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Rouge has friends

200 honored for cleanup of river; '89 date set

By Tom Henderson
staff writer

Some 200 Friends of the Rouge gathered at an awards luncheon last Tuesday to honor some of those involved in the 1988 cleanup and to kick off the campaign for Rouge Rescue '89, which will be Saturday, June 3, throughout the metropolitan area.

"We are stuck with a legacy of bad practices that are going to take a long time to clean up," said James Murray, Wayne County public services director and president of Friends of the Rouge.

Twenty-one communities were honored for their participation in last year's massive cleanup of the Rouge River basin. Oakland County communities receiving honors included Beverly Hills, Birmingham, Farmington Hills and Southfield.

"THE ROUGE River has a lot of work ahead of it if we are going to turn it into a resource we're proud of instead of embarrassed by," Murray told the gathering at the Fairlane Club and Manor in Dearborn.

He praised the 3,000 volunteers who cleaned a total of 6,000 cubic yards of garbage and debris from 23 cleanup sites, from Salem Township in the west to Birmingham in the north to Wayne in the south to Allen Park in the east.

Several cars and at least one van, as well as numerous shopping carts, tires, appliances, farm equipment, bathtubs, tree trunks and a forest worth of logs and branches were removed from the river.

In three years of cleanups, more



David Hales
DNR director

than a third of the basin's 150 logjams have been cleared, Murray said.

"But we've still got a lot more work for you next year," he said.

U.S. REP. Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, reminisced about his childhood days along the Rouge.

"I used to swim there once in a while as a kid, and I'd like to see it come back," he said.

He spoke fondly of such former Rouge activities as canoeing, water slides and ice skating.

"I'd like the opportunity to do a long-term project to make that 27-mile parkway system fully usable," Pursell said.

Pursell promised federal assist-

ance through the efforts of himself and U.S. Reps. John Dingell, D-Trenton, and William Ford, D-Taylor.

KEVIN OTTER, David Hales, director of the state Department of Natural Resources, praised the Rouge cleanup as one of the "very exciting things going on" in the state regarding environmental improvements.

He mentioned the 10th anniversary of the state's bottle law; recent victories for ballot proposals C and D, which provide bonds for cleaning up toxic waste sites and improving state parks; and pending state legislation to clean up leaking underground storage tanks.

"What you've done sends a clear message no one can ignore. It's heard in Washington, and it's heard

in Lansing. If you become involved, you do make a difference.

"The conservation movement was born in this country, not of government regulation, but out of a love for our resources and environment."

Companies honored for their participation or sponsorship of the '88 Rouge cleanup were: WJBK-TV, which has provided more than \$500,000 worth of air time to promote the cleanup; Ford Motor Co.; Waste Management Inc., which provided trash containers, trucks and free landfill space; Gannett Outdoor; City Management Corp., which also provided containers and disposal space; Michigan Tractor Machinery; Farmer Jack; WCSX-FM; and the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Seasonal hiring sets state job mark

Strong seasonal hiring increases across Michigan pushed employment to an all-time high during November, Richard Simmons Jr., director of the Michigan Employment Security Commission, reported.

At the same time, the number of holiday jobseekers entering the work force caused Michigan's labor force to also reach a new high and contributed to a slight increase in the state's November unemployment rate.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate inched up by 0.2 percent to 7.4 percent in November, ac-

ording to estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Simmons said Michigan's jobless total increased by 12,000 last month to 340,000.

In October, statewide unemployment totaled 328,000, 7.3 percent of the labor force. The current November jobless rate is below the year-ago level of 8.0 percent when 360,000 were out of work.

Employment in Michigan grew by 29,000 in November to a record 4,284,000 while the labor force rose by 21,000 to a new high of 4,624,000.

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