



ELLEN O'CONNELL/Standard-Speaker

Bob Skulsky, center, executive director of the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership, accepts a \$1,500 grant and a \$500 FAST ball donation from International Paper, Valmont Industrial Park. The donation will be used towards the Rails to Trails project. Participating in the presentation are Nadine Veet, left, human resource specialist at International Paper, and Ed Garbacki, International Paper service manager.

Paper company presents grant for Rails to Trails project

International Paper, Valmont Industrial Park, became a stakeholder in the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership Rails to Trails Project by approving a grant request for \$1,500 and Sponsoring FAST ball, which resulted in another \$500 donation.

The \$2,000 will be used to match a \$35,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for the Rails to Trails Phase II planning study," said Bob Skulsky, executive director of the Civic Partnership.

FAST ball consisted of a catered tailgate party and the Red Barons vs. Pawtucket baseball game, which was held at the Lackawanna County Stadium. Employees of International Paper and Rails to Trails committee members attended. For each person in attendance International Paper donated \$5 towards the Rails to Trails project.

The Rails to Trails project consists of converting old railroad beds to public recreational trails which will be used for hiking, walking, jogging, bicycling, cross-country skiing and educational walks. The proposed trail will start near the intersection of Route 93 and 424 and proceed to Eckley Miners Village and then continue to the Lehigh River, Delaware Lehigh National Heritage trail near Rockport.

The mission of the partnership is to make the Greater Hazleton Area the best place in which to live, learn, work, worship, and play. The organization hopes to accomplish its mission at the grassroots level, meaning that participation in the partnership is open to any person living or working in Greater Hazleton who believes in the future of our communities. For more information about the Civic Partnership or Rails to Trails, call Bob Skulsky at 455-1508, or e-mail: civic@hazletonchamber.org.