

Today's Presentation

Program: Bridging the Past to the Future

Speaker: Allen W. Patterson, Director of Hamilton County Parks and Jim Barker, Project Engineer

Introduced by: Jim Dillon

Attendance: 73

Guests: Sue Dashiell, Linda Nitka

Scribe: Gonz Chua

Editor: Jim Willson

The talk was split between two speakers. Mr. Allen Patterson who spoke first on the history of the three bridges, acquisition, repair and finally reconnection into one single bridge. Jim Barker explained the process of removal, dismantling and rebuilding of the bridges. The project was the most important accomplishment of the Parks Department in 25 years.

The idea for bridge restoration was to connect the White River Campground with the Strawtown Koteewi Park for common community use.

The three bridges involved were all closed and in disrepair. The Washington County Bridge 113, built in 1898, spanned the Blue River on Fredericksburg Road, measured 148 foot long. The second bridge was Wayne County Bridge 229, an American Standard Bridge design, built in 1908. The third bridge was Hamilton County Bridge 21, built in 1890, closed and removed in 1990. It was the last example of a design patented by Indianapolis resident Solomon Godson.

Parks department personnel did extensive research on the original blueprint and with help from Jim Barker, created a new design to restore the three bridges. They included also getting Grant funding for the project with the Federal government contributing \$3.195 million dollars and \$750,000 from the local authorities.

After getting permits and funding, the Washington County Bridge 113 and the Wayne County Bridge 229 were removed from the original sites, dismantled, labeled and stored. The Hamilton County Bridge 21 was newly constructed using the original 1890 drawings which Jim Barker had located in the Ball State archives. Jim Barker and engineers then proceeded to restore the bridges and finally connected the three together to span the White River. They were painted with zinc and covered finally with "Colts Blue" paint. The final bridge brought significant impact on community pride and improvement of local tourism and economy.



Jim Barker and Allen Patterson