

# Jim Gamble explains

## Whitestown's involvement

### with Hoosier Heartland

by Pam Ferree

Whitestown is the only Boone County municipality holding membership in the Indiana Heartlands Coordinating Committee. This came about because the town needed money for a sewer system and the Town Board decided to seek federal assistance. The federal government approved the funding provided the town joined IHCC.

Indiana Heartland's three main objectives involve land use planning, inter-county coordination, and fund application review in the area surrounding Indianapolis. Hendricks, Morgan, Marion, Johnson, Shelby, and Hancock counties are members. Carmel, Cicero, Fishers, Noblesville, and Whitestown have town memberships since Boone and Hamilton counties prefer not to belong. A county has three representatives and three votes in the regional advisory group. Towns have one representative and one vote.

Jim, Gamble, a Town Board member, is Whitestown's representative on the coordinating committee which is better known as Hoosier Heartlands. Earlier this year Gamble was elected vice-president. He is regarded as an IHCC promoter in Boone County.

Gamble justifies Whitestown's involvement saying, "Most of us that are in public office were elected to act in the best interests of the people. One of the things that goes along with political office is budgeting and controlling money - overseeing the tax dollar and trying to see that the people get the most and best services at the lowest possible cost. Whether we like to admit it or not, federal programs are available. The categorical programs are far from perfect. But, if we have the opportunity to oversee the spending of federal tax dollars, I think we should use the opportunity."

IHCC is one of what will be numerous clearinghouses across the nation for federal and state funds. The regional agency concept developed from the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

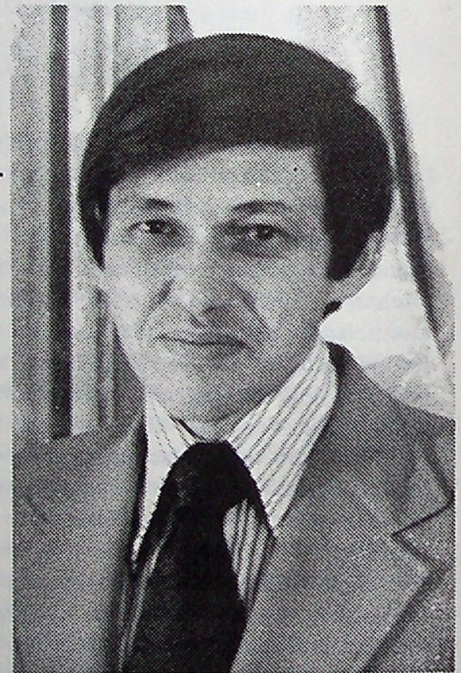
The agency's muscle comes from its designation and certification by the federal Office of Management and Budget as the areawide A-95 review agency or clearing-

house for the eight counties. All projects which utilize state or federal funds are analyzed by this group which takes into account national, state, regional, and local viewpoints. According to the IHCC's guidebook, the review process includes soliciting comments on projects from county commissioners and other public agencies affected by the project. IHCC comments either favorably or unfavorably and refers the application to either Wash-

ington or the Statehouse. "Let's be realistic," Gamble said. "That's a pretty strong power. However, an unfavorable comment does not stop the grant process."

Because of the federal government's numerous funding programs, Heartlands comments on a variety of projects. Currently being considered are:

- an airport master plan for the Shelbyville Municipal airport
- a grant for wastewater collection and treatment for Sheridan
- a manpower program for Boone and Hamilton counties
- FHA insurance for a subdivision in Marion County
- a Franklin City Plan Commission request for aid in updating the city's master plan
- an HEW continuation grant for the Marion County Association for Retarded Children,



Jim Gamble

Hoosier Heartlands was a year old in March and has been staffed with an executive director, three professional planners, and a secretary since January. The staff, with the advice of the town and county representatives, has identified physical environment, intergovernmental relations, and human resources as current areas of concern.

Physical environment refers to land use, transportation, community facilities, housing, and public utilities. The IHCC policy for this area is that it will serve as a functional agency and help prevent duplications of facilities. An example of what they hope to prevent is duplicated medical treatment facilities in a relatively small geographic area.

The broad concern labled intergovernmental relations involves funding review, regional planning, and coordination of government units within the Heartland region. IHCC's policy in this area is to serve as an inter-county liaison, to act as an informational source about innovative projects, and to provide planning and research assistance.

The group's position on human resources, the third area of concern, is to work with existing agencies and to help plan, program, and manage human resource activities without operating them. Examples of resource activities are habilitation and rehabilitation centers.

Gamble lists two advantages to Heartland's membership. "Problems fail to recognize jurisdictional boundaries," he said. "Consequently, one advantage is communication with other units of government and access to their ideas, solutions, and successes."

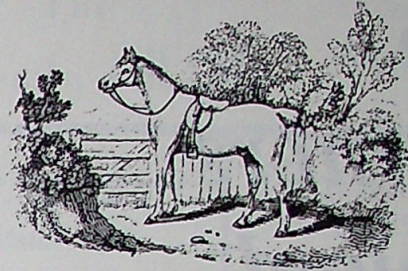
Secondly, he thinks that membership in IHCC helps deal with problems at their sources rather than after the fact. "The things that happen in Indianapolis affect us. At the present time the only thing we can do is react to them."

Elaborating on his philosophy, Gamble said that many people who move to this area exhibit a Daniel Boone syndrome in that newcomers want to own property and have privacy. "Boone County's problem is that people are trying to escape the city and find a piece of turf. If we can solve the problems of the inner-city and make it more desirable, we can preserve the countryside."

Clarifying IHCC motives, the lifelong Whitestown resident said, "There is no intention to replace local town boards and plan commissions. The autonomy of every Heartlands member is very carefully respected and guarded. As an agency, we don't intend to go into any county and dictate plans. What Heartlands is asking is that communities not build walls around themselves."

"There is a lot of opposition to using federal funds in Boone County. However, there are only three alternatives. Public officials can tax the citizen to death, do without services, or utilize federal funds."

Gamble, an Abraham Lincoln admirer, quotes one of the former president's statements. "I believe the government should do only that which the private citizens can not do for themselves or that which they can not do so well." Gamble agrees with this philosophy and believes that his viewpoint is similar to that of Lincoln.



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