

## The 15th Annual Hunterdon County Planning Board Planning & Design Awards Program

This year the Planning & Design Awards Program was held at the Hunterdon County Planning Board's Annual Dinner on April 28, 2005 at the Three Bridges Banquet Hall. The Awards Committee reviewed 14 nominations against the program's criteria:

- Compatibility with the County's environmental setting
- Socially-oriented plans and projects
- The use of creative and unique planning principles
- And the ability to transfer the ideas to other projects

Based upon these criteria, six projects received awards, one of which received the second annual Green Development Award.

### Dorsey Reading – The Kirschner Building

Built as a single-family home in the early 1800s, the Kirschner Building on 33 Race Street in Frenchtown was converted into an appliance store in 1953. In 2003 Dorsey Reading purchased the property, modernizing the structure and restoring the façade to the style of the Borough's mid-nineteenth century vernacular architecture. Through changes in window treatments, cladding and roofing materials, façade colors, and other architectural details, a single structure was made to appear as three differentiated buildings. Concrete sidewalks were reconstructed with inlaid brick and the front steps were rebuilt using large slab stones. The renovated structure figures prominently into the Borough's streetscape, as it is one of the first buildings seen approaching the Borough from Route 12 or from Route 513 onto Race Street.



### Deborah Kratzer and Kingwood Township – Kingwood Township Environmental Resource Inventory

The Kingwood Township Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) was prepared by the Kingwood Township Environmental Commission in consultation with Deborah J. Kratzer of Kratzer Environmental Services and funded by a National Park Service Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Municipal Incentive Grant (June 2004).

Kingwood Township's ERI begins with a discussion of ecologically based planning and the role that environmental resource inventories play in the local planning process. From there, the document covers an exhaustive list of environmental topics that are of concern locally, including land and water resources, air quality, contaminated sites, plant and animal species and habitats, historic resources and open space resources. Each topic is described in length and each section concludes with a list of published and Internet resources. Kingwood's ERI is organized in a systematic, logical manner. The text, maps and tables are presented in a way that is understandable to any reader, not just planning professionals. This ERI is highly informative and is an invaluable resource for other Hunterdon County municipalities that are creating or updating their ERIs. At the same time, the planning document can be used to educate interested residents about local environmental resources.



### Patricia C. Hilton & Linda Chapman – "Heaven on Earth" Farm Mural

Linda Chapman, Patricia Hilton, and student volunteers from Hunterdon Central Regional High School painted the "Heaven on Earth" mural in a four-car garage on the Hilton/Van Doren farm. Three walls and the ceiling were completed over the course of two summers for an official unveiling that took place on September 24, 2004. Patricia Hilton hosts events on the 326-acre preserved farm, which was the inspiration for the mural. The east wall displays tilled land, the Clover Hill Reform Church Steeple, and farm animals; the north wall displays the farmhouse, Patricia's three Airedale dogs, a historic gravesite, and Patricia driving a tractor

pulling a hay wagon; and the west wall displays an autumn scene with cedar trees, a fenced area with grazing horses, Holstein Dairy Heifers, and the farmstead in the horizon.



Patricia Hilton uses the preserved farm to educate the community about Hunterdon County's historic and rural heritage with the many community events she hosts, most notably with the agriculture education events. Events that have been held at the farm include a "Star Gaze" for Hunterdon County High School freshman, an annual picnic for the Hunterdon Medical Center Lab Staff, a family picnic for the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, a Halloween Party for the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Somerset and Hunterdon Counties, and a three-day "Farm Camp Experience" for nine young students from the Greater Newark Conservancy. The mural has been conceived as a public meeting place on these occasions, and in this capacity the mural celebrates the rural heritage of the

Hilton/Van Doren farm in particular, as well as the County's rural landscape as a whole.

### **Back to Nature Landscape Associates, Inc. – Fern Valley**

Described by Landscape Architect Anthony Sblendorio as an "ecologically inspired neighborhood," Fern Valley is a four-home development off Boulder Hill Road in Tewksbury Township with lots ranging from three to seven acres. Over eight acres along a trout stream and two ponds have been set aside as common open space and numerous green design techniques have been integrated into the site plan. Vegetative swales and wetland pools have been designed to capture stormwater runoff along the roadway, while native plantings, limited site disturbance, and limits on site clearing and impervious surfaces have been planned to improve groundwater recharge and reduce soil erosion throughout the site.



All homes are planned to include roof drains to collect rainwater, which will be stored in cisterns, then reused to water the garden and flush toilets. A woodland management plan has been devised to increase the diversity of native plants and educational programs have been planned to educate residents about Fern Valley's environment. The development includes a recently constructed covered bridge, the first built in New Jersey since the 1800s. Plans for the first home have been completed, which is to be constructed from a renovated barn.

### **Clinton First Aid & Rescue Squad and Bank of America – Clinton First Aid & Rescue Squad**

After outgrowing an existing one-story garage, the Clinton First Aid & Rescue Squad constructed a new 13,818 square foot, two-story emergency services building in its place on Old Highway 22. The existing lot proved to be too narrow to accommodate the additional garage bay that was required by the Squad; therefore, the Squad entered into an agreement with the adjacent property owner, Bank of America, to share the Squad's parking area in exchange for a lot line adjustment that would cede .078 acres of the Bank's land for the new building.



The architectural details of the building were designed to be compatible with the adjacent bank, as well as the Town of Clinton's vernacular architecture. In an effort to create the atmosphere of a historic Main Street along Highway 22, the building's proportions were designed to be similar to those of a Victorian firehouse and the building's façade was given an all-brick finish.

### **NJ Water Supply Authority and The Spruce Run Initiative – The Spruce Run Initiative Corridor Study**

The Spruce Run Initiative Corridor Study was sponsored by the New Jersey Water Supply Authority, the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC), and the Spruce Run Initiative (members include the Townships of Bethlehem, Lebanon, and Union and Boroughs of Glen Gardner and High Bridge). With a 2003 ANJEC funding award, the New Jersey Water Supply Authority contracted with the Environmental Planning firm AKRF, Inc. to analyze existing land use practices in the study area and prepare recommendations for consideration by each municipality. The study area included three roadway corridors within the watershed: Route 173 in Union Township and a portion of Bethlehem Township; Route 31 in

Lebanon Township and Glen Gardner Borough; and a portion of commercially-zoned Route 513 in High Bridge Borough (between Route 31 and the railroad bridge near the downtown business district).



The final report presents a set of recommendations that address individual sites within the watershed, as well as the watershed as a whole. At the scale of the watershed, the study proposes higher density nodes separated by low-density areas. At the scale of individual parcels, the study presents methods for improving site planning both within and outside node areas along the corridors. Site planning methods concentrate on environmental concerns, including groundwater recharge and habitat protection, and community design issues such as pedestrian connections and streetscape considerations. The study involved key stakeholders, municipal mayors, town planning committee members, environmental commission members, town planners, businesspersons, members

of the public, and Hunterdon County.

This regional planning effort was conceived as a local initiative, providing a way for the Spruce Run Initiative municipalities to assist one another in the planning of the areas within the watershed. This project is unique in that it considered the area's environmental constraints in the context of continued development pressures, searching for ways to balance the needs for new services and amenities alongside the need for environmental preservation. The project tied the two issues together by proposing community design recommendations that cover a range of topics from green design practices to circulation patterns to architectural design.