

Annual planting begins Saturday

By **JIM DINO**

jimdino@standardspeaker.com

5-10-04

People who have a green thumb who have a Saturday or two open this month can indulge in their favorite pastime, thanks to the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership.

The Partnership's Gateway committee – charged with improving entrances to communities in the Hazleton area – will be sprucing up its original project along Route 924 on Saturday.

Elaine Judd, co-chairwoman of the committee, said volunteers are needed Saturday.

"We have 160 plants to plant," Judd said. "Most of them will go down both sides of Route 924, between Broad Street and the salt dome. But some will go near the intersection of Route 424 (the South Beltway) and Route 309, and at (Route) 93 and the Airport Road."

Anyone interested can go to the PENNDOT salt storage shed along Route 924 at 9 a.m. Saturday.

The following Saturday, May 22, two groups will be planting.

Neil Oberto of the Tri-Area Recreation Commission, said members of the National Honor Society will be planting at the fledgling Oneida Junction Park, which the commission is creating on the northeast corner of the intersection of Route 424 and Route 309.

The same day, employees of Alcoa/Kama, will be assist-

ing the Partnership's Red, White and Blue committee plant flowers in downtown Hazleton, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Ellie Whitaker, chairman of the Red, White and Blue Committee, said the committee will also need more help, as they plant flowers along Broad Street, from Locust to Pine Street; Wyoming Street, from Broad to Green Street, and Church, from Broad to Green Street.

Skulsky said if there is any time left, volunteers will be planting in the Route 924 Gateway area.

He also said the Partnership will provide a sign for the Oneida Junction Park. The sign will be similar to signs at the Route 924, Route 424 and Route 93 gateways, but will have flat lettering.

Oberto thanked the Partnership for providing the sign.

"Thank you," Oberto said. "The only way we could do it is with volunteers."

The sign is coming from a \$67,000 state grant the Partnership received for the Gateway project, which will be instituted in other Hazleton area communities.

Judd said a plan to plant along the rest of the distance of Route 924 from Interstate 18 is being designed.

The grant will pay for that project, plus projects in about a half-dozen other communities.

For more information on any of the Partnership's events, contact Skulsky at 455-1508.