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Gateway project an important step

It has been a busy week for the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership.

First, we kicked off the "Paint Our Towns Red, White & Blue" campaign over the weekend. Hundreds of volunteers and area residents gave up some of their time for a greater cause — making Greater Hazleton a place full of pride and unity.

Merchants in the downtown areas of Hazleton, West Hazleton, Freeland, Conyngham, McAdoo and Beaver Meadows hung red, white and blue banners on their storefronts. Red, white and blue stars were painted on the streets of those towns through the efforts of Interstate Road Markings.

Dozens of volunteers and community service groups planted flowers in Memorial Park in Hazleton.

On Monday, we announced that we received a \$90,000 grant to continue the beautification work. That money will be used to turn the barren median and dirt berms of Route 924 near Broad Street into a tree- and shrub-lined entrance, with hundreds of flowers and a professional sign welcoming visitors to Greater Hazleton.

After all, we believe that a beautiful gateway will provide an accurate reflection of the communities beyond it.

News from the

Making Hazleton a better place to live, learn, work, worship and play.

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The Greater Hazleton Area Gateway Beautification Project grant came from the state Department of Transportation through the Mountain Council of Governments.

Local agencies pledged their support for the Gateway Beautification Project. CAN DO will give \$5,000 cash. Pennsylvania Power and Light will donate some trees, flowers and shrubs. Quad 3 and landscape architects are donating in-kind services collectively worth \$20,000.

The planning for the project will start within a few weeks. Contracts will be awarded this fall, and the planting and erection of the welcome sign are scheduled for April 2000.

We at the civic partnership believe beautification is an important step in improving the image of Greater Hazleton, both here and outside our region.

The red, white and blue theme will identify us as a community linked by patriotism, spirit and pride. A beautiful gateway entrance into Hazleton and West Hazleton will make that important first impression a good one for visiting businesses and families. The entrance will also create a positive impression and sense of pride for local residents, and give them something they can be proud of.

Both projects are the first step in creating a long-range beautification plan for the community.

We're asking all residents to get involved. Paint the town red, white and blue. Support our efforts in making Greater Hazleton an even greater place to live, learn, work, worship, and play. This community belongs to all of us.