

Heath Springs Industrial Park should have roads by summer

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By Johnathan C. Ryan - Staff Writer

HEATH SPRINGS - Heath Springs is a step closer to getting its own industrial park.

On Tuesday, Heath Springs Town Council members and interested residents listened to Keith Tunnell, president of the Lancaster County Economic Development Corp., explain the plans for the park. He presented drawings of the designated area and how it will be parceled for development and roadways.

"By summer we should have roads, landscaping and signage in the park, and the place will be top rate," Tunnell said. "We're at the easy part now."

Tunnell said the LCEDC is awaiting bids on the park's landscaping and signage, as well as a master engineering plan that provides roadway details. The county is expected to grade the land for free.

The project is being funded by a \$450,000 Rural Development Authority grant. The grant comes from money Comporium Communications and Lynches River Electric Cooperative paid to the Rural Development Authority Fund.

Tunnell said the site's 67 acres of land, located along U.S. 521 between Boyd Faile Road and Small's Food, cost \$335,000. The remaining grant money will be spent on engineering, road, landscaping and signage work, all of which may lead to a need for more money, Tunnell said.

When Tunnell became the LCEDC president in July 2004, he said the main priority was to buy land in an area that would be conducive to an industrial park. The current site seems to fit that mold, as it is adjacent to railroad tracks and a federal highway.

"It should be a good location because there is easy access to U.S. 521 and a spur will be built by the L&C (railway) off of the main railroad," Councilman Ted Sowell said.

A spur is a side track that leaves a main railroad. The planned spur will be constructed to allow rail cargo into the park.

Tunnell said he has been in touch with companies interested in locating at the park. The park's economic prospects are promising, Tunnell said.

"I'm really excited. This is my first foray into completing an industrial park," Tunnell said. "It should bring needed jobs to the area."

Tunnell commended the Town Council, Lancaster County Council and the LCEDC board for working cooperatively on the project. In particular, he commended Mayor Ann Taylor for helping make the final land purchases a smooth process with her contacts and influence.

In other action Tuesday, council voted unanimously:

- To accept a \$400 bid from Southern Landscaping Co. to maintain the town's planting beds this summer.
- To allow the Heath Springs School Reunion Committee to construct a monument at Town Hall in commemoration of the old Heath Springs schools.

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