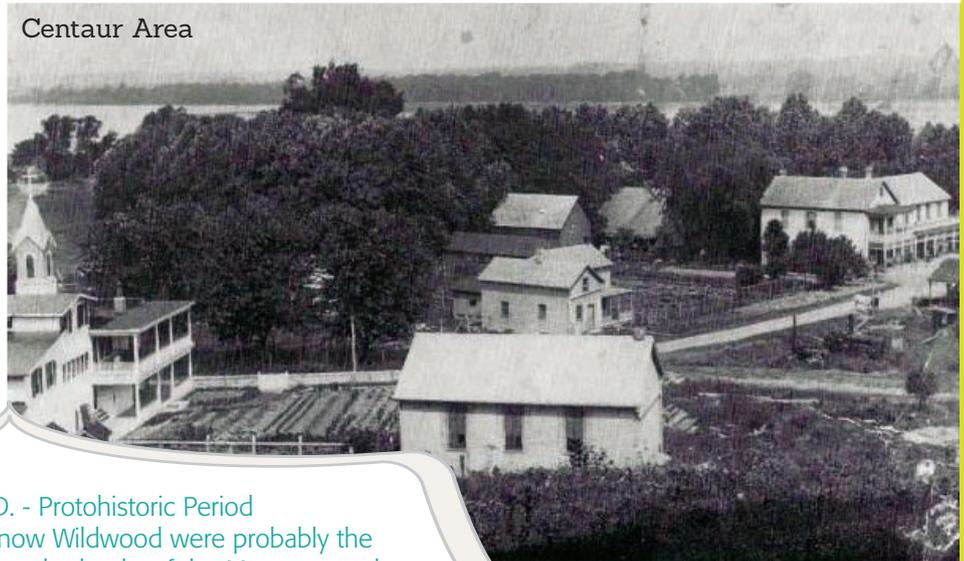
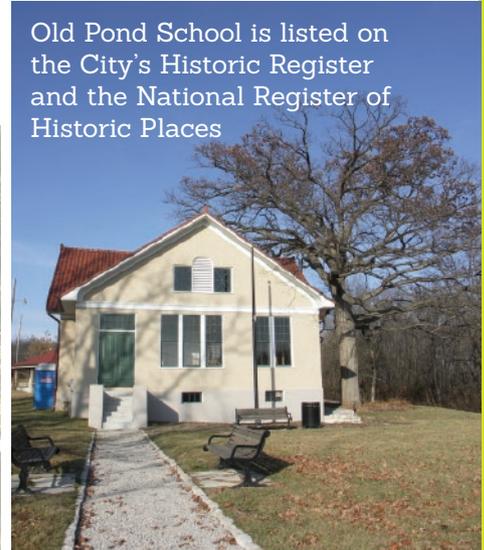
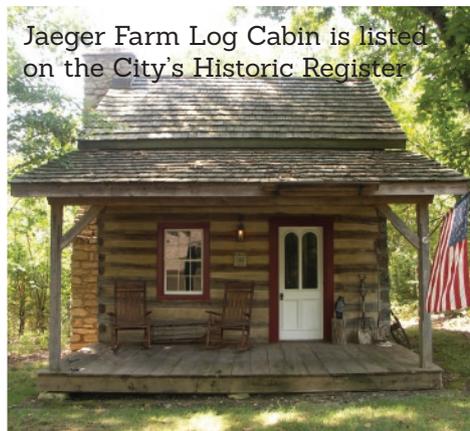


# OUR HISTORY

A major focus of the Celebrate Wildwood Event this year is its recognition of the City of Wildwood's anniversary of incorporation, which occurred on September 1, 1995. Although only twenty years old, the area that became Wildwood had a long and rich history before then. This history begins with the earliest of settlers, nomadic Native Americans, who lived near the major streams and rivers, to some of the first settlers, whom many of the area's streets and roadways are named after them till this day. As part of the event, and recognizing this weekend as Founders' Day as well, the City's Historic Preservation Commission compiled concise descriptions of these historic communities that ultimately formed, and defined, much of the character of Wildwood and the surrounding area. The members of the Historic Preservation Commission also

developed a history of the formation of this great City and the efforts undertaken by a group of committed and engaged people to incorporate it. The City hopes you enjoy reading about these historic communities and the incorporation efforts and find them as interesting as they did in preparing them. Enjoy the weekend here in Wildwood and thank you for attending the Celebrate Wildwood Event.

If you should like more information, want to become involved, or share your historical information, please visit the City's website at [www.cityofwildwood.com/hpc](http://www.cityofwildwood.com/hpc) or contact the Department of Planning at (636) 458-0440 about the Historic Preservation Commission's plans for the future.



## 1400 A.D. – 1700 A.D. - Protohistoric Period

The earliest habitants of what is now Wildwood were probably the Osage Indians. They stayed close to the banks of the Meramec and Missouri Rivers, primarily for the water supply, but also because of the rocky soil and flint, which they used as scrapers, weapon points, and other stone tools. (Courtesy of Joe Harl)

1774 - A flat stone was found and remains today in the LaSalle Cemetery, just off Highway 109, which is marked "1774" and has other indecipherable markings.

# THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY OF ORRVILLE

One of the many rural hamlets that make up the current City of Wildwood, Orrville is located in a wooded valley at the intersection of Bonhomme Creek, Eatherton Road, and Orrville Road.

Orrville was named for brothers, John and James Orr, who emigrated from Glasgow, Scotland in the mid-1850s. Their children married into the Bacon and Caulks families.

John's son, Robert, was postmaster of Orrville from 1858 to 1871, and was also part owner of a grist mill. He donated part of his land for the Antioch Baptist Church on Wild Horse Creek Road. John's son, John, and his wife sold land to Gustav Hoppenberg in 1866 and he began a general store and post office on the site. Gustav sold the store to Phillip Fick in 1883. The Fick family had emigrated from Bavaria in 1851. The Hoppenberg-Fick Store served the community for more than 70 years, until 1940, when it closed.

Gerald Carson writes in his book, "The Old Country Store," of the importance of the general store in a rural commu-



Orrville

nity. "In the days when men lived separate and solitary lives, it was the country store that tied the scattered farms into a community."

The Hoppenberg-Fick Store at 526 Old Eatherton Road is one of Wildwood's best preserved structures. Its exterior maintains its historic lines, while the interior has been repurposed as a residential dwelling. The other principal building from the earliest era of Orrville is the Kesselring-Werther House at 538 Eatherton Road. It dates from 1867. Both these properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1867, Robert Eatherton built a "splendid mill with all the modern appurtenances and improvements, at a cost of \$32,000." The mill, located on the west side of Eatherton Road, burned after one year, but was quickly rebuilt.

By the mid-1890s, Orrville's population had reached 50, including three carpenters, two shoemakers, a meat market, a barber, a blacksmith, and a basket manufacturer. Nearby, Erich Essen established a nursery which specialized in peaches and grapes.

*Sources:*

- 1883 History of St. Louis County*
- United States Department of the Interior*
- 2003 National Register of Historic Places*



Hoppenberg-Fick Store is listed on the National Register of Historic Places

1797 - James MacKay establishes the first Euro-American settlement in the vicinity of Centaur.

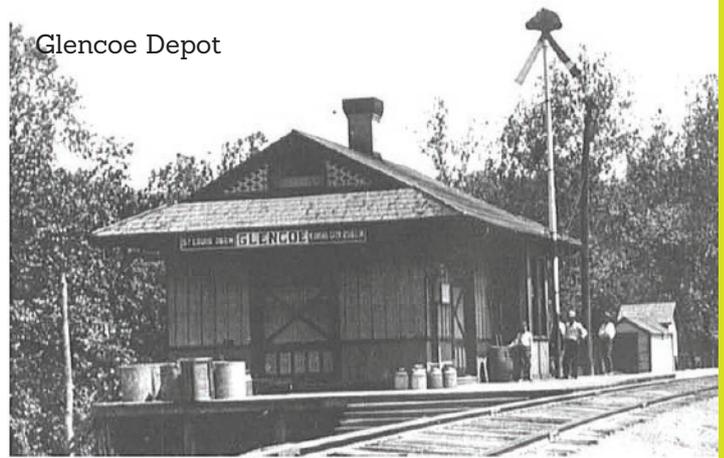
1800 - 1803 - Ninian Hamilton settled on 640 acres in an area that now includes LaSalle Institute and lands south where Old State Road crosses the valley. Andrew Hamilton obtained a grant for 340 additional acres to the west and Louis Courtois Jr. obtained 6,000 acres, which included the historic area of Glencoe.

# THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY OF GLENCOE

Ninian Hamilton settled on a 640 acre tract of land in the area now occupied by the LaSalle Institute, Old State Road and Highway 109 about 1800 to 1803. (History of St. Louis City and County and Historian Louis Houck) Andrew Hamilton obtained a settler's grant of 340 acres directly west of Ninian's. A much larger land grant adjoined Hamilton's to the south. Louis Courtois received 6,002 acres, including the present-day area of Glencoe, within the City of Wildwood. There is no record that Courtois ever lived in the area.

Ninian Hamilton built the first of several grist mills to operate in the area. In recent years, the LaSalle Institute Fathers found two old millstones on their property. The mill served an area extending all the way to what is now Labadie. This enterprise was supplanted by a large water mill and bark mill for tanning leather, owned by Henry McCullough, Ninian's wife's brother, who also established a shoe making business which shipped large quantities outside the area. McCullough served as the area's Justice of the Peace for nearly 30 years.

When the Missouri Pacific Railroad came to the area in 1831 development began. The Village of Glencoe was officially laid out in 1854 by Woods, Christy & Co. who also erected grist and saw mills to harvest the large supply of



Glencoe Depot

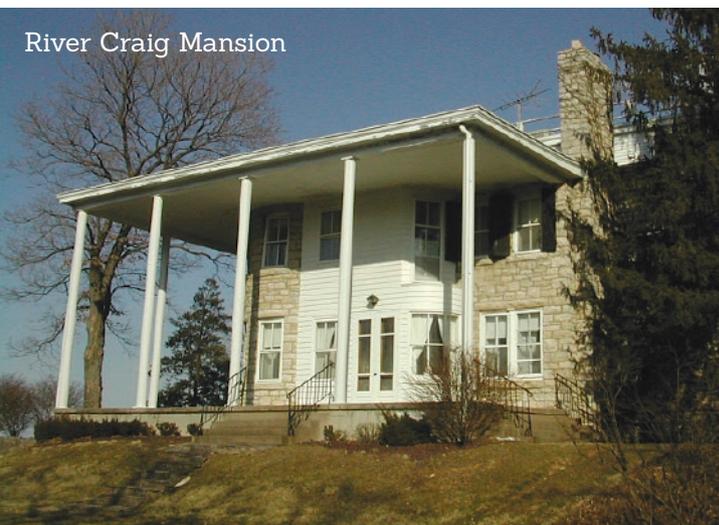
white oak timber available in the area. It would take nearly 150 years for residents to appreciate the beauty of these forests and to mount a battle to save them from negative environmental impacts.

In 1859 the original Ninian Hamilton tract, then owned by James E. Yeatman, built a 16 room mansion and lime kiln. When Yeatman sold to the Christian Brothers in the 1870s the mansion was used as an orphanage. They built a larger building in front of the mansion, which burned in 1875 and was rebuilt in the 1880s, with two additional wings on either end, and it is today the LaSalle Institute.

Ninian Hamilton's Spanish Land Grant was added to by James Yeatman's acquisition of land directly to the south. Later more land was obtained to the east and a residence was built for the Peyton Carr family, Yeatman's grandson. It is now called Marycliffe, a retreat owned by the Marianists since 1950, and survives as one of Wildwood's historic structures.

Still further south is River Craig, the imposing concrete residence. Located within the Courtois Land Grant, the home appears to have been built by William Gay, son of a prominent tobacco tycoon. In 1875 it was owned by St. Louis Prosecuting Attorney, A.W. Alexander. In the 1890s, James Broderick purchased the home and did extensive

River Craig Mansion



1820s - Josiah McClure establishes the Village of Fox Creek.

1835 - Cyrus Speers opens a store and tavern in the Village of Pond, also known as Speer's Pond.

1837 - The William Tyler House is constructed along what is known today as Laurey Lane. Planters from Virginia and Kentucky, including the Coleman, Tyler, and Long Families, along with dozens of their slaves, settle in an area generally located along today's Wild Horse Creek Road and establish plantation farming.



Centaur Lime Company

additions and restoration. He commuted into the city daily and built a 385 step stairway from the bluff, leading down to his depot at the railroad. The house still stands today and has magnificent views of the St. Louis County area and beyond. On a clear day, it is said the St. Louis Arch is visible from the look-out area.

In 1868, the Glencoe Marble Company was formed to utilize limestone deposits in present day Rockwoods Reservation. Just prior to this time, large scale gravel operations on the Meramec River began. Meramec River gravel is considered the standard for industry nationwide and is used for roads, construction and decorative work. This gravel was moved by railcars to St. Louis.

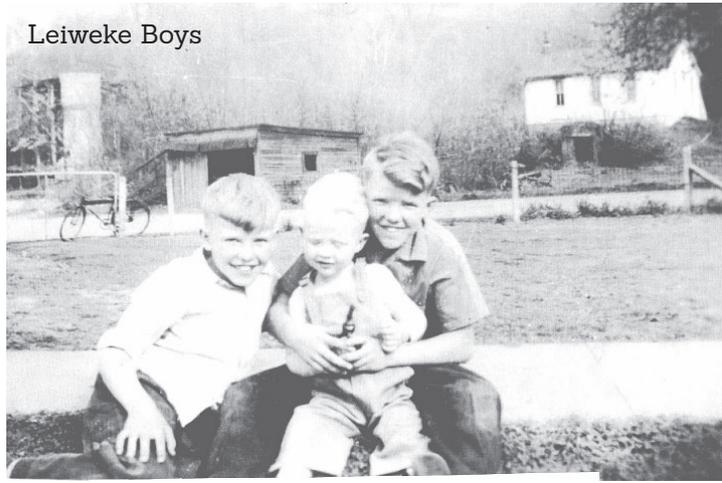
The advent of the railroad in the area made Glencoe one of the premier resort communities of the clubhouse era from 1900 until about 1945. The buildings at the present site house a miniature steam railroad (Wabash, Frisco & Pacific). A number of residences remain in Glencoe.

The City of Wildwood has created Glencoe Park as the starting point for the magnificent Al Foster Trail which follows the Meramec River.

Sources:

*Foster, Al*

1983 - *Glencoe From the Beginning*



Leiweke Boys

## THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY OF CENTAUR

In 1797 James MacKay settled the area now called Centaur. It began at the mouth of Bonhomme Creek and was originally called St. Andrews. MacKay owned almost 4,000 acres. At this time the area was under the control of the Spanish government, who granted MacKay this large tract of land for his service, taking soldiers up the Missouri River to remove the British troops and map the river, and to encourage other settlers, mainly from Kentucky and Tennessee and mainly Scottish and Irish, who were offered free land.



Centaur Station

1841 - The Antioch Baptist Church is established on Wild Horse Creek Road just west of Eatherton Road. The Coleman and Tyler Families and other settlers, primarily from Virginia, were responsible for the church's founding.

1854 - Village of Glencoe laid out and a grist mill is erected.

1851 - The Missouri Pacific Railroad is extended to the Village of Glencoe. Fred Schulze opens the Orrville Post Office. Charles H. Haven spends \$15,000 creating "Park of Fruits of a Thousand Acres" in Melrose. John and James Orr emigrate from Scotland and establish Village of Orrville.

Other settlers in this area included Alexander McCourtney, William Bellew, William Coleman, Robert Coleman, John Coleman, Henry Tyler (whose house remains at Laurey Lane), Theodore St. Onge, Adam Kesselring, Johann Sandfoss, and Anton Leiweke. German immigrants would come to the area in the 1830s.

The Centaur community came into its own between 1885 and 1891 when Anton Leiweke founded the Centaur Lime Company. This was supplanted by a stove factory owned by Henry Kelpel and his sons. Even with a modest population of thirty three, the area was a hot bed of entrepreneurial spirit due to its rich base of resources and transportation options, the Missouri River, and the railroad that had come to the area in 1887. The Missouri River also provided lime, rock, sand and gravel, used at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. The railroad station in Centaur was an integral part of this community, serving generations of residents and workers.

The Centaur community, from approximately 1909 to 1933, is a story of the family of Anton Leiweke and their role in the area's development. The man-made and physical features of the area helped the community grow, yet its distance from St. Louis and the ever present threat of floods, offers present day citizens a chance to look back at what western St. Louis County used to resemble.

In 1924 a major fire devastated the Centaur community, starting at the Centaur Lime Company Building and encompassing seven other houses and barns, as well as the local church/parsonage. Afterwards, the Leiweke family constructed a two story brick residence which stands today. Not long after the fire, the Great Depression descended on America and Centaur began a decade's long struggle.

Recently, many of the original parcels were purchased by Michael Phelan who has led a renaissance in the area with plans to restore many of the historic buildings, including the old church/school.

Sources:

*Harl, Joseph, Naglich, Dennis and Nixon, Joseph M.*

*1990 Report of Phase 1 Reconnaissance Level Survey of Prehistoric and Historical Cultural Resources in the Wild Horse Creek Drainage Basin in South St. Louis County*

*Research Report – Administered by Missouri Department of Natural Resources – January 1990*

*Sebastian, John*

*1909 In the Heart of Missouri, The New Rock Island Country.*

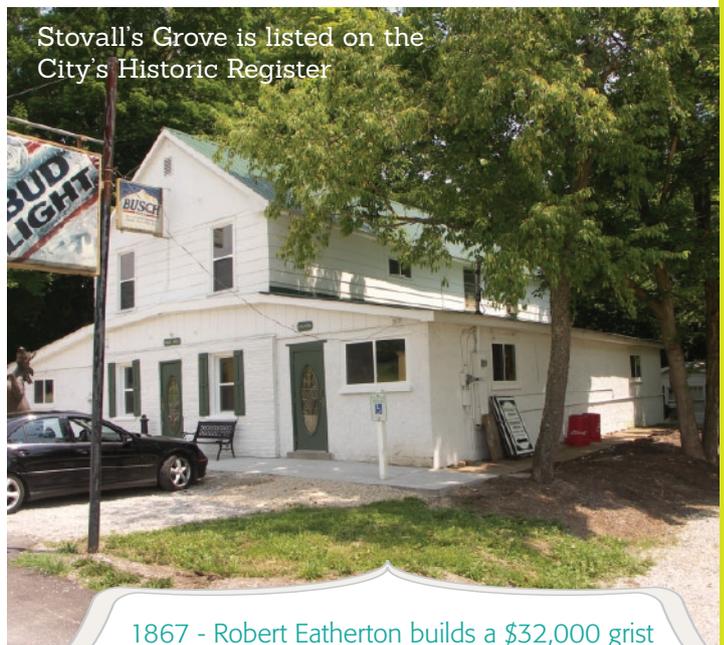
*Passenger Traffic Department, Rock Island Lines, Chicago*

*City of Wildwood, Department of Planning*

*2014 Historic Centaur, Prepared for the Historic Preservation Commission*

## THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY OF HOLLOW

The village of Hollow, located on Highway 100 in far west Wildwood, is about five miles west of Highway 109. The village's name started as "Deutsch Hollow" so called by the German settlers, and named for "Dutch" Charlie Paffrath, who came to the area in 1834 and kept a tavern on the much traveled highway. "They liked the way this valley - or hollow - looked like their homeland" according to Hollow historian Bebe McKenzie. Later the name was shortened to Hollow.



1858-59 – The original Bethel Methodist Church is established along Wild Horse Creek Road in the "Rock Church" by German settlers.

1867 - Robert Eatherton builds a \$32,000 grist mill in Village of Orrville. The Hoppenberg-Fick General Store is built in Orrville.

1860 - Antioch Baptist Church leaves its former church building and moves to a new building further east on Wild Horse Creek Road.

The tavern was widely known and a popular stopping place for travelers. During the California and Kansas migration, there was a celebrated camping place at the Bartold Farm. Hollow was also a relay point for the Jefferson City stagecoach line. The railroad came in 1851 but was south along the Meramec River, making it difficult to get animals and products to market.

Not much remains of the old settlement except a few houses and the historic dance hall and roadhouse called Stovall's Grove, which remains today as a well-known venue for live music. A small portion of the original Route 66 still runs just outside of the front door of Stovall's Grove. This hamlet was once a busy stagecoach stop, and in the mid 1900s when the road carried more traffic, there were a number of stores and other businesses in the area, including two general stores, one operated by the Hencken Brothers and one operated by Henry Poertner. There was also a shoemaker, a harness maker, two blacksmiths, one operated by Joseph Tieman, and a carpenter shop.

Manchester Road travels west from Hollow to the Franklin County line and is undoubtedly one of Wildwood's most picturesque roadways.

Sources:

[Beck, Jo](#)

2009 *Wildwood*

[Thomas, William L.](#)

1911 *History of St. Louis County – A Story That Attracts*

1883 *History of St. Louis City and County*

1920 *History of St. Louis County*



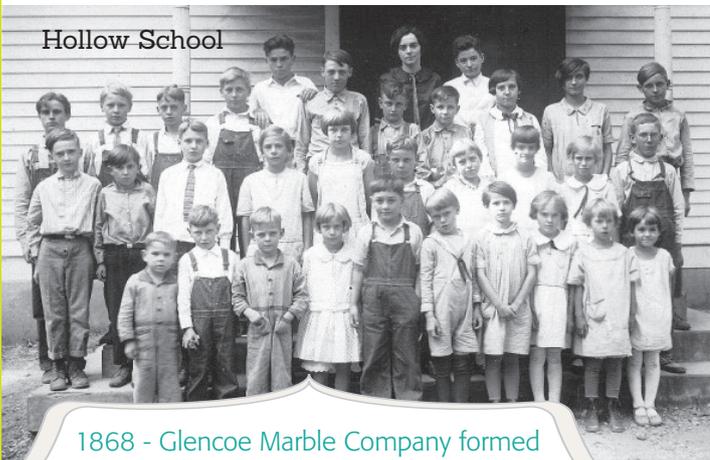
Klump Family

## THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY OF FOX CREEK

Running west through Hollow is Fox Creek, so named by an early hunter who shot a very large fox there. Josiah McClure was one of the earliest settlers. He came from Kentucky in 1819 and briefly settled in North St. Louis County. He ultimately bought property on Fox Creek. The family donated an acre of property on the south end of the Creek to serve as a cemetery and it bore the McClure family name.

In 1851, Fred Schulze, who lived in Orrville, opened a store which became the Fox Creek Post Office. Schulze served as postmaster until Frederick Hencken was appointed to the job in 1860. The Hencken Store was near today's Glencoe Post Office. The home's remnants and cemetery are on the north side of Highway 100.

Mail was important to the citizens in the area and was carried by stagecoach from St. Louis. But the mail was often days late due to the poor condition of the roads.



Hollow School

1868 - Glencoe Marble Company formed to utilize limestone deposits in what is now Rockwoods Reservation.

1872 - Orphan Protectorate opened by the Christian Brothers, just off what is now Highway 109. It is now used as a retreat, run by the Marianist Order. The former Antioch Baptist Church building on Wild Horse Creek Road is deeded to the founders of the Mt. Pleasant Colored Baptist Church, which included the families of freed slaves. A burial ground is established behind the one room church.

On March 7, 1862, near Fox Creek, a notable skirmish occurred between elements of the Confederate Army and of the 4th and 10th Missouri Calvary units on the other side. The Union Army units were led by Captain Benjamin Ludlow. Five Union soldiers were wounded as the Confederate excursion into the area was turned back.

During its heyday, Fox Creek contained a blacksmith shop owned by C.A. Hardt. G.A. Pfeiffer ran a hardware store and an undertaking establishment.

Sources:

*Thomas, William L.*

1911 *History of St. Louis County Missouri, A Story That Attracts*

1883 *History of St. Louis City and County*

## THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY OF MELROSE

As the name implies, this "sweet rose" village had a very roseate setting in 1851, when Charles H. Haven acquired 1,000 acres of Federal Land Claims and platted the place as a nucleus for a great "Park of Fruits of a Thousand Acres." It contained fruit trees and flowers of every description as well as orchards and vineyards, reportedly costing \$15,000, a vast sum at the time. Herman Kreienkamp, as a fifteen year old youth, remembered planting the hills in grapevines and trees. This huge undertaking provided employment for many area residents.

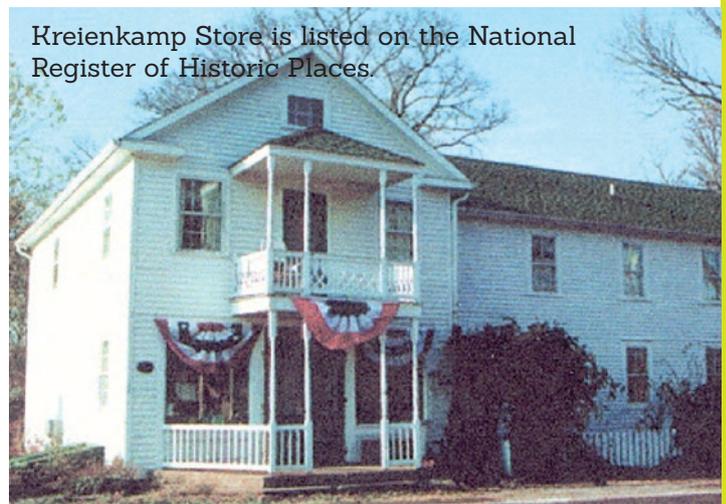
Irene Gaele Hairston provided an oral history to the Wildwood Historical Society, sharing her childhood memories of befriending an Indian family who traveled each year from Wisconsin to a wooded area off Melrose Road to collect herbs, roots, berries and bark. They told her they could only find these specific items at that location. They used them for medicines and salves. One can only wonder if these were relics of Haven's majestic garden.

The home dwelling was named "Woodlawn" and the grounds also included a three story building which served

as a day and boarding school for young girls. The building later served as a Catholic chapel.

Most thought Mr. Haven was sincere in his efforts, although many thought he was "ahead of the times." This feeling was perhaps a result of efforts to publically auction lots to wealthy St. Louis residents as places to build summer homes. He even brought interested parties from the Glencoe train station as well as a brass band to generate interest in his enterprise. He then sold stock in the Vine & Fruit Growers Association of St. Louis County. Investors included Prince Alexander of Russia, who visited St. Louis in 1872. But the enterprise fell into debt and the sheriff sold the property.

Herman Kreienkamp later became a merchant in Melrose, and built a large frame store and post office. This structure



Kreienkamp Store is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

was sometimes referred to as Melrose Hall, as the building could be rented out for events during the 1880s. It still stands today, known as the Kreienkamp Store, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is one of Wildwood's historic treasures.

Sources:

*Thomas, William L.*

1911 *History of St. Louis County – A Story That Attracts*

1920 *History of St. Louis County*

1883 *History of St. Louis City & County*

1875 - The new (third) Bethel Methodist Church is erected on Manchester Road.

1879 - Fred Rettker builds two-story building at 16962 Manchester Road that will become the first Wildwood City Hall in 1995 through 2009.

1883 - St. Paul Lutheran Church is established.

1887 - Railroad is built through Centaur.

# THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY OF GROVER

This beautiful little village, that now comprises much of Wildwood's commercial core on Old Manchester Road and the surrounding area, was originally called St. Friedling and Maple Grove. The first post office was established during the Grover Cleveland administration and John Brown, the first postmaster, named the village of Grover after the President.

One of the most memorable structures is the large two story building, located at 16962 Manchester Road that served as the original Wildwood City Hall from 1995 through 2009. The original building was probably built by Fred Rettker about 1879. It was the only general store in the immediate vicinity. Louis Fick bought the store in 1890 for two thousand dollars. He then built a new building, which he still owned, when it became the communications hub of the area after the first switchboard was installed in 1911, known as the Grover Mutual Telephone Company.



Rettker-Fick Store – First Wildwood City Hall

Elmer Funk took ownership in 1921. The store and the picnic area to the east became a favorite meeting place. Townspeople would often gather at the picnic area, known as Funks Grove, for parades, picnics and band concerts. The building now houses a tea shop and gift store.

Another notable structure located across Manchester Road from the original Wildwood City Hall, and is now the site of an interior design store was known as the Wetterer Smith Shop and later Wells and Company. This long building was constructed in 1865, with additional portions added later. Freidlien Wetterer came to St. Louis from Baden Baden, Germany in 1854 and worked as a wagonmaker in St. Louis before opening a wagonmaking shop in Ballwin. Following the Civil War, he moved to this location in Grover, had four sons, and also acquired a farm of 84 acres.

The town also boasted of a blacksmith shop and a saloon owned by Christian Von Gruben. Additionally, Judge Frederick W. Steines, who was 'the best known man living in Meramec Township', lived in Grover. He was the son of Herman Steines, and both men served as justice of the peace.

Sources:

*Beck, Jo*

*2009 Wildwood, Reedy Press*

*Thomas, William L.*

*1911 History of St. Louis County – A Story That Attracts*

*1920 History of St. Louis County*



Aerial photograph – Grover

1891 - Centaur Lime Company founded by Anton Leiweke, as the Centaur Rail Station is opened, which produced the community of Centaur. St. Anthony's Catholic Church is established in Centaur and ultimately merges into Ascension Catholic Church to the east. Monarch Post Office is opened.

1900 - Glencoe becomes a popular summer retreat because of the Missouri Pacific's commuter train from St. Louis to Pacific.

1909 - Heirs of Anton Leiweke open a quarrying operation in the Village of Centaur.

Old Pond School Class



## THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY OF POND

First known as Speers Pond, this special area came into prominence as the voting place for Meramec Township and the scene of many political disputes. The land that comprises the area of Pond was pre-empted by John Brockman in 1835 and then sold to Cyrus Speers, who kept a store and tavern at this location for many years.

The land changed hands and ultimately was sold to Frederick Drienhofer who came to the area from Osnabruck, Germany. The village began to flourish when Frederick Essen built a new store.

William Kesselring and his wife managed a combination store and bar in the early 1900s. Next door was Kesselrings' Hall where many local celebrations were held. It was variously known as Kesselrings Hall and Grove, the Wayside Inn, or the Pond Inn. The Pond Inn and adjacent Pond Hall still stand today on Old Manchester Road and Pond Road.

Another treasure from the days when the stagecoach traveled Manchester Road was the Pond Hotel, ca. 1851, which was located across a side street from the Pond Inn. An investor attempted to repurpose the building in the mid 1990s, but lack of working capital stymied the project and eventually the building fell in on itself and had to be demolished, much to the dismay of historians far and wide.

Still flourishing today is the Big Chief, now the Big Chief restaurant, located at 17352 Manchester Road. Built in 1929, it was designed for the automobile trade that traveled the new Route 66. From 1926 to 1932, Manchester Road formed part of this legendary highway. The motorcourt facility originally had 62 cabins in a horseshoe pattern around the main building, each with two rooms, bunk beds, hot and cold running water, and a garage. There was also a gasoline station, whose structure can still be seen at the Manchester Road entrance to the building. When Route 66 was rerouted to Watson Road, business declined and the cabins were rented as efficiency apartments.

Sources:

*Beck, Jo*

2009 *Wildwood* Reedy Press

1920 *History of St. Louis County*

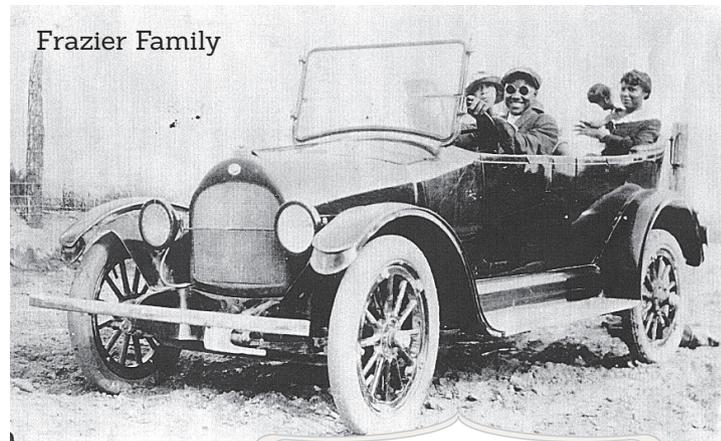
1883 *History of St. Louis City & County*

## THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY OF WESTLAND ACRES

Westland Acres in northeast Wildwood is a predominantly black community, whose history is inextricably linked to that of the Union Baptist Church and the families of former slaves who settled in the area and formed the church.

In 1797, Daniel Boone came to the area from Kentucky with about fifty families, most of who settled across the Missouri River in today's St. Charles County. One of those settlers,

Frazier Family



1921-22 - Union Baptist Church is formally established in "Westland Acres" by a membership that included families of former slaves, including that of William West. Grover Mutual Telephone Company established in building at 16962 Manchester Road.

1924 - Major fire destroys most of Centaur.

1926 - 1932 - Portion of Manchester Road becomes part of historic Route 66.

Lawrence Long, instead chose to settle in the Bonhomme Creek area east of the river. Long and other pioneers settled in the area which now includes Westland Acres. The Long and Frazier families (not the current Frazier family associated with Westland Acres) were white slave owners. One of the Long family slaves was William West. Another was Polly Ellis. Somewhat uncommon for the times, two black men, James Ellis and Philip Winston, purchased 88 1/2 acres of land from Andrew Stevens, a slave owner, in about 1868. One of Stevens' former slaves was Polly, James Ellis' wife. The Ellis' and Winston's eventually donated or sold a small plot for use

Church and Cemetery further east on Wild Horse Creek Road. The "colored" church became Mt. Pleasant Colored Baptist Church in 1872 (also known as the "African Free Colored Church") with its associated burial ground for black members. The congregation of Mt. Pleasant died out or moved on during the first quarter of the twentieth century, and the building was abandoned. The roots of the present Union Baptist Church in Westland Acres include those which extend westward to former slaves of the Tylers and Colemans and the membership of Mt. Pleasant Colored Baptist Church.

One year after James Ellis and Philip Winston purchased their land in about 1868, they donated or sold one acre to the "Colored African Baptist Church". Maps and Deeds show such a church, its cemetery, and a black community in the current general area of Westland Acres as early as 1868. The Colored African Baptist Church was the forerunner of the Union Baptist Church. Apparently, the site of the original church and cemetery was sold at some point in time.

One of the Coleman slaves and a member of that original church was Malinda Webster, later to become Mrs. William West. Mr. West, himself, was a slave of the Long family. In 1879, he purchased about 133 acres of land from John Long and Joel Frazier and donated part of it as another burial ground for family members of freed slaves. The

Westland Acres is designated as a Local Historic District



as a burial ground for former slaves and their family members. Area slaves, who typically were buried on their owners' plantations before emancipation, now needed to be interred elsewhere and not all families owned land yet.

The Antioch Baptist Church was formally established along Wild Horse Creek Road near Eatherton Road in 1841 by white Baptist planters, mainly from Virginia (although worship may have occurred for years prior). Included among the founders of this area were the Coleman and Tyler families, who owned many slaves and had large plantation holdings in today's Wild Horse Creek Valley and Babler State Park areas. Many of their slaves were also baptized into that original church. After the Civil War, the plantation owners, whose slaves were then newly free, deeded the old church and grounds to several of the freed slaves and constructed the current Antioch Baptist

Malinda Webster West



1938 - Rockwoods Reservation, 1,843 acres in size, is established by the Missouri Department of Conservation. It abuts the 1,724 acres that would become Greensfelder County Park and the 1,388 acres that would become Rockwoods Range Conservation Area.

1929 - Big Chief Hotel built in Pond.

1937 - Governor Lloyd Stark dedicates Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park on June 23, 1937. The land for the park was donated by the Babler Family.

## Monarch Train Station



133 acres was next to the land originally transferred to the Colored African Baptist Church. Matilda and William West settled on the land and raised their five children plus two of William's from an earlier marriage. Prior to 1906, William West began dividing his land among his children. Surrounding land was also divided and sold at various times. Eventually, two acres including a piece of the original West holdings became the property of the Union Baptist Church.

The first church was a one room log cabin, possibly located on the West property or the land he donated. Apparently, it was also loosely referred to as "Orville Church" for a time. That building also served as a school house and a meeting hall. Its exact location is unclear. Another log structure was also subsequently used as a church, and that was considered a "family church" with a small membership. From those beginnings, the present Union Baptist Church was formally established in 1921 and officially recognized in 1922. The first church edifice was erected in 1925. With common beliefs, heritage, and family ties, members of Mt. Pleasant Colored Baptist Church also "migrated" to Union Baptist, as the former faded into obsolence.

Tragically, the Union Baptist Church building burned in 1977. With considerable difficulty and tireless effort, led by Clifford Frazier, a descendant of the original slave families, and several others in the community, the church was rebuilt by 1984.

The name "Westland Acres" originated decades ago and became commonly known in the early 1990s when Clifford Frazier and others attempted to assure the heritage of the area in planning discussions with the new City of Chester-

field (having a boundary running through part of the area) and St. Louis County. The name recalls William West and his family, who were integral to the development and fabric of the community and the church since about the 1860s. With the incorporation of Wildwood in 1995, Westland Acres and its rich history are now shared by two cities, but its future is far from certain amid the pressure of surrounding development and evolution of the families who have been its residents. Westland Acres was designated as a "Wildwood Historic District" in 2005.

Sources:

*Judy Mashan, Cynthia Sutton, Members of Union Baptist Church  
1987 - 1993 "From Whence We Came..."*

*Esley Hamilton*

*Letter to Doris Frazier*



School girls playing on the bluffs in Monarch

## THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY OF MONARCH

Monarch Station was a whistle-stop railway depot on the Rock Island Railroad (originally known as the Saint Louis, Kansas City and Colorado Railroad when established in 1886-87). The settlement of Monarch (earlier called Atherton, then Eatherton) straddled what is now present-day Wildwood and Chesterfield near Wild Horse Creek, Eatherton, and Centaur Roads. The application to become a postal town stated that

1943 - A. P. Greensfelder, a civic leader donates land to the Missouri Conservation Department that would be dedicated as the 1,388 acre Rockwoods Range Conservation Area.

1963 - Greensfelder County Park is donated to St. Louis County by the Trustees of the St. Louis Regional Planning and Construction Foundation.

1963 - The Pond Athletic Association is established on bottom land along Pond Road.



Margaret Picker Singer, taken at "The Shadows"

it would serve about twenty families in the surrounding area. A post office was opened in Monarch in 1895 and was active until 1907. William Sutton served as Monarch's only postmaster. The Sutton family lived on the top floor of the grocery store and remained there after the store closed.

For several years, there was a restaurant/tavern at the bottom of the hill to the east of the current railroad crossing. It was called LaBreese (or similar). It was known for its chicken and steak dinners. People came from St. Louis by train on the weekends, and there were some guest cabins on the property.

The Picker and Beardsley Grain Elevator also operated from within the town. Erich Picker, of St. Louis, purchased just over eight acres of wooded land atop a bluff which overlooked the Gumbo Bottoms in 1915 from Caroline Bayer. She and John Bayer had purchased 42 acres along the bluff around 1900, in addition to 150 acres of bottomland below.

Picker died in 1918. His wife, Louise, sold the house and property at 133 Eatherton Road South, today known as "The Shadows", in 1921 to Virginia Hall Harsh. A single woman from St. Louis, Harsh may have used the house as a Catholic Girls retreat. It could be reached from St. Louis by train which stopped at Monarch

Station located at the foot of the bluff. "The Shadows" House still exists and the driveway is just north of the entrance into Lions Head Subdivision.

The original Antioch Baptist Church was located atop Monarch Hill about ¾ miles west of Eatherton Road along Wild Horse Creek Road. When the newer Antioch Baptist Church was completed about 1¼ miles to the east along Wild Horse Creek Road, the old church was deeded to recently freed slaves in the 1870s and Mt. Pleasant Colored Baptist Church was established. An African American settlement existed in the area of the church until the early 1900s. An area known as "Taylor Estates" existed nearby the African American church. Remnants of the church and adjacent cemetery exist as a historical site to this day.

Longtime residents say it is not clearly defined when the community of Monarch died out. However, it was 1941 before some area residents had electricity.

The Chesterfield-Monarch levee, originally called the Monarch Levee, is a major levee protecting the Chesterfield Valley. The origin of the name is not known. The levee was originally constructed by farmers to protect their bottom land from frequent Missouri River flooding. Over time, the levee was expanded and heightened, and much of the farmland was absorbed by development. During the Great Flood of 1993, the Chesterfield-Monarch Levee failed about one mile north of the site of the old Monarch Station, and the entire valley was inundated by the Missouri River.

Sources:

*Kim Potter*

*Portrait of an American Town (page 49)*

*The Chesterfield Historical Commission Book Committee Chesterfield, Missouri from "Untamed Wilderness to Thriving Municipality" (page 168)*

*Ruth Welty*

*"Place Names of St. Louis and Jefferson County", M.A. Thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1939*

1987 – First of two (2) Community Area Studies are commissioned by St. Louis County, i.e. Pond – Grover and Wild Horse Valley.

1965 - "Guide for Growth", a land use plan, is adopted by the St. Louis County Council, which leads to the rezoning of almost all the land area west of Lindbergh Boulevard to the NU Non-Urban District – the beginning of a three (3) acre residential zoning district.

1990 - The Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) releases preliminary possibilities for a major divided highway through western St. Louis County, possibly impacting parkland and existing homes and subdivisions.

# THE HISTORY OF WILDWOOD A ST. LOUIS COUNTY PERSPECTIVE

St. Louis County has a very long and rich history, beginning with its formation in 1812. St. Louis County was overshadowed for decades by the City of St. Louis, which, at one time, was the eighth largest City in America. However, as the 20th Century unfolded, three major events occurred, two (2) World Wars and the Great Depression, which led to changing circumstances and St. Louis County experiencing growth pressures it had not faced before.



## INITIAL GROWTH OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY

The areas of St. Louis County adjoining the City of St. Louis started to have new residences, businesses and institutions being built. The initial growth of the inner ring areas was then followed by growth along the major arterial roadway corridors, which were being extended further to the outward reaches of St. Louis County, while also being expanded to accommodate increased use and traffic volumes.

In 1948, St. Louis County Council adopted a major Zoning Ordinance. This established zoning district designations for all properties not located within a municipal boundary. Rezoning of properties included categories for residential, commercial, industrial, and open space activities. The major zoning category for the area that would someday become the City of Wildwood was the "B" Residence District, which required a minimum of a one acre lot for any new single family dwelling. This one acre minimum size was the largest of all of the residential zoning district designations established at that time.

Growth accelerated after the end of World War II, and areas of St. Louis County that had once been farmland or hills and valleys of mature woodlands soon became residential subdivisions and commercial centers to support these new residences. In a span of twenty years from 1950 to 1970, St. Louis County's population

grew from 406,349 to 951,671 residents. At the same time, the population of the City of St. Louis began a long descent from 856,796 to 622,236 residents. During these twenty years, the character of St. Louis County was established.

## LAND USE FOR WEST ST. LOUIS COUNTY



Another major update of St. Louis County's Zoning Ordinance occurred in 1954. However, this did not lead to any substantive alterations in the area that is now Wildwood. By 1960 though, the St. Louis County Council did recognize that growth was actually accelerating and now reaching new locations, which for many years were thought too difficult or too far from employment centers to become sustainable locations for development.

In 1962, St. Louis County completed a study called "Guide for Growth," which covered the entire unincorporated area and set new parameters for the remaining rural locations. With the establishment of the "NU Non-Urban District," a three acre minimum lot requirement for any new single family dwelling became the norm. Much of the area that became Wildwood was designated NU Non-Urban District and was intended under this plan to be open space and rural areas in the future. This zoning district designation, which also included many areas beyond the "outerbelt" of that time, Lindbergh Boulevard, would never see full implementation.

With the adoption of the new comprehensive Zoning Ordinance in 1965 and the rezoning of all properties under St. Louis

1995 - Residents of a 67 square mile area of West St. Louis County overwhelmingly vote to incorporate as a city on February 7, 1995. The City of Wildwood is officially incorporated on September 1, 1995.

1996 - Master Plan, under the guidance of Jonathan Barnett, is adopted in February.

1996 - First election is held and a new Mayor and sixteen City Council Members are elected in April. Ron Marcantano is elected Mayor.

County's jurisdiction, growth in St. Louis County continued at a record pace through the next years. However, as development moved from the inner-ring to North, South, and West County, not all parties were enthusiastically supporting these changes to their landscapes. Problems with overcrowded schools, over-taxed roadway systems, under-developed utility networks, and scarred landscapes led residents in some areas of St. Louis County to object to the status quo.

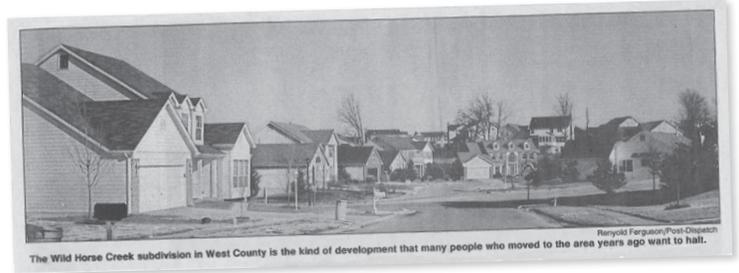


## CONCERNS ON THE HORIZON

As growth occurred and discontent increased in areas of St. Louis County, many residents sought to break from its control and started to consider annexations and incorporations. These actions, which were very concerning to St. Louis County officials, became reality when the City of Town and Country annexed three contiguous unincorporated areas in 1977. The annexation issue progressed to the Missouri Supreme Court in 1983, which supported the action of Town and Country, thus changing the direction of past lower court actions in this regard. Shortly thereafter, Maryland Heights incorporated and a string of annexations began that threatened the viability of St. Louis County. The annexations threatened services, particularly those such as health and justice services, revenue collection, recording, etc. Through legislative actions by Missouri's House of Representatives and State Senate, a Boundary Commission was created to oversee the annexation and incorporation activities in St. Louis County.

## RESIDENTS SEEK CONTROL

In the years 1980 through 1986, County Executive Gene McNary began a process of planning efforts called *Small Area Studies* to start addressing County residents' concerns about the state of land use planning and services in many of the unincorporated areas. The studies were St. Louis County's commitment to residents in high growth areas that planning would be pre-determined, with compliance to the adopted requirements of the St. Louis County Council. The *Small Area Study* process was then followed by a more extensive set of studies called *Community Area Studies*. These were similar to the prior studies but attempted to set parameters for future growth in developing areas, including resident participation. This process created an expectation that recommendations contained in the studies would be followed in the future.



## PLANNING OF WILDWOOD BEGINS

Two of these Community Area Studies were completed in the area that is now Wildwood. These are known as the *Pond-Grover Community Area Study* and the *Wild Horse Valley Community Area Study*. Both efforts were completed by 1993. With the completion of these studies, residents now had hope that land use decisions would follow these plans, which was the commitment of St. Louis County with their respective completions. As these studies were being developed, the committee members, who were residents of the area, began to form relationships and discuss the next steps, if the plans were not followed. Many of these residents became the nucleus of the Wildwood incorporation movement that would follow in a few years.

Despite these planning efforts, St. Louis County never fully recognized the unique character of this area until it was too late.

1996 - Tree Preservation and Restoration Code and first-of-its-kind Natural Resource Protection Standards are adopted by City Council. These laws are intended to protect the character of Wildwood.

1997 - Almost 500 single family dwelling permits are issued by the City, reflecting the zoning activity of St. Louis County, leading up to the incorporation of Wildwood.

1996 - Wildwood Days, a community event, is first held in Babler State Park.

1997 - Edward R. Kohn Park, the City's first facility, opens in the Wildwood portion of the Chesterfield Valley.  
City receives its first grant for a trail corridor along State Route 109.

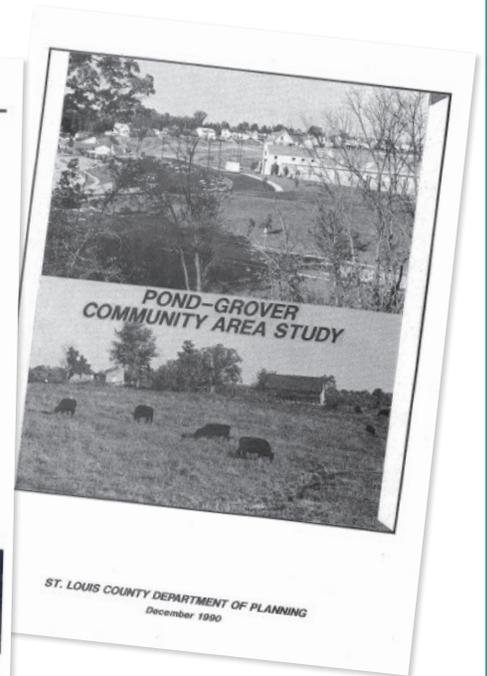
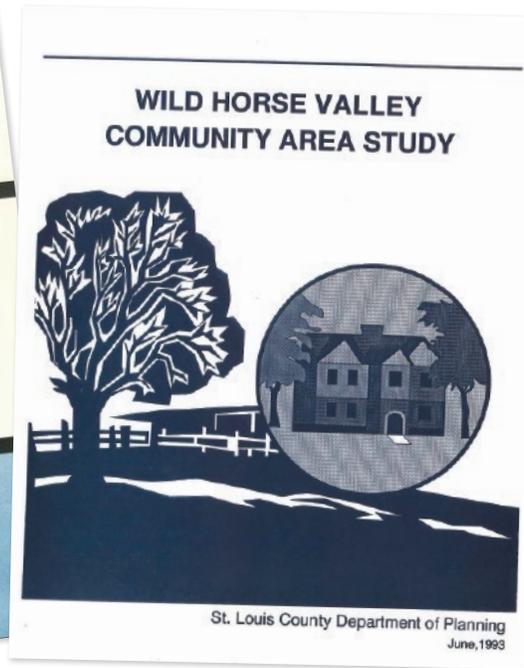
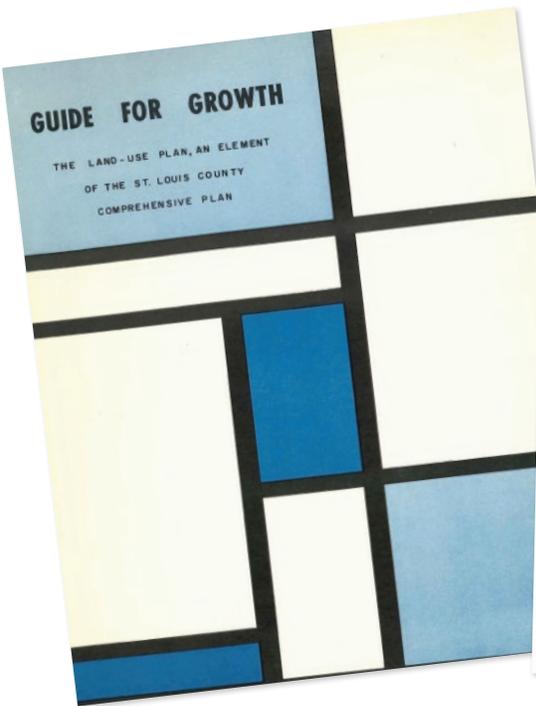
Land use policies that had been applied for many years, starting in 1965 when the County Council adopted a new master Zoning Ordinance and rezoned all properties located in unincorporated areas, were never modified to reflect the differences, which existed between North County, South County, and West County. These differences were distinctive, but the areas were treated with a one-size fits all approach by St. Louis County Government that residents of this area could not accept.

## RESIDENTS RALLY

Unfortunately, the *Wild Horse Valley Community Study* became a more political effort on the part of the homebuilders and other development interests. This led to a more divisive outcome from the planning process. Regardless, it became clear from the adoption of the *Pond-Grover Community Area Study* that both the St. Louis County Council and the Planning Commission viewed these studies more as guidelines, believing the recommendations for land use decisions could be changed, if they felt a better outcome could be achieved. This approach on the part of St. Louis County was different than expected or explained to participants during the process to develop each of the plans. Despite years of cooperative efforts of the residents with St. Louis County officials,

many of the residents once again had to contend with development policies by that jurisdiction which were not suited to the unique characteristics of this area that became Wildwood.

Along with St. Louis County Government, another threat which prompted residents to consider more involvement in planning their future was a plan by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) to consider changing State Route 109 from its current condition to an "outerbelt" interstate design that would require land acquisitions from the Rockwoods Reservation and Babler State Park properties and the displacement of several existing residences located in its final alignment. This announcement occurred during the early stages of the *Pond-Grover Community Area Study* process. Such a design standard would be reminiscent of Highway 141 to the east. This proposal led to public outcries and calls for such a project to be stopped, which evolved into the "Coalition to Save the Greenbelt and Stop the Outerbelt". This group became for all intents and purposes, the "Committee for the Incorporation of Wildwood". The committee, formed in 1992, led the effort to bring local government and its decision-making to the residents and property owners which resulted in incorporation of the City of Wildwood in 1995.



1997 - Hunting Regulations approved for Wildwood by City Council.

1997 - Voters approve Charter status for City of Wildwood.

1998 - Dierbergs Town Center is proposed and thereafter constructed.

# SAVE THE GREENBELT – STOP THE OUTERBELT

*Editor's Note: The following information has been compiled from articles in newspapers, including the St. Louis Post Dispatch, Riverfront Times, Press Journal, Tri-County Journal, West Countian, and others; letters to editors of newspapers; meeting agendas and minutes; Babler Rockwoods Preservation Association and Coalition for the Greenbelt newsletters and fliers; original and copies of documents and other items from private collections of committee and coalition members; and verbal and written recollections of various involved persons. The information presents the highlights and is not necessarily the full story.*

## THE “GREEN BELT”

Far West St. Louis County has long been an area of special interest. For centuries prior to the arrival of white settlers, the area’s lush vegetation, abundant fish and game, many streams and springs, bordering rivers, desirable minerals and rock formations, and other natural features attracted native Indian populations and eventually white trappers, hunters, and traders. Throughout the nineteenth century, those same features, as well as the abundance of rich valleys, navigable rivers, virgin timber, and other riches, afforded the settlers from places like Virginia, Kentucky, Germany, France, etc., a new life and great opportunities. Into the twentieth century, successful farms, orchards, and quarries, as well as varied recreational opportunities, shared the beautiful forests, green spaces, and mostly unadulterated nature. People traveling along the main road from St. Louis to Jefferson City appreciated the beauty of the terrain. As the region’s population slowly and steadily moved westward in the early 1900s, visionaries sought to protect as much of that special land in West St. Louis County as possible from rapid and irresponsible development. The concept of protecting the so-called “greenbelt” originated early on. The donation of thousands of acres of green space and forests within Dr. Edmund Babler State Park, Greensfelder County Park, Rockwoods Reservation, and Rockwoods Range created and protected much of the natural assets so they might be enjoyed by people near and far for countless decades to come. As people and sprawl

continued to move into the area, partly because of those assets, ongoing efforts to limit unwanted and threatening commercial and high density residential developments were beginning in earnest by the 1980s.

## THE “LOADED SHOTGUN”

Given the special character of the parklands and area surrounding those parks, and considering the hundreds of new homes and dozens of proposed subdivisions along or near the main north-south route from Eureka to Chesterfield, Missouri Route 109, it came as a shock to virtually all in the area when the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) announced plans to construct an interstate style expressway from Interstate 55 in Jefferson County to U.S. Highway 40 (Interstate 64) in Chesterfield Valley. Various potential routes were illustrated in MoDOT’s earliest planning documents, including one generally along the Franklin County Line and one to the east of Route 109, eventually connecting to an interchange built at Highway 100. There was even a possible route that passed through Castlewood State Park. The routes that seemed most prevalent in discussions would have extended an expressway northward from Eureka, back and forth along the existing Highway 109 corridor through existing homes and neighborhoods, including some that were very new, and running along the eastern edge of Hidden Valley, cutting through Rockwoods Reservation, and passing just east of Babler State Park and into Gumbo Flats. Regardless of the exact route selected, major blasting and massive excavation would be required



1998 - The City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission adopt phase 2 of the Town Center Plan.

1999 - Historic Preservation Commission is created, after being an advisory board for its first few years.

1999 - Capital Improvements Sales Tax is approved by the voters.

1998 - Wildwood Logo is approved by City Council via Resolution.

1999 - Taylor Road is opened to traffic, after its construction as part of the Dierbergs Market Project.

to accommodate at least six lanes of divided highway, necessary outer roads, and intersections with the existing and some new feeder roads. In some areas, 60-100 ft. high hills would be cut away and valleys and deep ravines would be filled. If an "outer-belt" expressway was constructed, the character of the landscape would be permanently changed, and the development drawn by such a roadway would certainly eliminate the history and beauty of the general area forever. It was not very difficult for opponents to envision another overcrowded Interstate 270 corridor, which would ultimately obliterate a generally rural portion of the County. And that vision, or nightmare, would also extend through beautiful areas of Jefferson County to the south. The City of Eureka and its people would be further subdivided by a major highway, just as construction of Interstate 44 had done previously. Residents throughout the area felt threatened and violated by MoDOT's plans and the potentially catastrophic consequences, and they understandably reacted with intense defensiveness and outrage.

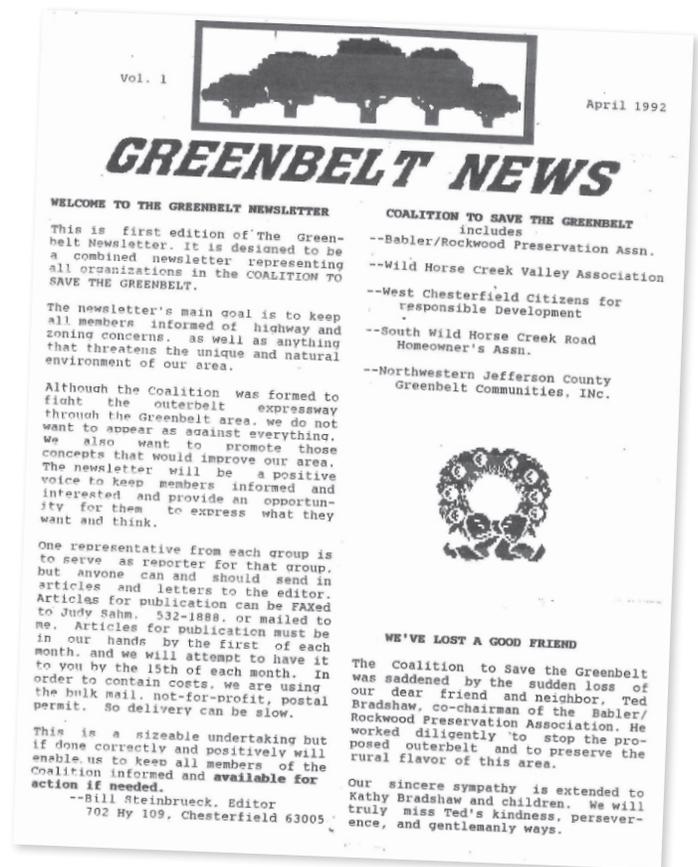
## LACK OF PUBLIC AWARENESS AND INPUT

As the St. Louis area developed and sprawled outward to the west and south in Missouri in the 1970s and 1980s, developers saw abundant financial opportunity in Jefferson County and West St. Louis County. However, one of the major issues to be overcome was the network of old, winding, narrow roads throughout the region. Pressure increased on state and local officials to upgrade or replace key roadways to improve safety and stimulate development possibilities. Various meetings of "concerned parties" were held, some without significant notice to the public or without the chance for public participation.

As early as February 1988, St. Louis County planners were referring to the need for an "outer belt" highway further west from Interstate 270 to relieve pressure on that expressway. But at that time, they were referring to extension and expansion of Route 141. Concerned citizens along Route 141 expressed the need to avoid a major expressway that would carry loud, heavy trucks and only exacerbate congestion on feeder roads such as Manchester and Clayton Roads. The County's Highway Department Director balked at any significant reduction in the State's plans for that route and actually pushed for a more robust expressway than proposed.

On March 21, 1988, a meeting was hosted by MoDOT at Eureka Senior High School. It was called a "prelocation study meeting" focusing on "Route 109, St. Louis County-Jefferson County, Route 40 South to Route 21" The public was notified in a one inch

piece buried on Page 5 of the St. Louis Post Dispatch – West Section that same day. Public input was therefore minimal. A MoDOT project number had already been assigned, indicating significant work on the project had already been done. Maps and data were distributed to attendees and explained by MoDOT, and these items illustrated various proposed routes from Eureka to Gumbo Flats through what is now Wildwood. Only one of those illustrated options loosely followed the existing Highway 109. Data presented to attendees also included the Spirit of St. Louis airport layout, layouts of the County parks, the Lower Meramec Greenway Study, the County Highway System Master Plan, data on approved and planned zoning requests along the potential corridors, and information on proposed development in Chesterfield Valley (Gumbo Flats).



2000 - Area's first roundabout is constructed at Manchester Road and Taylor Road.

2000 - John Wild, a seated Council Member, is elected Mayor, in a three-way race.

1999 - First bridge replacement project completed on Hencken Road, over a tributary of Fox Creek.

2000 - U.S. Census indicates the City has grown from 16,232 residents to 32,415. The City's population doubles in size.

MoDOT's internal memorandum summarizing that meeting concluded: "the meeting was conducted in a very friendly and compatible atmosphere and if the number of speakers (20) and their subject is any criteria, the people are very anxious for the State to get moving toward development of this project. The general tone of the meeting was toward rapid development of the plan whereby a corridor could be established thus preventing development which could preclude ultimate highway construction." The problem was that many new homes had recently been constructed along Highway 109, and the County was processing plans for many more. According to the memorandum, the meeting was attended by "several state representatives", "the Superintendent of the Rockwood School District", a "number of other governmental representatives", and "private developer representatives". A letter to the group from State Senator Tom McCarthy advised MoDOT to "speed up development of the project in view of the many, many homes that are either under construction or proposed". (Seven years later, that same Mr. McCarthy sued in an attempt to stop the incorporation of Wildwood.) Bill Foster, Rockwood School District Superintendent at the time, said, "we don't need this road in the year 2000 or later; we need it now." Home builders in attendance at the Eureka meeting "indicated concern for the amount of time needed for construction." (The list of handouts and presented information is significant in retrospect, because 2-3 years later, MoDOT engineers and planners were indicating in meetings that they were not aware of all the new and planned development in the Highway 109 Corridor when they prepared the project draft.)



Road east of Eureka, through Crescent Valley, to just north of the village of Glencoe and LaSalle Institute, through Rockwoods Reservation, to the Pond Road area, to just west of the Pond Athletic Association, then traveling through hills just east of Babler State Park, and down Monarch Hill to a connection with U.S. 40 at the Daniel Boone Bridge, 4.) The new Route 109 should be built as a freeway and right-of-way acquired accordingly – to provide a "beltway" from Interstate 55 to U.S. 40/Interstate 70 to provide relief for Interstate 270. The right-of-way discussed would have included several new interchanges, limited access, and provisions for an ultimate dual lane divided freeway/expressway. The key missing element in that meeting and those conclusions was public awareness and citizen involvement in discussions.



MoDOT's takeaways from the March 1988 meeting were: 1.) Such a project will not start for at least 10 years, and local agencies should decide on and protect a selected corridor from further development, 2.) High development areas, such as at Highways 100 and 109 and in Gumbo Flats, should be avoided if possible, 3.) MoDOT's preferred location at that time (the "Red Line") was shown on a map, and that route included a leg from near Lewis



2001 - A committee of volunteers completes City's first Parks and Recreation Plan. The plan is named Green Spaces and Recreation Places.

2001 - Redistricting Committee modifies ward boundaries based upon census results.

2001 - First vegetated stream bank improvement project completed along segments of Wild Horse Creek.

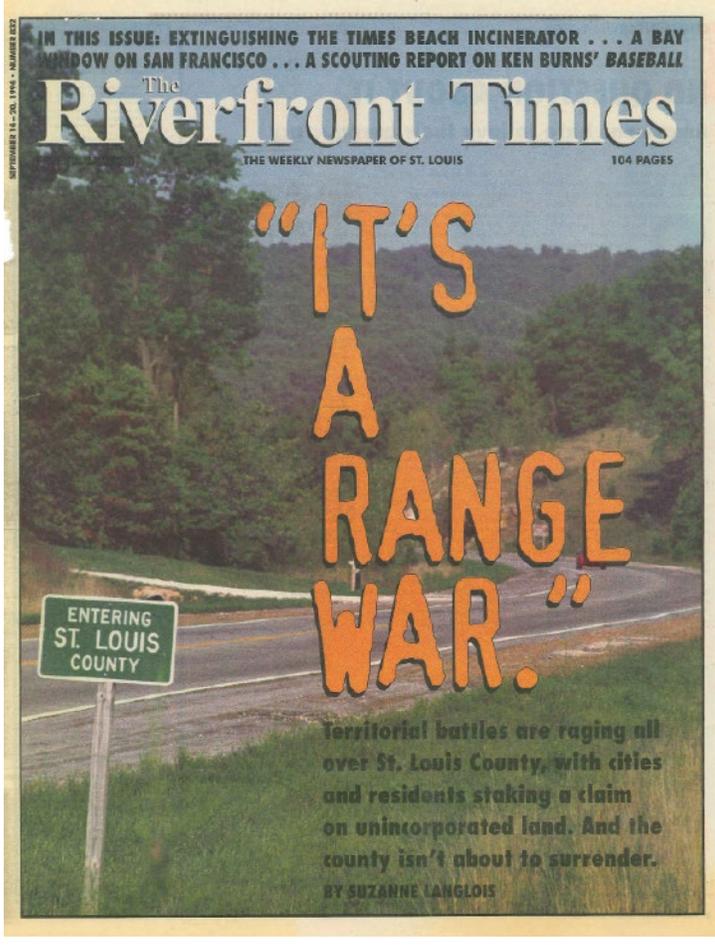
2000 - Wildwood Family YMCA opens in the City. Immediately is a major gathering point.



In the same general timeframe, Mayor Edward O'Reilly of Ellisville, in conjunction with the office of U.S. Senator Robert Young, hosted "a meeting of civic, business, and government leaders to discuss the concept of a north-south connector highway linking U.S. 40 with I-44 in far West St. Louis County." The stated purpose of the meeting was so elected officials in West County (note, the Wildwood area was not yet incorporated), local developers, and officials from MoDOT could discuss the idea "to head off the kind of traffic problems that plagued Highway 141 and Clarkson Road." Again, there was only subtle notice of the meeting and no significant provisions for public contribution to the discussion.

## THE PLANNING CONTINUES IN EARNEST

Efforts progressed behind the scenes. By April 1990, MoDOT had completed a detailed "Reconnaissance Corridor Study" of the proposed project from Route 40 in Gumbo Flats southward to Route 21 in Jefferson County. The report included detailed aerial maps which clearly indicated the hills, valleys, and structures to be impacted. (Again, it is important to note that within a few months from completion of that report, MoDOT indicated a lack of awareness of the full impact of the project.) After it wound its way through the MoDOT review structure, the Reconnaissance Study was presented to the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission on April 4, 1991, and the report and the tentative preferred routing of the project were unanimously approved. The Vice Chair of that Commission was Harry Morley, of Taylor, Morley, Simon Homes, a large and influential homebuilder in St. Louis County. No public comment was accepted at the meeting. At the Commission's August 2nd, 1991 meeting, MoDOT planners recommended a change to the alternate routes. A proposed alternate route that would have connected to U.S. 40 in Gumbo Flats just east of Long Road was abandoned (an area that soon became the core of rapid development in the valley). The reason given for the change recommendation was the "substantial development" which was occurring in the area. The route further to the west was recommended. Those changes were approved unanimously, firming the threat to the Highway 109 corridor.



## CITIZENS RESPOND

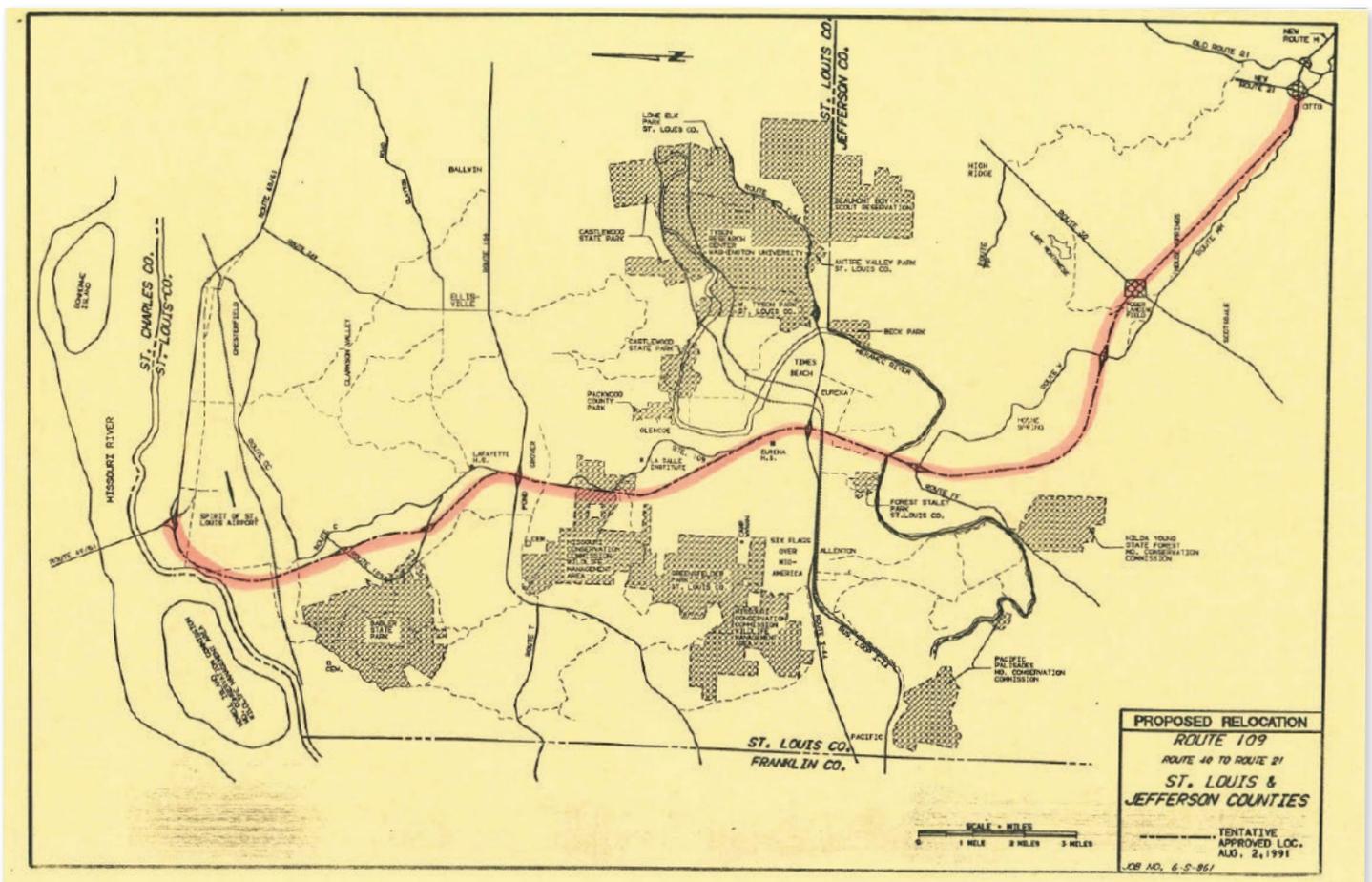
In 1990, seeing the need for planning the sprawl and pending growth in the area, St. Louis County facilitated the Pond-Grover Area Study issued in December 1990, which was closely followed by commencement of the Wild Horse Valley Area Study a few months later. By mid-1991, citizen members involved in those planning committees recognized that a major expressway through West County was not a consideration presented to them by the County Planning Department. In fact, the County's Highway Department eventually advised the Wild Horse Valley study group not to anticipate any improvements to County roads in the area due to limited funding. Some of the contributing citizens were outraged to hear the MoDOT proposal. Among those contributing members and participants were Dr. Jack Dann, Barb and Joe Larimore, Marianne Simmons, Sue Cullinane and others. On September 30,

2002 - First major bridge replacement project is completed over Caulks Creek, on Strecker Road.

2002 - The City's Route 66 Run is begun, highlighting the original location of the historic roadway.

2002 - First trail corridor opens along State Route 109. This trail segment is one-half mile in length.

2003 - Al Foster Memorial Trail and Trailhead opens in Glencoe Community; reflecting a decades old dream of many recreation and environmental enthusiasts.



1991, Dr. Dann wrote a strong three page personal letter to County Executive Buzz Westfall expressing his disappointment and concern. He included an itemized statement of opposition signed by Maryanne Simmons, Ron Coleman, Fannie Pritchett, and the other members of the Pond-Grover Area Study Committee.

Between the April 1991 and August 1991 Highway Commission meetings, the public was beginning to gain awareness of the project that was soon to impact them. U.S. Representative Richard Gephardt mentioned the project in a forum on jobs creation. In attendance were two high school teachers, Debbie Hauser and Judy Mitchell-Miller, who researched and determined their homes near Babler State Park were within the preferred route and would likely be lost, along with those of their neighbors. The word rapidly spread through their area and coalesced with rumors already circulating in the area closer to Eureka, because people in

Jefferson County had already been alerted. Debbie Hauser and Judy Mitchell-Miller organized an initial meeting of concerned citizens in their area. A local realtor, Ted Bradshaw, had heard of the proposed project and determined it would pass through land he had purchased near the entrance to Rockwoods Reservation and would prevent construction of the home he had long planned for his family. Bill Kennedy, a trustee of a relatively new subdivision north of Eureka High School in the path of the project, was advised of the project by a neighbor who had seen a note about it in the newspaper. Bill Kennedy could find very few neighbors who were aware of the project, even though some were involved in Eureka area activities and in the Rockwood Schools. Separately, Ted Bradshaw and Bill Kennedy, accompanied by neighbor Russ Hughes, decided to attend the August 14th meeting near Babler State Park just to hear what was being said. Concerned citizens from the north and the south quickly recognized that

2003 - Green Rock Trail Challenge is offered on this heritage trail, between Rockwoods Reservation and Greensfelder County Park, on National Trails Day.

2003 - Wyman Center adds two new buildings to its facility on Forby Road.

2004 - Wildwood Town Center Project is proposed by Koman Properties and thereafter constructed.

first meeting and at the next meeting that the threat was real and that no one was representing their interests and the welfare of the parks and beauty of the region.

Because residents in Jefferson County had already begun to hear the proposal via a MoDOT initial “scoping meeting”, representatives of the subdivisions in northwest Jefferson County also attended the first meetings of the group.

On August 18th, the fledgling group was formed as “The Babler/Rockwoods Preservation Association” (“BRPA”), a name which denoted the unity of purpose from those living to both the north and south of Highway 100. Growth of the group was rapid. Representatives from subdivisions just south of Eureka in Jefferson County quickly became involved in a “coalition” with BRPA. The organizational chart dated September 24, 1991 listed Judy Mitchell-Miller and Ted Bradshaw as BRPA Chairs, Debbie Hauser and Bill Kennedy as Vice Chairs, Judy Sahm as Secretary, and Jerry Gunkel as Treasurer. The Certificate of Incorporation from the State of Missouri, filed by attorney Ron Danna and dated September 25, 1991, lists those same registered officers. By September 24th, the organizational chart included a new layer of committees and two dozen more people than the one drafted two weeks earlier, indicating the rapid growth in the volunteer leadership group. The growing organization included various committees, including those to handle Area Coordinators, Neighborhood Coordinators, Coalition Liaisons, Public Relations/Communications, Demographics, Information Packets and Materials, Fundraising, Legal and Lobbying, Environmental Issues, Highway Department Liaisons, and Archaeological Issues. Over fifty names were included on the list of the leaders and coordinators within just a couple months of organizing, and dozens of other residents were already offering to assist.

Existing citizen advocacy groups had quickly joined the effort. The West Chesterfield Citizens for Responsible Development, including Maryanne Simmons, Sue Cullinane, and others; the Wild Horse Creek Valley Association, led by Joe and Barb Larimore, Judy Sahm, Bill Ballard, Joe Forshaw, and others; and the newly created South Wild Horse Creek Road Homeowners Association, led by Oreon Sandler, Ron Coleman, and others teamed with BRPA and the newly formed Northwest Jefferson County Greenbelt Communities group. These five groups proceeded under an umbrella organization named “The Coalition to Save the Greenbelt”, with the stated mission of: a.) continually improving the quality of life in the area by maintaining its environmental integrity; b.) insuring improvement in the safety of the area’s roads without harming the

parks, recreational assets, residential areas, and natural topography; and c.) seeking and supporting responsible development that benefits the area and does not jeopardize the environmental beauty of the County’s last woodland greenbelt area. (Perceptive readers might see a correlation between that mission and the vision statement presented in the effort to incorporate Wildwood a couple years later.)

By September 30th, the list of BRPA accomplishments indicated its “members” had sent almost 3000 postcards to MoDOT Commissioners and other officials, sent hundreds of letters to officials and politicians and supplied pertinent mailing lists to several subdivisions for that use, made well over 100 phone calls of opposition to MoDOT offices, organized and conducted three informational meetings (at St. Thomas Church and Eureka High School) which had drawn over 300 residents, met with various elected officials including State Representative Bill Linton (who was empathetic and shared the committee’s view) and with U.



S. Congresswomen Joan Kelly-Horn (who indicated she could do little on the federal level). The group subsequently met with State Representative Jim Talent, who pledged his support. BRPA representative Maryanne Simmons and others also met with County Executive Buzz Westfall, who seemed sensitive to the concerns and promised to investigate the issue. The group contacted the Missouri Conservation Commission, which indicated they had heard of the citizens’ efforts and shared the concerns about Rockwoods Reservation but had not yet been contacted by MoDOT. That listing of BRPA accomplishments and planned

2004 - Town Center Development Manual is completed and adopted by the City.

2004 - Ed Marshall is elected Mayor.

2004 - “Money Magazine” selects Wildwood as one of the Best Places to Live in the Midwest.

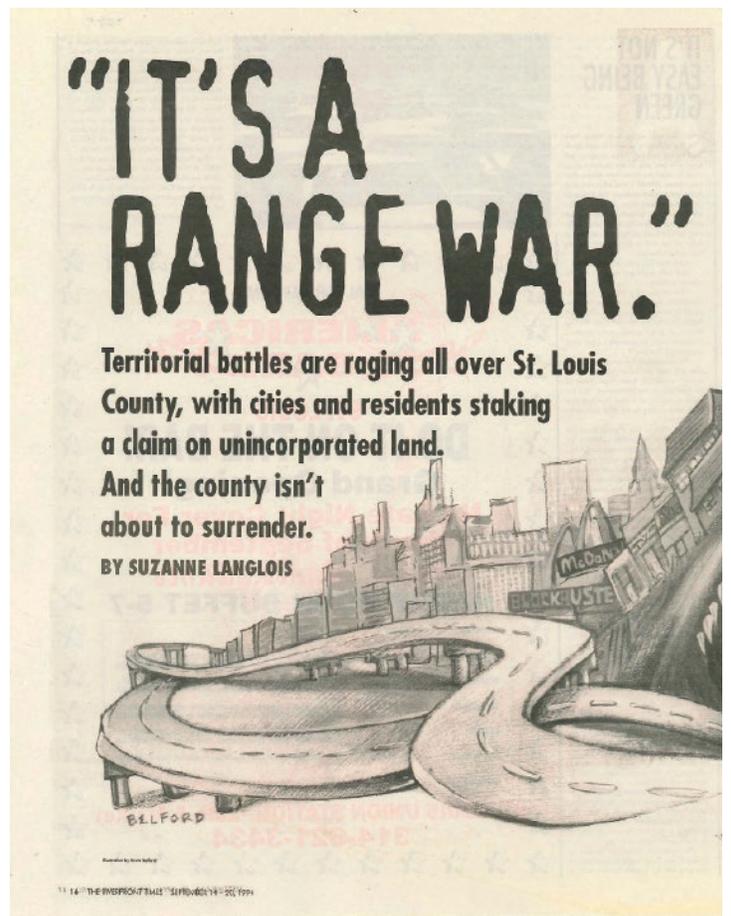
2005 - City’s Anniversary Park opens to big crowds.

activities actually covered four full pages in standard type, just a few weeks after the BRPA group had been formed.

The Coalition group organized and conducted its first joint public meeting on October 27th at Lafayette High School to inform residents and prepare them for the MoDOT "scoping meeting" scheduled for November 4th at Eureka High School. Press releases sent by BRPA to the television stations, KMOX radio, the Suburban Journals, and the St. Louis Post Dispatch publicized the meeting and the issues.

As the opposition to construction of an Outerbelt expressway, generally in the Highway 109 corridor became more open and more vocal, so did the voice of the expressway's proponents. A September 12th, 1991 letter to MoDOT from a retired highway patrol trooper spanned three pages with rambling reasons for an "outerbelt" along Highway 109, and included the following thoughts: "most of the woodland is scrub oak, brush, and sprouts"; he became aware "through my good friend, Mr. Fred Weber, Jr." (i.e. the highway builder); "I strongly urge you to keep relocation proposals strictly confidential"; and, "if you must, give "lip service" to those who oppose the relocation." On October 7th, the Lafayette Area Mayors Organization sent a letter to MoDOT's District Engineer expressing their support. Co-signed my Messrs. Andrew of Ballwin, Leonard of Chesterfield, Douglas of Clarkson Valley, McGuire of Manchester, and Brenner of Winchester, the letter commended MoDOT for its foresight in planning the expressway and urged its completion. The Ballwin City Administrator, Robert Kunz, conveyed his aldermen's support for the proposal on October 30th. Paul DeMay of the Chesterfield Chamber of Commerce communicated the group's support for a "multi-lane, North-South Highway 109 Outerbelt". (Interestingly, BRPA representatives began attending that Chamber's meetings, and the subject was not mentioned again.) A similar letter was sent by the West County Chamber of Commerce on October 17th. A collection of citizen letters of support for construction of the outerbelt came from places like Clarkson Valley, Manchester, Des Peres, Kirkwood, and Chesterfield. BRPA had requested copies of all correspondence received by MoDOT and secured these documents and more. The proponents of the outerbelt were then fairly easy to identify and counteract.

As it turned out, Ted Bradshaw and Bill Kennedy lived very close to each other and began a joint effort. Given that support for the expressway project that was apparently developing in neighboring cities, those two BRPA leaders took on the task of reaching out



to those municipal governments to explain the potential impact, not only to the immediate Highway 109 corridor, but also to the region's recreational areas, green space, and parklands. Presentations were made to the Boards and Councils in Ballwin, Ellisville, Clarkson Valley, Chesterfield, and Eureka in late 1991. Bill Kennedy recalls the response in Ballwin was a polite "we empathize but don't send it our way." In Ellisville, Clarkson Valley, and Chesterfield, the response is recalled as "we need to reduce congestion and noise on Clarkson Road, and we don't want it to be upgraded to an expressway, so Hwy 109 might be the better choice as far as we're concerned." Chesterfield leaders also made it clear they wanted to stimulate major development in Gumbo Flats and felt that an expressway from I-44 to U.S. 40 would do just that. The lone BRPA supporter among the cities was Eureka, which was already bisected by I-44 and did not feel the need for another major expressway in their area. Following the presentation by Bill Kennedy on Decem-

2005 - St. Louis Community College – Wildwood Campus is proposed and thereafter Phase One is completed. The facility, located in Phase One of the overall campus plan, is the City's first LEED building and designated "Platinum."

2005 - Pedestrian bridge across State Route 100 is completed in Town Center; only such structure across this State roadway in entire region.

2005 - Wildwood Greenway Corridor trail network is expanded with addition of segments along both sides of the State Route 100 right-of-way.

ber 3rd, 1991, the Eureka Board of Aldermen and Mayor directed City Administrator Steve Collins to draft a resolution of concern to be distributed to the MoDOT Commissioners and District Engineer, affected elected officials, state agency and institutional property owners in the corridor, the Babler Rockwoods Preservation Association, and the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council. The resolution was passed by the Board at their December 17th meeting and was forwarded as specified. Among other points, it called for creation of a broad-based "Highway 109 Advisory Committee" to work closely with MoDOT.

## PUBLIC CONCERN BECOMES VISIBLE

Public outreach was in full force by November 1991. The rallying cry became "Save the Greenbelt. Stop the Outerbelt". Hundreds of signs and bumper stickers carrying the slogan began appearing throughout the region. The Coalition prepared and published its "Greenbelt News" on a regular basis to advise residents of the project status, planned meetings and activities, and need for volunteers and funding. Thousands of copies of the Greenbelt News were distributed by mail, handed out door-to-door, and hung on mailboxes throughout the area. Hundreds of lapel buttons were ordered and distributed. Sections of green ribbon, buttons, newsletters, pre-addressed cards for mailing to officials, petitions to sign and send, etc. were packaged in plastic bags and hung on doorknobs and mailboxes throughout the area that is now Wildwood, plus eastern Eureka and northwestern Jefferson County. Green ribbons were appearing on mailboxes and car antennas throughout far west county. The area was inundated with Coalition literature and promotional material. Within a few weeks, very few people in the area could say they were unaware of the Save the Greenbelt effort.

At one point, a few members of the Coalition traveled to Jefferson City to show a presence at a highway commissioners' meeting, even though the Highway 109 project was not to be discussed. Prior to the following commission meeting, the Coalition was advised their presence was not necessary because there would be no public comment and the Outerbelt project would again not be discussed. To continue the reminders to the Highway Commission, the Coalition arranged for delivery of a 5 ft. tree to their meeting room in Jefferson City. The delivery card read "Regarding Highway 109 and the demolition of homes and woodlands. Looking forward to seeing you at your November 1st meeting in Kirkwood. Regards, the Citizens of West St. Louis County and Jefferson County." Behind the scenes, Coalition members also placed bumper stickers on commissioners'

cars, tied large green ribbons in front of Commissioner Morley's home and on shrubs at his office, and began sending opposition postcards to the commissioners' home addresses. While some of these actions seem immature in hindsight, it is important to note that the comments and actions of some MoDOT commissioners' were clearly disrespectful of the views offered by area residents who were to be impacted by their decisions.

As recalled somewhat humorously today, in November 1991, a group called the "Rockwood School and Student Foundation" sent letters to several targeted residents of means asking for significant donations, accompanied by a solicitation letter from Dennis Peterson, Superintendent. Dr. Peterson, without openly supporting the road project to residents, had several times touted the benefits that substantial commercial development along such a road would bring to the district, its teachers, and its staff. Dr. Peterson and the Foundation made the mistake of suggesting to Joe Forshaw that he might consider donating \$50,000. Perhaps they did not know that one of the original proposed Outerbelt routes would have passed through the expansive Forshaw family property along the County Line and that Joe was a leading member of the Coalition to Save the Greenbelt and the Wild Horse Valley Homeowners group. On November 18th, Joe Forshaw replied with a two page letter to Dr. Peterson, which professionally and tersely explained where the school district could better place its focus and its fundraising efforts. That episode was closely followed by a small group meeting with Dr. Peterson, requested by State Representative Jim Talent, and attended by State Representative Bill Linton, County Councilman Greg Quinn, Maryanne Simmons, and Bill Kennedy. Little was heard on the subject from Dr. Peterson thereafter.

MoDOT scheduled a series of "scoping meetings" aimed at presenting their concept and hearing citizen comment. Hundreds of citizens attended the meeting at Eureka High School on November 4, 1991. It would not be an overstatement to say MoDOT officials were overwhelmed by the negative comments from citizens in the area stretching from I-55 all the way to U.S. 40. It is true that some rose to speak in favor of the major road, and it is noteworthy that highway safety was a valid concern, especially in Jefferson County. But most comments in favor of the project were obviously self-serving opinions from political allies, developers, contractors and similar. Dr. John Gragnani recalls that it was at the Eureka meeting that he, Dr. Jack Dann, and Don Kozlowski first met. Those three would not only become instrumental in the Outerbelt fight but also key leaders in the eventual Wildwood incorporation effort.

2005 - City receives ACEC Engineering Excellence Award for Manchester Road/Taylor Road Roundabout.

2005 - Wildwood turns ten (10) years old.

2006 - Master Plan update is completed, reflecting a year-long process in this regard.

BRPA and the Greenbelt Coalition scheduled their own meetings and rallies in late 1991 and January 1992 and made their case with maps and numbers and traffic counts and impact statements. New volunteers were enlisted by the dozens. Don Kozlowski and Dr. Dann, along with Charlie Petit, an engineer from Jefferson County, continued to analyze MoDOT's project in depth and demonstrated the faultiness of the concept and the questionable details in the engineering and cost estimates. As the tone of the hearings and public comments escalated, things got to the point where the abilities of MoDOT engineers were being questioned and demeaned in public.

## ST. LOUIS COUNTY TAKES A STAND

On November 8th, 1991, St. Louis County hosted a "Total Transportation Planning Meeting" in Clayton, with the objective of hearing input on various regional transportation issues from multiple sources. The Coalition was certainly not going to miss the opportunity to express its concerns about the Outerbelt project. Each speaker was to pre-register and was to be given a 10 minute speaking slot. The meeting or hearing was scheduled to last the entire day, so it was anticipated that more than 25 speakers would be providing input. The Coalition strategized its approach, which included organizing as many people to attend as possible. Thus, the Coalition had more attendees than any other group – and they were obvious with their green ribbons, t-shirts, and buttons. To gain maximum impact, the Coalition registered for more than one speakers' slot under different names but coordinated the points to be presented. Lynn Carey from the Northwest Jefferson County group, Don Kozlowski from the Babler/Rockwoods Preservation Association, Joe Larimore from the Wild Horse Valley group, Eric Tremayne from the West Chesterfield group, and Bill Kennedy representing his subdivision and the residents just north of Eureka each registered separately but then presented a common theme spread across the day's schedule. As anticipated, developers, politicians, and special interest groups provided their own vocal support for major projects such as the Outerbelt. Les Sterman, Executive Director of the very influential East-West Gateway Coordinating Council, stressed the importance of agencies and governments involving the public in project planning and decisions. Overall, the Coalition was successful in presenting a strong stand. Also of benefit was a statement from Franklin County representatives that they would certainly welcome an Outerbelt type expressway in their county.

As time passed, the St. Louis County Council was clearly hearing the clamor from West County. Hundreds of postcards and letters were sent to each of the Councilmembers, to County Executive Buzz Westfall, and to County Planning and Highways staff. On December 19th, 1991, the St. Louis County Council passed a Resolution (No. 3653), introduced by Councilmembers Quinn, Shear, Rothman-Serot, O'Mara, Odenwald, and Breihan, calling on MoDOT to abandon plans for the proposed "outerbelt". The Council resolved that MoDOT should involve county and local governments, environmental groups, and representation from area residents in future studies. The resolution specifically stated that any major highway should avoid adverse impact to the "greenbelt", parklands, and natural areas - language borrowed from Coalition literature.

## THE MISSOURI HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT STEPS BACK

A January 7th, 1992 MoDOT press release reported that the Missouri Highway Commission had changed its recommendations regarding the proposed project. The Commission decided to re-evaluate but not abandon construction of an expressway/freeway through northern Jefferson County. The new plans also called for "a study to determine if and how the existing Route 109 could be improved from I-44 north to Route 40." The Highway Department cancelled planned public meetings, including the third scoping meeting at Lafayette High School, and indicated plans to work closely with local governments and communities that might be impacted. Shortly after the MoDOT announcement, the St. Louis District Engineer announced plans to create two "advisory" groups to assist with developing plans to improve the roadway in the corridor - one representing the area north of I-44 and one for the area to the south through Jefferson County. The St. Louis Post Dispatch carried a headline above an editorial that said "The Right Side Won One" and text which advised area residents to stay alert. A sense of "guarded optimism" spread through the Coalition and West County, but the residents of northern Jefferson County were still not put at ease by the news. The Coalition for the Greenbelt vowed to continue the fight and to carefully monitor all that MoDOT planned and discussed involving the corridor. Ted Bradshaw, Debbie Hauser, and others provided comments in the news media that echoed concern for the people in Jefferson County and their limited satisfaction with the apparent new plans in St. Louis County. That message was conveyed to the MoDOT District Engineer who was present at a January 29th meeting of the Wild Horse Valley Area Study group. Don Kozlowski

2006 - Cherry Hills Golf Course is rezoned for single family dwellings.

2006 - Old Pond School is restored and associated park is opened to the public.

2006 - Crossings Community Improvement District is formed for a fifteen (15) acre area of the Wildwood Town Center Project and it eventually becomes the owner of the parking garage.

and Maryanne Simmons were subsequently selected to represent the Coalition in the newly formed northern Highway 109 Corridor Advisory Committee, with Ted Bradshaw and Joe Forshaw serving as alternates. Bill Kennedy eventually replaced Don Kozlowski, who began work commitments out of town.

The Coalition group remained together, and previously scheduled meetings of the Coalition and BRPA continued as planned in the first months after the MoDOT announcement. BRPA Steering Committee meetings were held periodically at the Daniel Boone Library in Ellisville, and the "executive committee" met regularly at a restaurant also in nearby Ellisville.

On March 15th, BRPA organized a St. Patrick's Day "Green for the Greenbelt" corn beef and cabbage event in Eureka and presented Congresswomen Kelly-Horn, State Representatives Talent and Linton, and Councilman Greg Quinn with plaques in appreciation for their help and support for the residents of far West County. Over 200 residents attended the event.

Beginning in early April, 1992 and at the suggestions of Bill Steinbrueck and Judy Sahm, coordinators of the BRPA newsletter, the first edition of the monthly "Greenbelt News" covering information for all five member groups of the Coalition was circulated or mailed to hundreds of homes. Included was information from Maryanne Simmons on the Highway 109 Advisory Committee activities, updates on development issues from Dr. Jack Dann, Maryanne Simmons, and Judy Sahm, a "pep talk" on saving the greenbelt by Bill Steinbrueck, and for the first time, an update on the fledgling incorporation effort written by Dr. Dann.

The Babler Rockwoods Preservation Association was dealt a sudden blow on April 9th, 1992, when Ted Bradshaw passed away unexpectedly. He had worked tirelessly for months to stop the "Outerbelt". His efforts are impossible to overstate, and he operated in constant fear that helping lead opposition to a road favored by developers and many realtors would jeopardize his own career as a realtor. Ted's professionalism and dedication in those earlier days was respected enough that MoDOT District Chief Engineer, J. T. Yarnell, called for a moment of silence at a MoDOT hearing on the Hwy 109 project and sent condolences to the Coalition.

Bill Kennedy and Debbie Hauser eventually became the Co-Chairs of the BRPA group, until Debbie Hauser moved from the area. Judy Sahm continued as Secretary and Treasurer.



## PEOPLE WERE BROUGHT TOGETHER AND ENERGIZED

The proposed Outerbelt project brought people together in a way that likely would not have happened otherwise. The four Coalition groups based in St. Louis County were comprised of and represented a few thousand concerned residents based in the area stretching from the borders of Ellisville and Chesterfield all the way to Eureka and Franklin County. There are various views on exactly when a significant group began discussing the possibility of incorporating the far west St. Louis County area as a new city. There is little doubt that Maryanne Simmons, Sue Cullinane, Eric Tremayne and several others, who lived in areas bordering Chesterfield and Clarkson Valley and who frequently confronted

2006 - Voters approve St. Paul Road Annexation and a one square mile area of land is added to Wildwood.

2006 - Bethel United Methodist Church celebrates its 150th Anniversary.

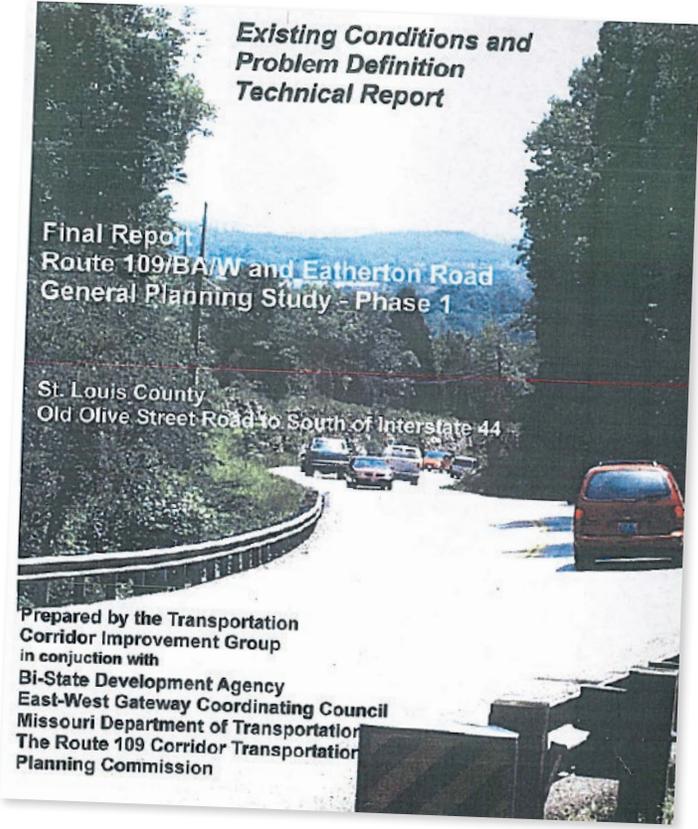
2007 - Hamilton-Carr Greenway Corridor and trail completed and links the Meramec River to Rockwoods Reservation and includes a tunnel under Old State Road, at State Route 109.

the County about new developments and degradation of the forests and green space, began to realize the need for some level of self-determination via incorporation or annexation well before the Outerbelt threat surfaced. However, it is noteworthy that the agenda for a March 14th, 1992 "Save the Greenbelt Coalition" meeting held at the Larimore's "Spring House" on Wild Horse Creek Road included three items of interest. One item was a review of a follow-up letter to the County's Director of Planning on the status of proposed area developments, drafted by Maryanne Simmons and intended to keep up the pressure from the united front. Another item was an update of the Highway 109 Advisory Committee status presented by Don Kozlowski. And at the end of the meeting and for the first time there was a scheduled discussion by all attendees dealing with the simply stated bullet point "Incorporation", a topic being developed behind the scenes by Dr. Dann, Dr. Gagnani, Don Kozlowski and several others.

BRPA's activities dealing with Highway 109 moved on via its participation on the Advisory Committee. Highlights of those activities would take up another long chapter in this story. The challenges to preserving the corridor continued within the Highway 109 Advisory Committee for several months, and the activities of the Jefferson County advisory committee were halted by MoDOT altogether after just a few meetings. In the June 1992 Coalition newsletter, Debbie Hauser mentioned that MoDOT had just conducted a meeting in Maryland Heights that was poorly announced. Press releases had been mailed from the main Jefferson City office not the local office. Always on top of events, the Coalition sent members at the last minute, including Debbie Hauser and Bill Kennedy. The room fell silent when they walked in and took a seat. Mayor Leonard and then others from Chesterfield spoke in favor of the "outerbelt type" project. Not surprisingly, Patrick Sullivan of the Home Builders Association rose to say "Major improvements to the Highway 109 Corridor must occur. Although opposition has been voiced, the State must move forward quickly for some type of "outerbelt" in the 109 corridor." He challenged the MoDOT representatives to show leadership in the face of opposition. Following the meeting, Bill Kennedy complained to Colleen Hogan, MoDOT's Community Relations person, about the lack of notice of the meeting. For anyone who might have perceived that all relations between the Coalition and MoDOT were confrontational, Colleen Hogan wrote in her cordial handwritten reply that she was moving to Iowa, and then her P.S. stated "Keep up the good work preserving that corridor so I

can move back there some day!" That was consistent with what other MoDOT personnel were saying behind the scenes.

Needless to say, the proposed Outerbelt has not yet pierced the Greenbelt and that threat only strengthened the resolve of the residents in what is now the City of Wildwood. Importantly, the threat and potential catastrophic impact presented by that "loaded shotgun" project did lead to the creation of friendships and allies, strong communication links, the surfacing of common thoughts, objectives, and values, and the creation of an organizational structure and a grassroots force that could not be defeated when the idea of incorporating the area as a new city began to take hold. The Save the Greenbelt effort ultimately involved many hundreds of people, not named herein, who were critical to the effort in providing leadership, coordinating activities, mailing letters and cards, creating and distributing the Greenbelt News, donating funds, etc. Although they are not specifically recognized here, they and others know who they are and a wealth of documents confirm their contributions.



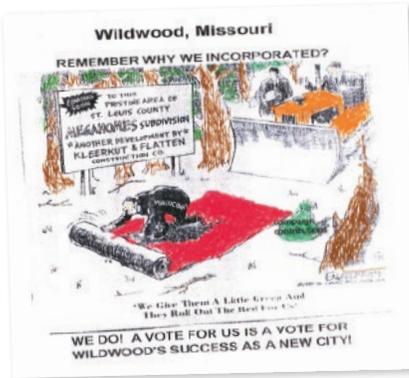
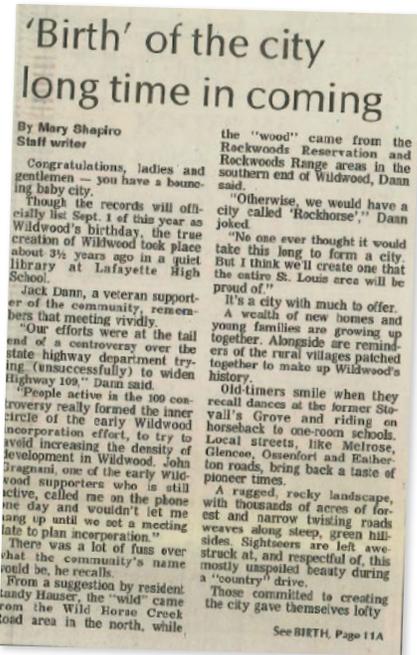
2007 - Action Plan for Parks and Recreation is adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission and ratified and endorsed by the City Council.

2007 - Rural Internet Access Committee is formed to address internet access for the rural areas of Wildwood.

2007 - Wildwood Hotel opens for business in Town Center, offering a boutique experience in Wildwood.

# THE BIRTH OF A CITY

*Editor's Note: The following information has been compiled from articles in newspapers, including the St. Louis Post Dispatch, Riverfront Times, Press Journal, Tri-County Journal, West Countian, and others; letters to editors of newspapers; meeting agendas and minutes; Babler Rockwoods Preservation Association and Coalition for the Greenbelt newsletters and fliers; original and copies of documents and other items from private collections of committee and coalition members; and verbal and written recollections of various involved persons. The information presents the highlights and is not necessarily the full story.*



The effort to incorporate the far West St. Louis County area as the City of Wildwood, MO is directly linked to the fight to stop the proposed north-to-south "Outerbelt" expressway, which would have

## THE 80S - A TIME OF SPRAWL

The increasing willingness of St. Louis County to foster suburban sprawl and complete development of the area occurred with little or no concern for tree preservation, storm water control, parkland and green space preservation, or other basic development controls which further raised concern among existing residents.

bored through the region and changed it forever. However, that is not the entire story. The story starts years before the incorporation effort began. It is a story that reflects the power of a threatened, ignored, emboldened, and determined group of people - a story that must not be forgotten. The campaign for incorporation was a month by month battle that spread over several years. The story is one of grassroots efforts of citizens who embodied passion and concern for the rich assets of the area. The people involved in the efforts were visionaries, who boldly fought against repressive odds and well-funded opponents on many sides to protect the assets and environment.

This trend was highlighted at a February 1987 public hearing held at the St. Louis County Administration building in Clayton. A petition was considered for rezoning 500 acres off Wild Horse Creek Road to allow a huge subdivision of more than 700 homes. One hundred and fifty anxious neighbors met at the home of Maryanne Simmons to sign petitions and develop strategies. Their goal was to bring sanity to development in an area which, until that point, consisted of lots of only 3, 7 and 10 acres. Minor concessions were subsequently made by the County, but many of those were later amended or reversed.

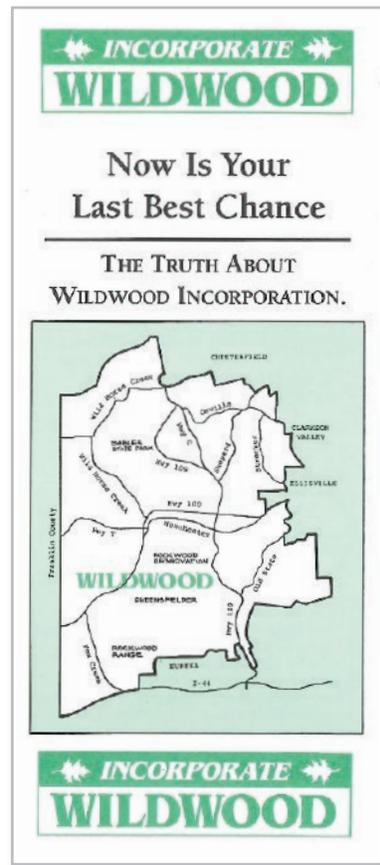
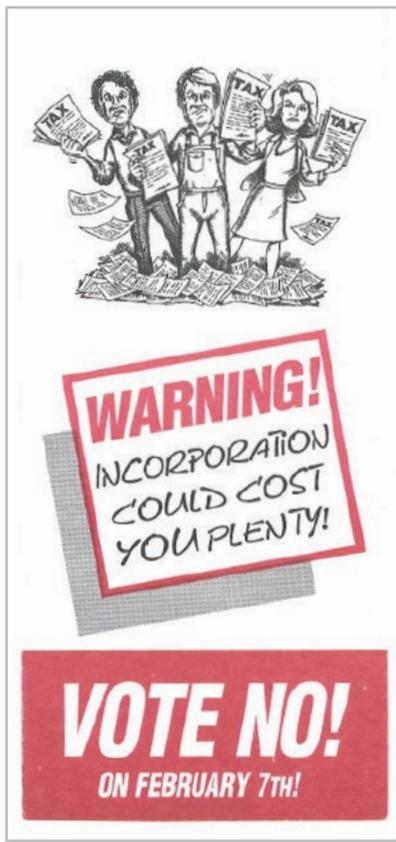
As St. Louis County government and the development community teamed to drive expansion to the western edge of the county in the 1970s and into the 1980s, citizens became very concerned about that which could soon be lost through irresponsible development projects approved by the St. Louis County Council.

Maryanne Simmons and a small group of citizens met and first discussed incorporation in 1988 after being frustrated by another St. Louis County development approval. After the incorporation of Chesterfield in 1988, however, St. Louis County successfully obtained a change in state law in 1989 which created a "Bound-

2008 - Timothy Woerther is elected to his first of two-terms as Mayor of Wildwood.

2008 - Glencoe City Park opens in Glencoe Community and includes a connection to the Hamilton-Carr Greenway.

2008 - Westland Acres, a historic African-American Community, is designated as the City's first historic district.



ary Commission” applicable only in this county and virtually assuring new incorporations would be prevented. The County’s control over developers’ petitions in the unincorporated portion of the westernmost county seemed assured.

It was in that timeframe that Clarkson Valley attempted to annex part of what is now northeastern Wildwood. Clarkson Valley residents voted down the proposal.

During 1989, a first attempt by residents to incorporate a portion of the unincorporated area near Wild Horse Creek Road faltered when the main collector of data moved out of town. All the while, proposals for more development continued to be submitted to the County.

The St. Louis County Department of Planning, sensing growing pressure and the need for forward thinking, initiated a series of detailed “area studies” involving various stakeholders. Two of those “area studies” were the “Wild Horse Valley Community Area

Study” and the “Pond-Grover Community Area Study”. Several members of the group that ultimately helped lead the Wildwood incorporation efforts, including Maryanne Simmons, Dr. Jack Dann, Sue Cullinane, Barbara Larimore and others, were active participants in those studies or provided comment to the committees. While the work of these advisory committees was detailed and surfaced many issues and possible approaches, it also focused attention on what could happen to the area if development was not done responsibly. Some of the citizen members finished their work with a sense of apprehension whether or not the studies’ results would be followed.

## A HIGHWAY THROUGH PARKS

In late-1990, residents in the area from Jefferson County to Chesterfield Valley learned that the Missouri Department of Transportation planned to “improve” or replace Highway 109 with a 10-12-lane interstate style expressway, running through Babler

2008 - City Charter updated and amendments approved.

2009 - B&B Theatres open a ten-plex cinema in Town Center, on Main Street.

2009 - Sixty-six acre tract of land is purchased by the City for its community park, near the intersection of State Route 100 and State Route 109.

State Park, Rockwoods Reservation, and several residential neighborhoods. The realization that outside entities were planning a future, with no input from the people who lived in the impacted areas, prompted a small group to gather and discuss options and initial strategies to prevent the highway development.

New annexation efforts were begun early in 1991 by the Cities of Chesterfield and Ellisville, each seeking parts of what is now Wildwood. Chesterfield expressed a desire to obtain all of the properties along Wild Horse Creek Road, including Babler State Park. Separately, Ellisville targeted the areas along Highway 100 out to Highway 109 to extend commercial development and even explored the possibility of establishing a City Hall on the grounds of the Cherry Hills Golf Club. The City of Eureka had long expressed, through its Master Plan process, an interest in eventually annexing territory north of its boundaries, from south of the villages of Grover and Pond westward to the Franklin County line.

If all of those boundary expansions had come to fruition, the land area of each city would have greatly increased and the development patterns in those cities likely would have continued along Highway 100, Highway 109, and Wild Horse Creek Road.

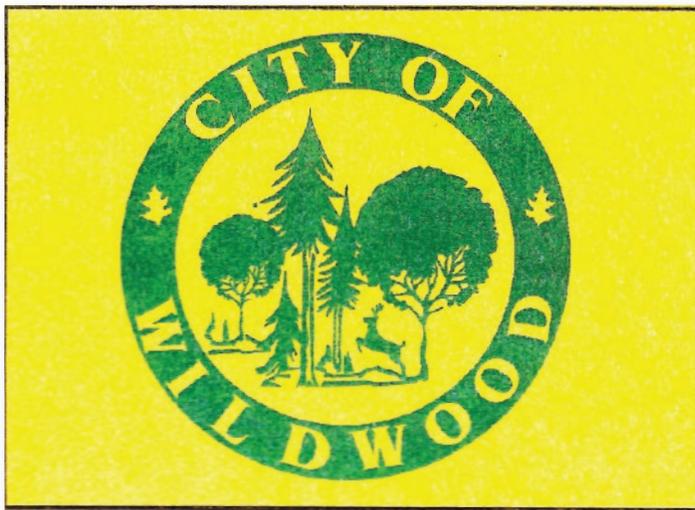
## RESIDENTS BEGIN TO MOBILIZE

In December of 1991, the first action-oriented meetings of the group opposed to the Missouri Highway Department's Highway 109 - "Outerbelt" project began. As the vocal opposition and organization appeared to be succeeding in late 1991 and early 1992, the push for incorporation grew - mainly from the sense that "self-determination" was critical to preserving the community and the area.

An area resident and executive of McDonnell-Douglas, Don Kozlowski, agreed in January of 1992, to chair the committee, which focused on pursuing incorporation, and was assisted by Dr. Jack Dann, Dr. John Gagnani, Roland Buchmueller, and others. Proponents began compiling data on a prospective city's finances, population, range of needed services, and details of the desired style of government. Boundaries had not yet been decided during this conceptual stage.

Activities began in earnest during the spring of 1992 to develop a "Plan of Intent" to be presented for review and recommendation by the St. Louis County Boundary Commission, an entity of St. Louis County, which was the central government from which residents

desired to create more "space". Under the Boundary Commission's rules, the population of a proposed incorporation area was required to be at least 10,000, and there could be no unincorporated "pockets," i.e., no areas left between an already incorporated area and a new city's boundaries. These rules were interpreted as impediments to discourage incorporation efforts. Based on those rules and the expressed opinion of citizens from throughout the proposed area to be incorporated, the boundaries of the new 67 square mile city were delineated so that they abutted the boundaries of Chesterfield, Clarkson Valley, Ellisville, parts of Eureka, and the Franklin County line.



## A NAME IS CHOSEN

In May, the name "Wildwood" was suggested by residents Debbie and Randy Hauser and was then selected by the committee pursuing incorporation from a group of other suggested names, including "Rockwood", "Parkland", and "Green Hills". The selected name reflected the northern and northwestern boundaries generally along Wild Horse Creek Road, while the southern boundaries were significantly reflected by Rockwoods Reservation and Rockwoods Range - hence, the name "Wildwood". The intent was to demonstrate that, while the area was large, residents in all areas were to be brought together under one identifier and a common vision and purpose.

In July, the first "Incorporate Wildwood" community rally was held at Lafayette High School. About 600 people braved an intense

2009 - City receives award from Missouri Recycling Association for Outstanding Government Recycling Program.

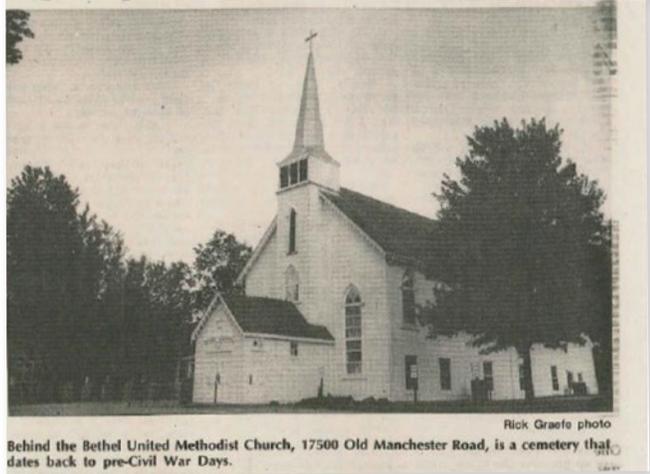
2009 - City Hall moves from Manchester Road (Historic Funk's Grove) to leased space at 183 Plaza Drive.

2009 - City Charter updated and amendments approved.

2009 - Barbecue Bash moves to Wildwood.

Page 8A—August 30, 1995—Chesterfield Journal  
**CITY OF WILDWOOD COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE**  
• Dedication Day September 1, 1995 •

# Community names, buildings speak of rich history



rainstorm to learn more about the proposal and to voice support and concern.

Early in August, Don Kozlowski was interviewed on the powerful local radio station KMOX to answer questions about the proposed City of Wildwood. The station was subsequently flooded with calls of support from all over St. Louis County.

In the fall of 1992, the group formed itself as the "Committee for Incorporation" and was led by Sue Cullinane, Dr. Jack Dann, Dr. John Gragnani, Barb Foy, Bill and Evie Steinbrueck, Bill Kennedy, Stephanie Lickerman, Barb and Joe Larimore, Chris Northcutt, Marianne Simmons, Judy Sahm, and Lisa Wax, and many others from the original Save the Greenbelt group. Primarily with the leadership of Don Kozlowski, drafting of a "Plan of Intent" for incorporation was continued in earnest. Attorneys Dan Vogel and Eric Tremayne commenced the legal representation of the effort.

During that period, up to eight dozen residents served in some capacity within the "Committee for Incorporation". Petition language was drafted and surveys were prepared. At that time, the law required that signatures of 15% of the registered voters from the last (1990) gubernatorial election (approximately 1,125) be obtained on the petitions and that those signatures be certified

by St. Louis County. In a few short weeks, 2,500 signatures were obtained through small meetings, door-to-door soliciting, and other approaches. Research for and drafting of the Plan of Intent was

nearing completion. Several thousand dollars were raised through residents' donations, some only amounting to a few dollars.

On December 4, 1992, the Plan of Intent and signed petitions were formally filed with St. Louis County. The detailed and thorough Plan of Intent contained specifics of the proposed boundaries, population, finances, and services. The Plan reflected the core vision and objectives of the incorporators and the input received from area residents. The vision was simply and clearly articulated and has been upheld strongly since it was written in 1992. The four tenets are summarized as follows:

1.) **Preservation and Conservation** - of the quality of life in the area, the environment in which area residents live, and the safety of all residents and wildlife. The Greenbelt area encompassing Wildwood is a regional asset, which provides unique topography and forested regions for a non-urban style of living, a feature residents desire to conserve;

2.) **Accountability to the people** – given that the area is represented by just one member of the County Council which meets over twenty miles away. Most members of the many commissions serving the County were from other areas where the major interest is in rapid growth and concentrated development. The objective is to transfer such responsibility to the people actually living in the area where each has a voice that will be heard by local, responsible representatives;

3.) **Improvement and development** – Both residential and commercial development are to be supported in a responsible manner consistent with long-range planning and prudent land utilization. Commercial development will be encouraged in a planned manner, but spot zoning for the benefit of the developer and to the detriment of the long term quality of the community will be resisted;

4.) **Save the Greenbelt** – The familiar theme reflects not only the varied and beautiful residential areas but also the real regional assets - Babler State Park, Rockwoods Reservation and Rock-

2010 - U.S. census is completed and Wildwood adds another 3,969 residents, despite worst recession in country's history.

2010 - Town Center Plan Update is completed and adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

2010 - Rock Hollow Trail opens and links to the Al Foster Memorial Trail.

2009 - Wildwood Farmers Market opens for business, every Saturday from May to October.

# Officially a city

woods Range, and Greensfelder County Park. To protect every acre of parkland, residents must be able to control development along the park boundaries;

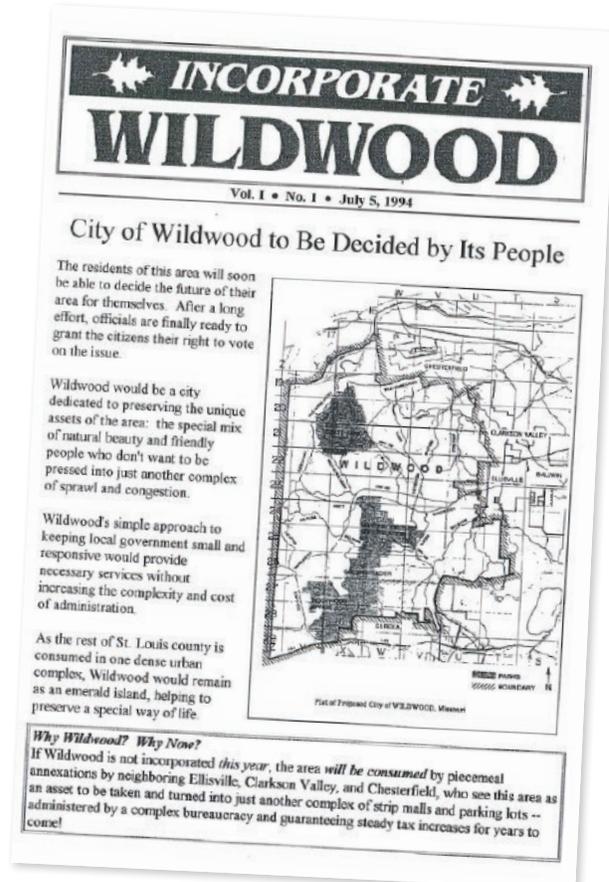
5.) **Model for the future** – Understanding that cities are born and bureaucracies expand, area residents do not desire continuing governmental spread. To the contrary, the aim was (and still is) to explore a new model for local government which deters and avoids government expansion while still serving its constituents. The intent was the formation of a lean and efficient government that provides the basic services desired, while outsourcing many typical municipal activities to better control overhead costs.

## OUTSIDE INFLUENCES EMERGE

In early 1993 as pressure to control development continued, the St. Louis County Council formed a "Tree Preservation Ordinance Committee" comprised of citizens, an arborist, members of the home builders' community, County staff, and Councilman John Shear, as Chair, and others. The stated intent was creation of an appropriate and usable ordinance that would be employed county-wide to guide tree preservation, re-planting, and forestation planning. Councilman Greg Quinn nominated Stephanie Lickerman and Bill Kennedy to represent western St. Louis County, where the questions were already being raised and preservation was championed. Significantly, the Wildwood incorporation effort was well underway. Suggested wording and approaches were offered from various sources. The offerings from the two Wildwood area members even included (unidentified by them) guidelines from the National Homebuilders Association (NHBA). However, the local HBA resisted virtually every proposal to limit clear cutting of land for development and replanting of specific numbers of trees per acre after construction, not realizing some of the suggested guidelines were actually those of the NHBA. Their plea included calculations of how many jobs would be lost for every tree to be preserved or replanted and how much more the average new house would cost the buyer over the life of the mortgage. Additionally, representatives of the County Executive's legal department refused to accept any guidelines that were "impossible to enforce" and

**"We are going to have the same rules as St. Louis County, only we are going to enforce them."**  
Dan Vogel  
Attorney For Wildwood

**"We have the chance to design a community and leave our imprint on the future. Our residents are our greatest asset."**  
David Glaser  
Wildwood mayor



any recommendations for planting "street trees", pleading that Missouri is a tort state and fearing a rush of liability lawsuits. After a year of meetings, that committee's work went nowhere. Obviously, the Committee for Incorporation perceived the lack of compromise by the County administration, developers, and homebuilders negatively and added these failures to the growing pile of reasons to incorporate.

2011 - City launches 'Frozen Feet Trail Run' in January and it is immediately one (1) of the most popular events in region among runners.

2011 - Wildwood Farms community garden opens to fifty (50) gardeners grows to over one hundred (100) participants by 2015.

2011 - Old Pond School placed on the National Register of Historic Places – U.S. Department of Interior – National Park Service.

The St. Louis County Board of Elections certified 2,195 signatures from the incorporation petitions on January 15th, 1993. The number certified far exceeded the 15% requirement.

On February 24th, a public hearing was held by the Boundary Commission on the Wildwood incorporation petition. Overall, fifteen Boundary Commission meetings were held to discuss the Wildwood petition between January 20th, 1993 and January 26th, 1994.

The St. Louis County Highway Department prepared a detailed twenty-seven page report on the Wildwood petition and presented it on March 2nd. Other reports from St. Louis County followed. As expected, those reports were generally not favorable to the incorporation proposal.

### LEGAL CHALLENGES BEGIN

On March 23rd, the St. Louis County Boundary Commission’s enabling charter was declared unconstitutional by the Missouri Supreme Court. Six days later, the Committee for Incorporation filed a petition with the St. Louis County Council asking that the question be placed on the ballot for a vote of the people in the delineated area. Receipt of the submittal was acknowledged, but no action was taken.

The City of Ellisville filed a lawsuit on April 14th seeking annexation of areas within the Wildwood petition area under the prior statutory provisions. In response on April 28th, the Committee for Incorporation and others intervened to oppose Ellisville’s claim. The Wildwood respondents challenged Ellisville’s claim for annexation because it originated after the Wildwood petition and the Committee asserted their own right to be placed on the ballot pursuant to state statute. The Wildwood respondents also specifically challenged Ellisville’s attempt to annex the Tartan Green Subdivision, an annexation approved by the Boundary Commission in May 1993 during the litigation. The Committee’s claim required striking down the Boundary Commission Act.

In June, Circuit Court Judge Kenneth Romines declared parts of the newer 1992 statute creating the Boundary Commission, as it existed at that point, unconstitutional, but not the entire statute. The Court declared that the Boundary Commission Act’s requirement that all new cities in the County be of at

least 10,000 population violated Equal Protection under the Constitution, but it also upheld the rest of the Act, thereby denying the Committee and citizens the right to an election. The attorneys for the Committee for Incorporation promptly filed an appeal with the Missouri Supreme Court.

That summer, the County Council revised its legislation regarding the Boundary Commission, addressing the points of law cited in the Missouri Supreme Court decision to invalidate the Boundary Commission. Believing the changes legalized the Boundary Commission, the County Council reauthorized it.

During the fall of 1993, numerous hearings were held by the Boundary Commission to review and “investigate” the Wildwood Plan of Intent. Many of the meetings started at 7:00 a.m., which was interpreted as an attempt to dissuade attendance by west county residents. The Commission declared early on that the proposed city could not survive financially, yet their own numbers demonstrated that the proposed city would have from \$300,000 to \$800,000 surplus yearly. Members of the Boundary Commission declared that “there is no community of interest” reflected in the proposal, ignoring the broad-based support in the area, and that the Committee’s plan to have a Master Land Use Plan controlled by the residents who actually lived in the area would be more “unwieldy” than a small group of Planning and Zoning Commission members positioned in Clayton, 20 miles away. In addition, the Wildwood petitioners were criticized for not budgeting for minor expenditures such as “mosquito control”.

### FAILURE BUT RESOLUTE

During its December 1993 meeting, the Boundary Commission officially voted 6 to 2 to deny placement of the Wildwood petition on the ballot for consideration by citizens, citing perceived concerns with the proposed city’s finances and minor issues with the boundary description in the Plan of Intent. Incensed by that decision and the reasons given, organizers regrouped, elected a new Executive Committee, and initiated a more intense, focused effort.

During that period of time, the County Council approved developments that would clear land in the area and create ten new subdivisions with over 1200 homes, as well as other projects. Those actions were interpreted by the Committee and its supporters as a clear attempt to dispirit the incorporation effort and to reassure

2011 - St. Paul’s Lutheran Church celebrates its 150th Anniversary.

2011 - Annual Founders’ Day Celebration restarted again, after short hiatus, to celebrate all things Wildwood and the people who work to make it so.

2011 - Wildwood is designated a “Tree City USA.”

and embolden the development community.

At times during late 1993 and early 1994, the incorporation effort subsided somewhat with the belief that the legal challenge had failed and the County would prevent the issue from ever reaching the ballot. Nevertheless, the core group and its attorneys persisted and a few new volunteers joined the effort, including Ron Marcantano, an experienced finance professional, and Jeff Kochelek, a businessman who subsequently was chosen as the “president” of the Committee for Incorporation. Yet, many of the citizen supporters remained somewhat discouraged, and discussions were even held about an alternate incorporation effort for a new city to be called “Deerfield”, with substantially smaller boundaries.

With spring came new life and new determination. On April 5th, ironically an election day, attorneys Dan Vogel and Eric Tremayne argued before the Missouri Supreme Court on behalf of the Committee for Incorporation and citizens seeking the right to an incorporation election.

On May 26th, the Missouri Supreme Court, ruled in favor of the Committee for Incorporation and struck down the St. Louis County Boundary Commission Statute. The Court unanimously agreed with the Committee’s argument that the Boundary Commission Act violated the Missouri Constitution since it created “special” county legislation. The issue was remanded to Circuit Court Judge Romines for establishing details to place the question on the ballot. Soon after, new volunteers joined the effort. Opposition to incorporation also became more intense during this period. While the ranks of the opponents included the predictable players - developers, home builders, and large land owners – many of those in opposition were simply older citizens and members of families who had lived in the area for decades. Their concerns and fears about increased government, taxes, restrictions, and unwanted changes to their way of life were understandable, and the Committee for Incorporation worked diligently to digest and address the issues and allay the fears.

As part of that effort, Ron Marcantano prepared updated financial data which would contribute to and justify a budget for the proposed City. In June 1994, the Committee for Incorporation arranged a rally at Lafayette High School. Nearly \$12,000 in new donations was raised to support the effort, and activities

moved into high gear. The new battle cry became “This is our last, best chance”. And the litigation continued!

On July 1st, the Committee for Incorporation, still undeterred, again requested in writing that the County Council act on the Wildwood petition. But on July 28th, the County Council rejected a bill placing the Wildwood question on the ballot by a 3-3 vote.

On August 1st, the Committee for Incorporation proceeded with legal action to require an election under state statutes applicable statewide. Clarkson Valley and Chesterfield intervened to assert their own claims to annex areas within the Wildwood petition boundaries, joining Ellisville and St. Louis County in opposing the Wildwood incorporation.

Also that August, Councilman Greg Quinn introduced a bill at County Council to place Wildwood’s incorporation on the ballot for a vote of the people in the area. The following week, the County Council referred the issue to a committee with the first hearing scheduled for September 22nd – too late to get the issue on the November ballot. A few days later, with one member absent, the committee vote on the issue was a tie, effectively killing it in Council, but ultimately paving the way for the Circuit Court to order an election. The Council then voted to hold a public hearing on September 1st on the Wildwood issue. When the hearing was held, the Council Chair discouraged comments from supporters and repeatedly asked for comments from citizens opposed to incorporation. Wildwood supporters in attendance were irate and vowed not to give up the effort.

On October 29th, at trial, Circuit Court Judge Romines ruled that the Wildwood petition had satisfied all requirements of the state statute, that Ellisville and Chesterfield had filed their annexation efforts after the Wildwood group’s filing, that the governing body of St. Louis County had unreasonably delayed in acting and had improperly refused to place the petition on the ballot, and that the election was ordered to be held on February 7, 1995. To the surprise of the incorporation opponents, the ruling also “de-annexed” the Tartan Green subdivision from Ellisville, one of the initial litigants. Ever the opposing force, the County Council scheduled yet another hearing to surface arguments for and against the proposal at the urging of County Counselor John Ross. Councilmember Quinn again objected to the County’s apparent stalling tactics.

2012 - Hidden Valley Ski Resort expands runs and adds tubing hill.

2012 - Monarch-Chesterfield Levee Trail is completed, which links much of the valley area together.

2012 - Redistricting Committee modifies ward boundaries based upon census results.

2012 - Manchester Road Great Streets Master Plan is adopted and ratified by the City of Wildwood.



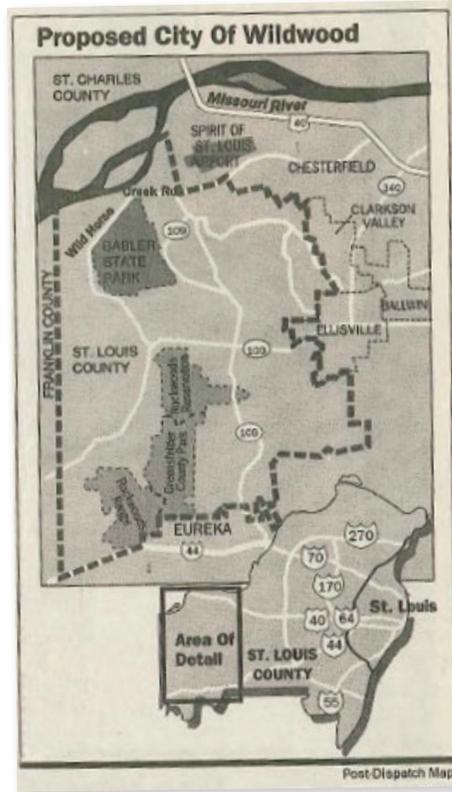
## ELECTION TO INCORPORATE

Intense campaigning began, both for and against the incorporation of the City of Wildwood. The home builders and development community financed a campaign that ultimately topped \$50,000 in funding to oppose the ballot question. Active incorporation supporters, with funds reaching only about \$20,000, now numbered nearly one hundred and fifty plus a phone chain of nearly one thousand. Larry Rogers and core Committee members prepared campaign literature, while others met with interested groups during weekly neighborhood get-togethers and meetings and even debated the issue on radio talk shows. The opposition group was small in number, primarily drawn from the construction and development industries, large landowners, and a small group from the western edge of the proposed city. The opponent's battle cry was "Wildwood Won't Work", while the incorporators countered with "Follow the Money", a phrase which pointed out that the opposition was primarily motivated by financial self-interest.

A core element of the campaign against incorporation was centered on the opinion of a local economics professor that the proposed city's revenues were not sufficient to support its operations. Although the Committee's financial projections had been carefully prepared by an experienced and respected financial analyst, County Councilman Greg Quinn requested and received an analysis by an independent accounting firm. The report from that firm indicated that not only were the Committee's projections valid but also that some revenue streams had actually been understated. The result was a projected surplus in the first one to two years of operation versus the opponents' projection of financial inadequacy.

As the February election approached, the Committee for Incorporation continued to hold dozens of informational meetings in subdivisions and elsewhere, while producing and mailing thousands of brochures and information sheets. More than 600 citizens walked door to door canvassing neighborhoods, drove the remote areas, and manned phone banks to spread the word and counter misinformation. A battle of yard signs and bumper stickers was waged throughout the area. Many Letters to Editors were written

by each side. Leaders of the incorporation effort, notably Barb Foy, Jeff Kochelek, Ron Marcantano, and Sue Cullinane, appeared frequently on television coverage, as did others on the opposing side. On January 31st, while St. Louis County continued to fight the incorporation in the courts, the Committee held a Town Hall meeting. More than 500 citizens, including those who supported the incorporation and some who opposed it, offered concerns and suggestions to help put their vision



2012 - Wildwood is awarded the 2012 "Parks and Trails Development" MUNI Award, in recognition of Wildwood's commitment to development of its trail system.

2013 - City adds a major segment to the Al Foster Memorial Trail with the construction of it west and south of the Glencoe Community.

2013 - City launches its new website.

2013 - New, and permanent, City Hall is completed and occupied on Main Street in Town Center.



Wildwood Mayor David Glaser is sworn in during inaugural ceremonies Friday by St. Louis County Circuit Court Judge Martin Schiff Jr., as KSDK-TV (Channel 5) chief meteorologist Fuller helps out and, at right, the Rev. Bruce Stanek, pastor of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church looks on.

of the proposed Wildwood into focus. County Councilman Quinn attended and spoke in favor of the effort. In early February, Councilman Quinn, who was well respected in the area, issued a public statement to his constituents and conveyed his strong support for the incorporation. In the days leading up to the vote, many hundreds of phone calls were made by supporters and by opponents.

## ELECTION DAY ARRIVES

Finally on February 7, 1995, in a record turnout for a February election and on a brutally cold day, 61% of the 7800 citizens who voted said "YES" to incorporation of their own city. The proposal passed easily in all precincts, except the one in the western edge of the area where it narrowly lost. On the same date, and despite the court ruling, the City of Chesterfield placed a competing annexation petition on the ballot, but their proposition failed. The issue had seemingly been decided by the people.

Rather than end the fight, the municipal and county appeals contesting the trial court's decision were still pending in the Missouri Supreme Court, and new lawsuits were filed to block the incorporation. At the recommendation of County Executive George "Buzz" Westfall and carried out by his assistant, Larry Mooney, the County Council sought to delay approving the incorporation until after the

Missouri Supreme Court ruled on the appeals. While Councilmembers Greg Quinn and Mark Brodsky strongly favored allowing the incorporation in light of the vote of the people, Councilmembers Dooley and Kersting were solidly opposed. The most vocal opposing member was the Council Chair, Jerry Corcoran, who publically warned the incorporators that they should avoid spending public monies until they were authorized to do so by his Council. With the momentum from the election still fresh, the Committee was undaunted and filed a legal action which sought a declaration that the vote was binding and which validated incorporation of the city. The legal action included a request to block all rezoning during the interim period, including a plan to rezone the Cherry Hills Golf Course for nearly 500 homes. Remarkably, Judge Campbell issued the injunction in March 1995, thereby blocking all rezoning until the Supreme Court decided the appellate case. As a result, the Cherry Hills proposal was abandoned by the developers.

In April 1995, St. Louis County successfully won statewide voter approval of an amendment to the Missouri Constitution which allowed special legislation for individual counties - an amendment necessitated by the Wildwood decision which relied on the former constitutional prohibition of special county legislation in striking down the Boundary Commission Act. Additionally, the Missouri Senate, fed up with the issue and the delays, adopted a position requiring litigation over the incorporation be resolved before the new Boundary Commission could begin operations. Therefore, the prodded County administration dismissed its appeal of the incorporation decision, and on June 29th, the County Council dropped its challenge and approved legislation establishing the City of Wildwood as of September 1st, 1995.

New lawsuits opposing the incorporation had been filed after the February election. The Home Builders Association of St. Louis appealed the zoning injunction granted in March, and former state senator Tom McCarthy filed a lawsuit contesting the election. By late summer 1995, the Committee's attorneys prevailed in the remaining litigation, and the incorporation of Wildwood proceeded as scheduled.

## THE WRANGLING CONTINUES

The administration of County Executive Westfall initially refused to accept the slate of city officials proposed by the leaders of the incorporation effort. A compromise slate was then negotiated by Jeff Kochelek, with input from other incorporators, and Dan

2013 - City completes its 26th, and most recent, bridge replacement project on Wild Horse Creek Road, over Bates Creek.

2013 - Bays ET and Wisper ISP rollout high-speed internet service to the rural areas of Wildwood.

2013 - Pond Athletic Association celebrates its 50th Anniversary.

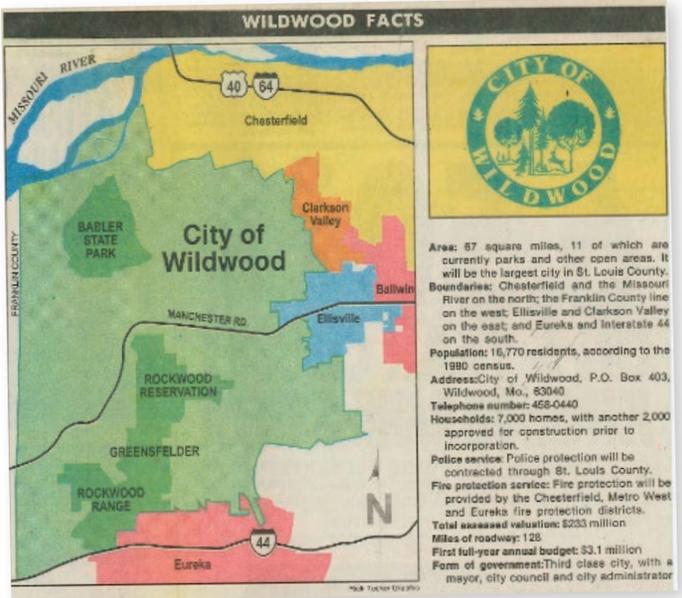
Stegmann, representing residents who had opposed incorporation, and in communication with County officials. However, at the County Council meeting the next day, its Chair, Jerry Corcoran, stubbornly refused to accept the compromise slate and demanded the right to designate four Wildwood City Council members of his own choosing. County Councilman Greg Quinn, a steadfast supporter and facilitator of the incorporation effort, was livid and publically criticized the County's leaders for their repressive approach to the will of the people. Following more give and take, Mr. Corcoran was ultimately allowed to choose only two members of his preference, but even those two were in reality more sympathetic to the Wildwood cause than he anticipated.

The initial City Council members included James Bellville, John Finley, Barbara Foy, Charlotte Fink, Gerald Frank, William Kennedy, Jeffrey Kochelek, Ronald Marcantano, Kirk Miller, John O'Shaughnessy, Karen Owens, Charles Parsley, John Schroeder, Daniel Stegmann, James Wand, and Lisa Wax. David Glaser, an official of the Francis Howell School District, was appointed as the first Mayor of Wildwood. Judy Sahm was the appointed Treasurer, while William Friedrichs became City Marshall and Samuel Panos was the appointed Municipal Judge. These first officials were charged with preparing for the official September 1st incorporation date and organizing the government, its basic laws and codes, law enforcement, and city services.

Those who had supported and were key drivers behind the incorporation and those who had actively opposed it, as well as many who were quietly awaiting the outcome, were now eager to offer suggestions and become involved in shaping their new City. The new officials began planning informational or "Town Hall" meetings to solicit input and accept offers to serve.

## FORMATION OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

During the summer of 1995, the first City Council members established subcommittees, which met almost daily in one format or another in private homes and offices and which focused on public works issues, human resources and staffing, finances and administration, and legal issues, among other key areas, all in preparation for getting the new city up and running as of September 1st. Council members and the Mayor, with ongoing input, counsel, and invaluable hands-on assis-



tance from the newly hired City Attorney, Dan Vogel, began the processes of recruiting and hiring initial staff, establishing banking and accounting processes, locating temporary meeting sites and a potential first City Hall, finalizing arrangements with the St. Louis County Police, contracting with a local construction company for road and bridge maintenance, and planning other critical functions and services. During the first months after the County Council appointed the new city officials, the



Wildwood Days Parade

2013 - Rockwoods Reservation celebrates its 75th Anniversary.

2014 - LaSalle Institute celebrates its 150th Anniversary at its Rue de LaSalle location.

2014 - City hosts its first Art Festival, as part of the Celebrate Wildwood Event.

2014 - City's Finance Department is awarded Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, a total of sixteen years, and Distinguished Budget Award for nine years in a row.

first staff members of the City were interviewed and hired. A request for applications and resumes was distributed via newspapers and professional publications in the region and beyond. A total of eighty-seven applications and communications were received for the advertised openings. In reviewing the applications, the Human Resources Committee of the new Council considered it critical that a successful applicant have demonstrated expertise for a significant period, directly related experience, and perhaps as importantly, stated knowledge and respect for the area, its assets, and its history. After the first round of review, in-person interviews were held with nearly two dozen potential employees. Within just a few weeks of the committee reviews, interviews, and subsequent recommendations, hiring of the first staff members of the new city was approved by vote of the Council as a whole. The first staff included Lynne Greene from Webster Groves as the City Clerk, Joann Hoehne from Pacific as the Deputy City Administrator and Assistant City Clerk, Jerry Ponder from Fulton, Missouri as the City Administrator, Joe Vujnich from St. Louis County as the Director of Planning and Parks, and John Collins as the Director of Public Works. As they teamed with the Council members and volunteer citizens, this group brought their expertise, skills, and knowledge of the area together to develop a functioning municipal government in a short timeframe where none had existed previously.

Finally, on a bright, sunny day in September at Dr. Edmund Babler State Park, with over 300 citizens and dignitaries in attendance, the new officials were sworn in and the birth of the City of Wildwood, Missouri became official.

Shortly after the inauguration ceremony, the City Council met for the first official session at the clubhouse of the Cherry Hills Golf Course. In a marathon meeting that lasted past midnight, the City Council passed Wildwood's first ordinances, codes, and resolutions, which had been drafted in advance by the Council members, the new City Attorney, and volunteers and which numbered almost two hundred. On that date and in the weeks following, the City's first Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustment, Board of Administrative Review, Board of Ethics, and Board of Public Safety were appointed from the large list of citizens who had volunteered to serve. Most leaders of the incorporation campaign, not already serving on the first City Council or as an official, became

members or active participants in the various Boards, Commissions, and activities. Those leaders included Sue Cullinane, Dr. Jack Dann, Maryanne Simmons, Eric Tremayne, Don and Pat Kozlowski, Dr. John Gragnani, Larry Thompson, Barb Larimore, Stephanie Lickerman, and many others. They were joined by several citizens who may or may not have supported incorporation but were determined to create a great city.

Within several weeks, Wildwood's first City Hall was leased in a remodeled historic building, the old Funk's General Store on Old Manchester Road. The 100-year old structure reminded citizens and officials of the strong, enduring character of those residents and families who preceded them and was a fitting site for the initial City Hall.



## PLANNING TOMORROW TODAY

To accomplish appropriate development of the new city, commensurate with the vision espoused and supported during the incorporation campaign, the City Council hired renowned planning consultants and the Staff began the process of securing public input. After a tremendous amount of work and visionary thought and deliberation, the draft Master Plan for the City of Wildwood was presented to the City Council for review and approval. It was also critical that the City solidify its form of governance to ensure current and future residents retained the rights of self-determination. Accordingly, a Charter Commission was formed, and citizens

2015 - Wildwood's Community Park opens with the completion of Phase I.

2015 - City is recognized for its project with the Missouri Department of Transportation for State Route 109.

2015 - Ryan S. Thomas, one (1) of City's first employees, is named the City's fifth City Administrator.

# Proclamation

*Whereas, on February 7, 1996, the voters of an area of West St. Louis County, Missouri, overwhelmingly chose to govern themselves by incorporating into a new city of the third class and established the metes and bounds of this area therein; and*

*Whereas, the people chose the name of Wildwood for their new city; and*

*Whereas, the people chose to have a locally elected Mayor and City Council; and*

*Whereas, the St. Louis County Council established and set the date and the time of the first day of the newest city in Missouri as September 1, 1996, at 12 o'clock noon;*

*Now therefore I, David Glaser, the first mayor of the City of Wildwood, Missouri, do hereby establish and proclaim by executive order that September First of each year will be recognized and known as*

## Founder's Day in the City of Wildwood, Missouri

*I set my hand and affix the great seal of the City of Wildwood, Missouri, this First day of September in the year of our Lord, nineteen hundred and ninety six.*



*David S. Glaser*  
Honorable David S. Glaser

began designing the specifics of how the City would move from a "Third Class" to "Fourth Class" municipality to function independently for years to come. This effort followed the vision of the Plan of Intent drafted primarily by Don Kozlowski years earlier.

Progress made in the first eleven months crystallized visions and plans for the new city and provided Wildwood with a sound and successful start. Reassuringly to many, the City did, in fact, generate a financial surplus in that first year of operation. So, on April 6th, 1996, proof that the vision had truly become reality was realized when the first citywide elections were held for Mayor and for two Councilmembers representing each of the eight wards.

Efforts of dozens of individuals, with the support of hundreds more, prevailed over opposing efforts that included three cities, St. Louis County, a half dozen legal challenges, developers and the home building industry that funded a campaign that dwarfed the finances of the proponents. Many tributes have been directed to the leaders of the incorporation effort, but without the efforts of hundreds of others, the support of Councilman Quinn, and the votes of over 4100 residents, it is likely the City of Wildwood would not exist as it does today. The formation of Wildwood bears tribute to the impact that individuals can still have in shaping their government. There is much more that could be said about the incorporation effort and the turmoil that swirled through the area for over five years, and perhaps all of that will be conveyed at some point in the future. Twenty years after the citizens voted their city was born, Wildwood is now a robust twenty year old with a very bright future!

2015 - Bluff View Park opens, under a partnership with St. Louis County

2015 - City receives "MUNI" Award from the St. Louis County Municipal League for collaboration on Manchester Road Great Streets Project.

2015 - Wabash, Frisco and Pacific Railroad in Glencoe Community celebrates its 75th Anniversary of its founding.

2015 - Wildwood is named one of Missouri's ten most-beautiful cities by TheCultureTrip.com.