



ERIC CONOVER/Standard-Speaker

Community leaders announced a \$90,000 grant award to beautify Route 924 near Broad Street at the West Hazleton-Hazleton border Monday morning. Participating were, from left: Joe Yannuzzi; Gene Rafalli, state Department of Transportation; Martha Spade, PennDOT; Cathy Geguzis, Quad 3 Group; Jim Ferry, COG, City Council; Robert Stanziola, Mountain Council of Governments chairman; Jim Boyle, Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce president; Lena Kotansky, executive director, Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership; Linda Schreiber, Civic Partnership; Anita Reber, secretary, Civic Partnership; and Terry Moran Bauder, vice chairperson, Civic Partnership.

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Roads leading to Hazleton to be beautified with grant

Terry Moran Bauder, vice chair of the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership, sees the Hazleton area as a diamond in the rough. A little buffing and polishing could bring out the brilliance community leaders and residents have always known was there.

Next year, first-time visitors will see the beauty as they drive into the area.

The Mountain Council of Governments, on behalf of the civic partnership, got a \$90,000 grant for a cross-community beautification project which will revamp Route 924 — a primary entrance to West Hazleton and Hazleton.

Community leaders, Bauder among them, announced the award from the state Department of Transportation at a news conference Monday at the PennDOT salt dome along Route 924 where the project will begin.

The wide, grassy median and overgrown berms from the salt dome to Broad Street will be replanted with trees, shrubs and flowers, and a sign will welcome visitors to the Hazleton area.

“We hope this project can be a first step in creating a long-range beautification plan for the community and that it will serve as a model for other communities throughout the region and the commonwealth,” said Lena

Kotansky, executive director for the partnership. “A more attractive gateway will provide a more accurate reflection of the community that lies ahead.”

Called the Greater Hazleton Area Gateway Beautification Project, the plan will be developed within the next few months and the civic partnership will work with the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Community and Urban Forestry Program on selecting plants.

Contracts should be awarded this fall, and the sign erection and planting should occur next April.

Pennsylvania Power & Light Co. will buy vegetation, and CAN DO, the region’s economic development group, chipped in \$5,000 cash. In-kind contributions also come from the Quad 3 Group and landscape architects.

West Hazleton agreed to maintain the gateway, but the partnership hopes it will be included the PennDOT Adopt and Beautify Program. The Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce also plans to use the gateway as a focal point for its annual Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful project.

Bauder lauded the community’s cooperation and teamwork on this project, which will put a

shine on one area within greater Hazleton.

“Together, we will make our diamond in the rough more beautiful,” she said.

