

Civic Partnership to hold Gateway Project workshop

By **JIM DINO**

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A workshop to help municipalities formulate projects to enhance their entrances will be held this week.

The Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership, the organization sponsoring the Gateway program, will hold a workshop on Wednesday, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the community room of the CAN DO Renaissance Center.

Bob Skulsky, the Partnership's executive director, said the format for the workshop will be part informational and part hands-on planning of the individual community sites.

The Gateway program is a program in which the Partnership grants to give to municipalities to beautify entrances to their respective communities.

Diane Madl, the environmental education specialist for Hickory Run, Lehigh Gorge and Nescopeck state parks, will provide information on

native Pennsylvania plants; along with a slide presentation.

Madl is a facilitator for "Wild School Sites," a workshop sponsored by the Pennsylvania Game Commission that offers ideas for teachers on how to plan for an implement native planting within their schools.

Skulsky said other speakers will advise municipal officials on other aspects of potential gateway beautification projects.

"All communities will sit down and develop a sketch of their respective plans," Skulsky said. "Bob Judd of Arc Electric will make a presentation on lighting for signs. Tom Bast will talk about the types of trees that should be used, because they can survive winter. We will also have presentations from state officials on what types of plants and flowers to use."

The Partnership is working to improve entrances to Hazleton, Hazle Township,

West Hazleton, Freeland, Beaver Meadows and the continuation of the original Gateway project along Route 924 coming into the city.

The guest speakers will be available to assist municipal officials to put their ideas on paper, and to develop a rough sketch of their site using what they've learned and the specific details of their individual sites.

A representative of Volunteers of America will also be there to offer the assistance of volunteers to each project. Municipal officials are encouraged to have tentative dates in mind for cleanup, preparation work and a planting date for their site.

One of the Partnership other large projects, development of a hiking and biking trail around Hazleton, is progressing.

Skulsky said Alfred Benesch and Co., the firm formulating a plan to develop and build the trail, has identified all property owners along the

entire 16.2-mile trail.

The Partnership subcommittee working on the trail is continuing to hold fund-raisers to raise money to help build the trail. The group will hold a garage sale April 26. Anyone who wants to donate to it call Skulsky at 455-1508.

Another beautification project, the Red, White and Blue committee, said the production of bows that will be distributed all over the area has begun. Every year of the five-year program, senior citizens have made the bows.

And the Partnership has expanded its program to help schools get weather forecasting equipment.

The Partnership received a grant to help Valley Elementary-Middle School upgrade its existing system, and to help Hazleton Area High School get an entire system. Now the Partnership will help the Hazleton Campus of Penn State get a system through the program as well.