

DeWitt-Bath Review™

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August 25, 2013

Showcase video entered into state competition

By Sue Lounds



DeWitt High School sophomore Libby Braun is interviewed by DeWitt City Manager Dan Coss, for the DeWitt Showcase video. Pictured are (from left) Braun, Coss, Peter Schlitt and Bob Bishop.

COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARD FINALISTS

- Region 1 - Shiawassee River Heritage Water Trail - Come Paddle With Us! (Linden, Fenton and Holly)
- Region 2 - Silver Beach Development (St. Joseph)
- Region 3 - Belding Community Garden (Belding)
- Region 4 - Community Showcase (DeWitt)
- Region 5 - Economic Gardening in Imlay City (Imlay City)
- Region 6 - Dancin' Downtown (Rogers City)
- Region 7 - Depot Park (Ironwood)

DEWITT — Lights! Camera! Action!

Those may not have been the actual words used during video taping sessions in DeWitt recently, but the video tape could yield some exciting results for the DeWitt area.

That video tape is part of DeWitt's entry in the Community Excellence Awards state competition to be held in Detroit in September as part of the Michigan Municipal League (MML) state conference.

Last April, the DeWitt Community Showcase – a collaborative effort of the City of DeWitt, DeWitt Township, DeWitt Public Schools and the DeWitt Area Chamber of Commerce – was entered in the Community Excellence Awards competition sponsored by the MML. And it won top honors in Region 4.

The regional win means the showcase is in the running for the state award. For that level of the competition, each regional winner gets seven minutes to present their project entry. DeWitt will use its 5-minute video as the main piece of their presentation.

“The video tells the story of the showcase,” said Dan Coss, DeWitt city manager.

Coss has been working with Bob Bishop, owner of Future Media Corp. of Okemos. Bishop is a resident of DeWitt and is donating production services for the video.

“Without Bob’s help, this video wouldn’t be nearly as professional,” said Coss.

The video will help present the story of the showcase to those who attend the conference. The 5-minute video will include photographs and video from the actual showcase plus interviews with several people who were key players in the event.

The interviews were shot in the DeWitt City Council chambers, against a portable green screen, which allows video, photos and images to be displayed “behind” interviewees in the finished product, according to Bishop.

Those interviewed include John Deiter, superintendent of DeWitt Public Schools; Jim Rundborg, DeWitt mayor; Rick Galardi, DeWitt Twp. supervisor and Libby Braun, a DeWitt High School student who volunteered at the showcase.

“By using this video, people who won’t be available to be there (in Detroit) can still participate,” said Coss.

And the video will be useful to the area after the conference, as well.

“After the conference, we’ll have a link on our web page,” said Coss, “and I imagine the school district and DeWitt Township will do the same.”

But until the competition, the video is top secret, he said.

“We don’t want to give our competition any ideas,” he said with a grin.

There will be seven regional winners making presentations at the conference.

“Ours is a little different,” said Rundborg. “Ours is something other communities can take and use right away. Most communities will have commercial businesses, civic groups and schools, which is all you need for a showcase – and everybody has those.”

The showcase grew out of a joint meeting between DeWitt City, DeWitt Township and DeWitt Public School boards.

“John Deiter, DeWitt superintendent, mentioned he thought it would be a great idea to showcase all we have to offer,” said Rundborg. And from there the showcase blossomed.

The taping is done, and it produced nearly an hour of video. Coss and Bishop have been going through all of it, making decisions on what will work best for the final piece.

Coss will make the DeWitt presentation Sept. 18 at the Renaissance Center in Detroit. He said about 300 to 400 people usually attend the conference, and they will be the ones who vote for the state winner.

“Plante Moran are the official auditors of the Community Excellence Awards,” said Coss.

The winner will be announced Friday, Sept. 20, at the conclusion of the conference. Coss hopes to be bringing the award cup home to share with DeWitt Township, the DeWitt Area Chamber of Commerce and DeWitt Public Schools.