



**Eric & Deb Fields
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This Week!**

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Providing Info On Land Compensation – Meghan Largent, left, and Lindsay Brinton of the law firm Lewis Rice were at the Orleans Public Library last Tuesday evening to bring information on how landowners who own property adjacent to the abandoned CSX railroad might file a claim for compensation for that land. (Photo by Vicki Gross)

Landowners May Claim Compensation For Abandoned Railroad Easement

By Vicki Gross

A meeting was held Aug. 26 at the Orleans Public Library with attorneys from Lewis Rice discussing the potential compensation claims of landowners who own property along the abandoned CSX railroad in Orange, Lawrence, Washington, Clark and Floyd counties.

A case will be filed on Sept. 30.

The process for filing a claim was explained by the attorneys.

Lindsay S. C. Brinton said, “Landowners have a right to make a claim and they have nothing to lose by doing so.”

Brinton said the attorney fee is on a contingency basis. She said approximately 50 landowners are being represented already along the corridor of around 62 miles of CSX abandoned railway.

She and fellow attorney, Meghan E. Largent, provided information on the claim process.

Information provided says a claim will not affect the landowner’s property, will not affect the easements on their property, will not affect the trail being proposed in Rails to Trails, and is just a claim for compensation.

A landowner will owe nothing to the law firm until they are paid their “just compensation.”

Plaintiffs are the landowners who own land adjacent to former railroad right-of-way with the defendant being the federal government.

The U.S. Court of Federal Claims, which is located in Washington, D. C., is the court where the claim cases will be filed.

Under the Rails to Trails, abandoned railroad tracks are turned into walking/biking trails.

Claims which may be paid to landowners do not come from the trail funds, rather from a judgment fund.

Brinton said there is no benefit to waiting to file a claim for compensation from the federal government.

She added that the Rails to Trails group, at some point, will be converting the abandoned railway to a walking/biking trail, although that may not happen for some years as the process is sometimes a lengthy one.

She also said that the Indiana Trails group must provide a fence between such a trail and the landowner’s property, when the trail is built.

CSX filed a request to formerly abandon the railroad line in December 2017. At that time, Indiana Trails Fund, Inc. filed a trail use request.

The attorney firm Lewis Rice is based in St. Louis, MO.

Those who wish to file a claim for compensation for property taken for the railroad right of way may visit www.lewisrice.com for more information, or call Brinson at 314-444-7723 or email lbrinton@lewisrice.com.

Orleans Chamber Of Commerce 75 Years Strong

Way back in 1944, the Orleans Chamber of Commerce was created by a group of local citizens seeking to advance the commercial, industrial, economic, and civic interests of their community. Today, the organization has progressed and broadened its scope, involving community representatives with varying interests but a common focus on future growth and development of the Orleans community in the areas of education, health, environment, and overall quality of life - all in addition to the chamber’s original intent.

With one of its main areas of focus being the downtown business district, the chamber has been instrumental in downtown revitalization efforts. The group has spearheaded a large number of beautification projects, such as welcome signs, street banners, holiday decorations, floral displays, and the enhancement of downtown storefronts. Semi-annual beautification awards are presented to encourage businesses and residents throughout the community to create a more appealing and attractive local environment.

Farther reaching, perhaps, are the chamber’s efforts toward advocacy and tourism. Hosting legislative forums two to three times annually, the organization gives local citizens the chance to meet and converse with their state officials, hear the views on current issues, and offer support and/or opposition to those views.

From the downtown visitors’ center, the Orleans Chamber of Commerce also offers informational materials about Orleans, including maps, directories, brochures, resource materials, and internet information, making it easy for visitors and locals both to access the events, attractions, and local flavor of Orleans and the surrounding area.

The chamber also serves as sponsoring organization of the Orleans Dogwood Festival, the annual Fall Festival, Christmas on the Square, and other special events, including the town’s popular Summer Concert Series. Its Business After Hours events provide the opportunity for local business owners and leaders, their customers, and the general public alike to network and learn more about the local commercial structure and the types of businesses and services available in the area.

More than 90 members strong, the Orleans Chamber of Commerce is governed by a 12-member board of directors who represent a broad range of local interests. As staunch supporters of local business and commercial efforts, the chamber meets several times throughout the year to give and to receive insight and information, which will encourage the mission of enhancing our community.

Today, the Orleans Chamber of Commerce’s directors and officers include President Randy Clark, Vice-President David Miller of Orleans Antiques, Secretary Vicki Gross of The Progress Examiner, Treasurer Wendy Sprigler of Sprigler’s Market and Deli, Nevada Wagers of Mid-Southern Savings Bank, Debby Stone of the Orleans Public Library, Dr. Kelly Kirk of Kirk Veterinary, Patton Busick of Busick Insurance Agency, Gary McClintic

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Solid Waste Board Meets

Commissioners Learn Of Paving Damage

By John F. Noblitt

At last week’s commissioners’ meeting, Richard Dixon reported he has been getting reports of damage to newly paved roads by drivers “peeling out” on the new surfaces. He said the highway department has made repairs 5 times to the same stretch of road. Highway Superintendent Carl Anderson confirmed there has been extensive damage to several roads where “cold mix”, which requires time to cure, is being used.

The commissioners are asking the public to report any incidents of people doing the damage.

In a related report, Anderson said Districts 1, 2, and 3 roadwork, under the Community Crossings program, was nearing completion and painting work on the highway garage buildings was complete.

Circuit Court Judge Steve Owen attended the meeting to inform the commissioners the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program had received a \$40,000 grant and it needed to be officially entered into the minutes to allow tracking for future audit reports. Owen also stated there were many sources of grant funds available for Children In Need of Services (CHINS) and some of the probation department programs which he wished to pursue. The commissioners noted the grant award and encouraged Owen to continue pursuing any enhancements available.

In other matters, Owen reported on several improvements to the courthouse landscaping and increased courtroom security. Finally, Owen urged the commissioners to consider having the courthouse power washed in the near future.

County Attorney J.C. Tucker reported on quotes for the HVAC system replacement at the community center building. He said two proposals were

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Orange County Players Say “Come On In...”

Orange County Players will be presenting their final summer production of “Come On In...” a night for coffee, friends and songs” on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 6 and 7 at the Paoli Presbyterian Church located at 110 Northeast 1st Street in Paoli.

“Come On In...” takes you into the home of the Orange County Players and invites the audience to come on in to join the cast as they relax and have a fun filled time of singing around the piano.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the show begins with desserts being served, and then moves on into the living room for the time of singing at 7 p.m. Music from all styles and times will be shared for the evening, and the cast promises that there will be some very interesting moments of fun to be had.

“There have been times that we had to stop the rehearsal, because we were laughing so hard. We just hope the audience will have as much fun as we have!” said director Kate Henderson. The cast includes Beverly Hester, Samantha Vandagriff, Cameron Vandagriff, Richard Vandagriff, Gary Spear, Larry Holan and Kate Henderson.

Tickets are \$12 for dessert and the show and are on sale now. Tickets can be purchased from any cast member or at 812-723-5672.

Orleans Residents Reminded Of Dog And Cat Laws

The Orleans Police Department has received numerous complaints of dogs and cats running loose. The Orleans Street Department picks up dogs and cats found running at large and transports the animals to Orange County Humane Society. Citizens experiencing problems with stray animals can contact the Orleans Town Garage at 812-865-3207 or by email, orleans-street@netsurfusa.net.

The Orleans Police Department is urging all dog and cat owners to be responsible owners and keep their animals confined to their property.

Executive Session Set

The Orleans Town Council will meet in executive session on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall as authorized under Indiana Code section 5-14-1.5-6.1 (b) (9).

TOP PRIZES AWARDED FOR INNOVATION CHALLENGE



Local Men Win Trine University Award

Two Orleans natives, Cale Hall and Chase Hall, won first place in the business division of Trine University’s Innovation Challenge, hosted by the university’s Innovation One and Fifth Third Bank. The first place win was a \$3,000 prize for H3 Baits, development by the Hall brothers. The two developed a fishing tackle company specializing in jigs and artificial baits for freshwater bass fishing. The young men, both graduates of Orleans High School, are the sons of Chad and Jennifer Hall, grandsons of Frank and Beth Hall and John and Diane Love, all of Orleans.