

Many helped to make civic partnership's highway beautification planting a success

Editor,

6-4-04
We at the Gateway Committee of the Greater Hazleton Civic Partnership would like to thank the volunteers and companies that helped make our highway beautification planting on Route 924 a big success May 15.

An energetic group of 17 volunteers dug holes and planted over 120 shrubs, picked up litter, pruned limbs, weeded, and mulched and outlined the existing beds along both sides of the one mile stretch from the salt dome to Broad Street. It was quite a task, but these great volunteers got the job done in very quick time.

The volunteers who made this "big plant" project happen, jumped right in with great enthusiasm and a willingness to do whatever was needed to make the Route 924 Gateway shine.

Thanks to Frank Schmidt, prepared with truck and tools, and Jim Wariganis from the Lions Club. Our thanks to Bob Sagan Sr., Bob Sagan Jr., Bob Skulsky, Gene Potten and the Hazleton Area School District "Blazing New Trails" program for making hole digging a quick and painless process.

Thanks to Evelyn Welsko and Tina Allegretto for the relentless pursuit of the weeds and mulching with tapioca! Thanks to Penny Cannella and George Ator for planning and design. Thanks to PennDOT and Valley Seeding for providing the shrubs. Thanks to the Hazleton Police for providing a safety patrol for our volunteers. Thanks to West Hazleton Crime Watch.

Thanks to Barbara Yencho of Diversified

Designs for providing water bottles for the volunteers. Thanks to Lisa and Brianna Huston, the mighty rock movers, for outlining the beds. And special thanks to our corporate role models, the employees of Cargill-Excel, who turned out in force to beautify the gateway to their industry, and to that of many others, in Humboldt Industrial Park: Shawn Mott, James Plein, George Benilla, Kevin Kniefel, Colette Kniefel, Kimberly Morro, Colleen McCrank, and a great driller, Clint McCrank. And thanks to the *Standard-Speaker* for getting out the word on the project and for the great coverage.

Like yard work at home, highway beautification is an ongoing project and a loving labor that will give blooming results. It is a perfect way to show pride in your community and meet great people. Beautifying the entrances to our local towns is a worthy goal for our own pleasure. More importantly, taking pride in our local highways sends a very positive message to visitors travelling in our area- we care about our community.

If you or your business would like to help in a one-day project or a longer term highway adoption, please contact Bob Skulsky at the Chamber office, 455-1508. We are truly grateful for the generosity of all of you who participated in the "big plant" in one way or another- thank you. Be sure to take time to enjoy all that is growing in our gateways!

Barbara Franzosa and
Elaine Judd,
co-chairs,
Gateway Committee