

Groundbreaking planned for New Harmony Church Park

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NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT:
Kathy Funke, Director
News & Information Services
812/465-7005
FAX 812/464-1956

A groundbreaking ceremony will be held at 9 a.m. Tuesday, November 1, signaling the start of a \$150,000 construction project to develop New Harmony Church Park, more than half of the block bounded by Church, West, Tavern, and Main streets in downtown New Harmony.

The ceremony will be held at the corner of Church and Main. Refreshments will be available at the New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art, courtesy of the Red Geranium.

A special guest will be Judy O'Bannon, wife of the Indiana lieutenant governor and a member of the board Indiana Main Street Program. New Harmony recently joined 135 other Hoosier towns as an Indiana Main Street Community, a program promoting community progress based on preservation and downtown development.

The groundbreaking will initiate the first phase of park development - the installation of a regulation basketball court at the corner of West and Tavern to replace an old facility and to spruce up an area that is a popular gathering place.

The second phase next spring will be construction of a structure to display the Harmonist Church doorway, a relic from the 1822 Harmonist Church which originally occupied the park site. The proposed site on Church Street is believed to be the door's original location.

All but the east wing of the Harmonists' brick church was razed in 1874 and the bricks used to build a wall around the Harmonist cemetery to preserve it as sacred ground. At the church site, a public school was built with funds provided by the Harmonists, and the Harmonist door became its north entryway. The school burned in 1913 and was replaced by another school in which the door became the west entry. This school was torn down in 1988 and a subsequent archeological dig located the foundations of the original building and many artifacts from the site's history.

The church park will be completed in the summer of 1995, including landscaping which outlines the original church and encloses a sunken area where seats will be installed for rest and meditation. The adjacent site of the original wooden structure will be outlined by decorated wooden poles. The quarter-block recreation area along Tavern will be completed with installation of a tot playground.

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