

OAKWOOD CELEBRATES 100 YEARS



On July 15, 1907 a group of 78 distinguished Daytonians living on unincorporated land in Van Buren Township decided by a 76-2 vote to establish a new village just south of downtown. Thus, the “Village was Oakwood” was created. Official incorporation documents were recorded by Montgomery County on January 9, 1908 and the first village council meeting was conducted in Oakwood on February 18, 1908.

The petition for incorporation read, in part:

“That the inhabitants of said territory desire that same shall be incorporated into a village; that the number of inhabitants residing within said territory is about 300; and they respectfully petition your honorable body that said territory may be incorporated into a village in the manner provided by law, and that the name of said village may be the “Village of Oakwood, State of Ohio”; and hereby designate John H. Patterson and H. E. Talbott their agents to act for them in all matters relating to the hearing upon this petition, and in other matters relating to the incorporation of said territory into a village; and further petition your honorable body that an election may be ordered to obtain the sense of the electors of said territory upon the question of its incorporation into a village as prayed for in this petition”.

(Note: By 1930, Oakwood’s population exceeded 5,000 so on July 1, 1931 we changed from a “village” to a “city”).

This year, we are celebrating our 100th anniversary. Over the past two years, a large group of Oakwood citizens have been working together to plan a number of special centennial events. These citizens are led by Mayor Judy Cook and Centennial Co-Chairs Madeline Iseli and Dick Good.

The major events for our celebration will begin with a very special “That Day in May” to be conducted on May 17. As always, the Oakwood Rotary Club will take the lead on planning and executing the activities. Rotarians Perry Martin and Rob Stephens are sharing leadership responsibilities. The highlight will be a large parade running down Far Hills Avenue.

On June 8 we will celebrate Oakwood’s Excellence in Learning through events led by School Superintendent Dr. Mary Jo Scalzo and Wright Library Director Ann Snively. As a showcase for Oakwood’s outstanding schools and students, these events will feature a time capsule, essay contest, visual arts, performances and sporting events.

On June 22 we will celebrate Oakwood’s Environment and Fitness with an event entitled “Haven on the Hill”. Cindy Garner and KC Stack are leading a group of citizens in planning activities focused on appreciation of the natural beauty of Oakwood. Physical fitness and outdoor recreation will be emphasized in activities for the whole family. This will include the dedication of a pedestrian bridge in Houk Stream. Construction of the pedestrian bridge is the first part of our plan to enhance Houk Stream by connecting the newly acquired city land into the existing natural area. “Centennial Park at Houk Stream” is a project headed by Irv Bieser and will be a legacy feature of our Centennial Celebration.

On July 12-13, we will celebrate a retrospective of our first 100 years featuring, among other things, the premiere of a historical documentary film and citizen tours of Hawthorn Hill. These events are being led by Harry Ebeling, Harrison Gowdy and Mark Risley.

On August 17, we will close the Centennial Celebration with our traditional, yet enhanced, community Ice Cream Social. The day will end with a spectacular outdoor concert at the Oakwood High School Stadium featuring the Air Force Band of Flight. Becky Butler and Sally McBride Solarek are leading planning efforts.

In the course of celebrating our great community, we will also take time to recognize our long-time residents and businesses through an exciting “Centennial Club”. Membership in this “exclusive” club is for persons whose age plus the number of years of Oakwood residency (or years working at an Oakwood business) totals 100 or more. This is being led by Sally Riffle and Dick Cummings.

The final major component will be creation of a centennial publication. This will be a beautiful “keepsake” to be distributed, at no cost, to all Oakwood citizens. Creation of this hard-cover “coffee table” book is headed by Dick Good, Ann Rasmussen, Joanne McPortland and Nina Anglin.

Much of the cost for our celebration will be paid from financial contributions by major corporate sponsors and from Oakwood businesses and citizens. Laura Byington is coordinating all fundraising efforts.

So...let’s get ready to party! Please mark your calendars and plan to participate in everything. It will be a grand celebration. Ongoing information about the Centennial events will be included in the local newspapers, on the city’s website (www.mvcc.net/oakwood), in the city newsletters, and other separate mailings. If you have any questions, please call me or e-mail (298-0600 or klopsch@oakwood.oh.us).