effort to rehabilitate the lake has met with some successes in its first year.

### Fish stocking

The start of Save Our Lake Environment's three-year fish stocking program is off to a good start, Ringhand said.

The early stocking of the minnows "appeared to be very lucrative," she joked.

They bred on schedule, producing a lot of food for the pan fish that arrived later in the summer, she said.

There appears to be a good supply of minnows to provide food for the fish over the winter.

More pan fish will be added in fall 2010 with bass and walleye coming in fall 2011.

SOLE is paying for and running the stocking effort.

Swimming

The city plans to place signs around the lake announcing no lifeguard is on duty in the lake or creek and that people swim at their own risk, Ringhand said.

"We're assured that we are not held liable if someone has an accident in the lake," she said.

The city is not encouraging swimming in the lake, but "you can't really stop it," she said.

Kids loved playing and fishing in the knee-deep creek, she observed.

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curtaincall  
Nov 3, 2009 at 9:16 a.m.  
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People need to remember this is a town, who is truly a bedroom community and will never be anything more, because the city has really failed to bring in business. Just spend money. Taxes are second highest in the county thanks to the city council, mayor and the school district. A town this size can not support the way they spend. This is town that was in the hole when it came to their budget this year and had to lay people off, have a hiring freeze and furloughs thanks to the city's foolish spending, which includes this lake. Both mayor decker and ringhand are wanna be's. ringhand ran for state office twice and was soundly defeated for two clear reason's. 1. When mayor for evansville she did nothing for the city but leave it in debt, 2. People saw her what she is , inexperienced with a strong desire for the title not the job. She would have been a nightmare in state office.

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This lake will continue to be a bottomless pit in terms of how much money it costs the city. Janis Ringhand/Mayor Decker. is a clueless woman who spends money regardless if its there or not. Really the city needs to decide which park is going to be 'their' park.. The westside park by the time it is done will cost over two million dollars. TWO MILLION dollars... Another two million for lake and improvements.. Lake Walls, Fish.. Where does it end. This lake will never generate enough revenue to pay for its up keep...Evansville has nothing no draw to bring people to evansville. Council should have taken the money they have used on this lake and got some business into town. They have so failed us. High taxes, low house values, no jobs... evansville has nothing , its nothing but a bedroom community.. Heck they even had to pay for Discover Wisconsin to come in a film things in evansville. No one would do it jus because its such a great town..They are building a senior center in a flood plain. What does that tell you?

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