

Wabash Valley Community Foundation distributes \$195,000 in Vigo County

Total tally in Clay, Sullivan, Vigo comes to nearly \$375K

BY HOWARD GRENINGER
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A new sculpture recognizing an African American settlement in Lost Creek will be located in Deming Park.

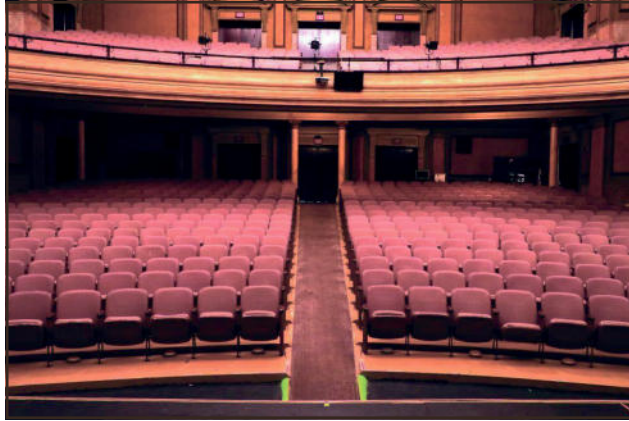
And a \$25,000 grant from the Wabash Valley Community Foundation will speed up its progress, said Ally Midgley, executive director of Art Spaces.

The new public artwork is to celebrate the Lost Creek Settlement, formed in the early 1800s by a group of free African Americans escaping the mounting dangers of being in the southeast United States, prior to the Civil War.

"They settled here and established a farming community with a church and school and cemetery. A lot of their descendants still live and contribute to the area," Midgley said, "so we will put up a sculpture to honor and bring awareness to the settlement."

"We wanted it somewhere that will draw people in and provide education," Midgley said.

The next step is to conduct a national search for an



SMWC photo

A \$20,000 grant from the Wabash Valley Community Foundation is helping to add Americans With Disabilities Act upgrades to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College's Conservatory Auditorium.

artist, following additional fundraising, Midgley said.

The Wabash Valley Community Foundation Thursday awarded more than \$195,000 to 13 Vigo County nonprofit organizations to support arts and culture, community development, health and human services and education.

In total, the foundation has awarded \$374,822 to organizations in Clay, Sullivan and Vigo counties.

Beth Tevlin, executive director of the Wabash Valley Community Foundation, said the foundation has awarded "about \$35 million to \$37 million" in grants since the foundation started in 1991.

In another Vigo County grant, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College received

\$20,000 toward Americans With Disabilities Act upgrades to the college's Conservatory Auditorium. It will help fund the college's more than \$500,000 Phase 1 renovation of the auditorium, said Catherine Saunders, associate vice president for advancement.

"This grant will help us to add to our (ADA) safety in the isles, with isle lighting embedded in the carpet," Saunders said. "We have added additional ADA space, taking out a few (seating) rows in house right (of the stage) for an ADA seating area that has plenty of room for companion seats, which we are having made to match the newly renovated chairs."

Two front box seat areas

were also leveled for ADA seating "and we had all of our seats restored, so almost 700 seats have been restored, and we added eight seats that have a swing arm, so that helps people who want to transition from a wheelchair or have other issues accessing the seats," Saunders said.

A \$25,000 grant to the Vigo County Historical Society will help renovate and repair the Paul Dresser home in Fairbanks Park.

"The home needs a new roof, new drywall and paint from prior damage. The exterior stairs, which is the only access to the second floor, is not even connected to the house, it is wobbly," said Marla Flowers, executive director of the Vigo County Historical Museum.

A fence also will be improved. The project will likely cost about \$35,000, Flower said, adding the Historical Society received a \$4,000 grant from the Indiana Historical Society to purchase new fencing.

The Historical Society has owned the house since 1963. It was the home to Paul Dresser, who wrote the state song of Indiana - "On the Banks of the Wabash."

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