



Winter 2007

A Newsletter for Our Community & Supporters

# Happenings

The Board and Staff of Riverplace would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members and volunteers for a very successful year here along the River and to wish all of you a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

## RiverFest 2006 Lights Up RiverPlace

Summer ended with a bang, as the RiverPlace central Riverfront's festival grounds hosted RiverFest 2006.

People from all over Berks County flocked to the Riverfront to partake in the festivities provided by numerous organizations that set up colorful tents and exhibits.

Among the entertainment provided at this year's event was a spectacular Saturday night fireworks concert performance by the Ringgold Band. Another noteworthy appearance was that of "Ribbit the River Frog", portrayed by Earl Wood, who is owed much thanks for his jovial adaptation of the newly named RiverPlace mas-

cot. "Ribbit's" clever name came from an unexpected source, one-year-old Meridith Johnson, who won the coloring and name contest that took place under our tent during RiverFest.

Though RiverPlace provided plenty for children to occupy themselves with while their parents learned all about the community's wonderful vision for the future under our tent, the GiggleWorks, which is planning an interactive children's museum for our area, had a tent situated right next door providing even more fun!

While there was much to do in the daylight, the River truly came to life with the cries of awe and thundering fireworks from the Penn Street Bridge,

shining brightly in a dazzling display of reflections on the water the last night of RiverFest.

The event was a big success, and we would like to extend a special thank you to the Ringgold Band, to the Berks Economic Partnership for co-sponsoring the fireworks, to all the RiverPlace volunteers, the RiverFest Committee and staff, and to everyone who came and enjoyed this great community festival.

## The River Speaks...now, it's your turn! Speak to us!

Give us your ideas and views about what we are doing along your River. Fill out a simple survey on our website, come to the 5th Floor of the GoggleWorks and talk to us or send us a short letter...[speak to us!](#)

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Using the Power  
of the River  
as a Catalyst to  
Unite Communities  
& Foster Economic  
Development

## Master Plan Update

The Master Plan Committee, under chair Lee Olsen, has begun taking the RiverPlace Master Plan on the road, with presentations to municipal officials and community organizations seeking resolutions of endorsement. Endorsements are currently in hand from the Berks County Planning Commission, Reading City Council and Planning Commission, West Reading Borough Planning Commission, and Latino Chamber of Commerce. If your organization would like a presentation and an opportunity to endorse the community's plan for a revitalized Schuylkill Riverfront, please contact the RiverPlace office. Endorsements will be helpful in obtaining grants and sponsorships for project implementation. Free illustrated copies of the Plan Executive Summary are available upon request, or on-line at [www.RiverPlacePA.com](http://www.RiverPlacePA.com).

## Project Updates

### • Solar Trail Lighting

Thanks to a \$118,000 grant received from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, design of a solar lighting system along the Riverfront trail has now commenced.

The plan calls for lighting in the Central Riverfront from the Penn Street Bridge, through RACC's campus, over the RACC Bridge and Wyomissing Creek, and all the way to Old Wyomissing Road.

Funds permitting we would also like to install lights along the trails to Bertolet Landing, Kerper's Landing, and to the West Reading Playground.

The project is off to a promising start with a new team captain, Jermaine Edwards, having been chosen. Edwards is the Community First Fund's local executive and a Reading native.

RiverPlace is currently applying for a matching grant for the project. The lights are expected to go up this summer and autumn.

### • Bingaman Gateway Project

The Bingaman Gateway project is well underway thanks to the hard work of RiverPlace volunteers and City Public Works staff. RiverPlace would like to thank and congratulate project captain and local architect Lou Masciotti for the successful completion of the project's first phase.

With the removal by City Public Works crews of gray gravel and asphalt from the triangle at the corner of Bingaman and 5th Streets, and installation of topsoil planting beds and red stone mulch, we can look forward to the completion of phase two in the spring, when permanent trees and shrubs and annual flowers will be planted at an important southern gateway to RiverPlace.

### • Wi-Fi Hot Zone

RACC students and the public will soon have free access to the Internet throughout most of



the RiverPlace Central Riverfront focus area.

Tyrone Boyd, an IT Networking major at Reading Area Community College is now heading up the project team.

Corporate project sponsors include Weidenhammer, RACC, Comcast, and Cisco.

The zone is planned to include both sides of the Riverfront from the future

site of the amphitheater south through RACC's campus, past West Reading's Bertolet Landing, and on through the festival grounds to Comcast. The hot zone will also enable the installation of web security cameras throughout RiverPlace.

### • Amphitheater — *planned opening early 2008*

Much progress has been made toward our vision of a multi-functional recreational facility and entertainment venue, which will draw numerous talent and spectators to the Riverfront.

One of the most important steps has already been taken – securing a preliminary agreement to purchase the property for the facility.

While many more important steps must be taken to insure that our vision is realized, one of the key decisions now to be made is the kind of programming the amphitheater will have. Programming decisions will inform final design plans on the \$2.5 million project. A project team under the direction of Ginny Hand is now meeting on a regular basis to



*“RiverPlace is committed to creating a healthy and vibrant community for all of us. Working together, we have the power to create the kind of community that attracts people and industry to it, making us a model community that others want to emulate. Get involved, volunteer, make a donation, make project suggestions...make a difference!”* Ray Heffner, community member and volunteer

guide a schematic design study, sponsorship, final design, and construction.

## Impact Projects

Though all RiverPlace projects play a role in the revival of the community's Riverfront, three projects are expected to have a dramatic transformational impact. The Schuylkill River Trail Bridge, Wyomissing Creek Trail, and West Shore Trail will really make RiverPlace a catalyst of revitalization within Greater Reading and Berks County.

We are working closely with the Berks County Planning Commission as they prepare their new Greenway Plan, and with municipal officials as they consider updates to local planning and zoning regulation. RiverPlace has also made presentations to PennDOT District managers, and to the Governor's office as part of a transformational impact plan.

We are currently working to secure site control for the West Shore Trail and steady progress is being made on funding for all three projects.

## Communication Innovations

While many know about RiverPlace, there are still many in the community who aren't familiar with our efforts. In an effort to reach a greater number of people, we continue to improve the way we communicate our message in the community.

Thanks to our volunteer marketing committee, in addition to a web site, newsletter, and speaker's bureau, we now have a twelve minute video that tells all about RiverPlace. The

video is intended for use during presentations to local groups/organizations and companies.

If your group or business would like more information or a presentation on the work that RiverPlace does, as well as the many opportunities to get involved in RiverPlace projects, please contact us today to set up an appointment. We would love to hear from you!

## RiverPlace 2005 Annual Report wins Gold MarCom Creative Award

RiverPlace on the Schuylkill's 2005 Annual Report, "The River Speaks," has received a Gold Award in the Association of Marketing and Communications Professionals MarCom Creative Awards 2006 competition.

The 14-page, 4-color and 2-color 2005 report was designed by Laura Wright, an active RiverPlace volunteer who co-owns the Drawing Board Graphic Design Studio in

Reading with Deb Soule, and written by Donna Reed, former City Councilwoman and now an Editor with WFMZ TV.

The MarCom Creative Awards is an international competition that recognizes outstanding achievement by marketing and communications professionals.

Copies of the RiverPlace 2005 Annual Report are available at the RiverPlace offices on the 5th floor of the GoggleWorks, 2nd and Washington Streets, Reading. Or download a digital copy on the RiverPlace website at [www.RiverPlacePa.com](http://www.RiverPlacePa.com)

### \* Wish List

Please contact us if you can help us out with any of these items:

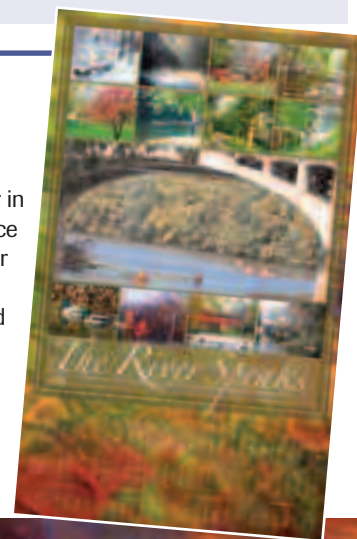
- Vacuum Cleaner
- Laptop Projector
- Desk Phone set w/speaker capability
- Postage Meter/Scale
- Popcorn maker for events

## Take a piece of the River with you!

Among the items available in the GoggleWorks gift shop are beautiful poster prints and poster calendars perfect for displaying the tranquil majesty of the River in your home or office. RiverKids can pick up a RiverPlace coloring book featuring Ribbit the River frog and other River life and history for hours of fun.

RiverPlace baseball caps, tee shirts, note cards, and cloth tote bags are also available.

Stop by the gift shop after visiting our offices on the fifth floor of the GoggleWorks or any time for a wonderful commemorative item sure to become a treasured keepsake.



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*Uniting Communities &  
Fostering Economic Development*

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**RiverPlace**  
ON THE SCHUYLKILL

WINTER 2007

# Happenings

## Upcoming Events

### Cherry Blossom Festival

Doug Fisher of Discoveries Gallery is leading an enthusiastic team of volunteers planning the community's first annual Cherry Blossom Festival, scheduled to take place **April 8th – 22nd**, including tea ceremonies, origami, bonsai, and more.

### Annual 5k Race and Fun Run/Walk

The 2007 annual RiverPlace 5k "Run for the River" will take place **Sunday, June 3**. Fast, flat, and scenic, this waterfront course is one of the most popular runs of the season. Please reserve the date and watch for details.

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**Happenings** is a publication of RiverPlace Development Corporation. Please contact us with any comments and/or suggestions.

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