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National Register Status Won't Necessarily Save Historic Bridge

◆ Status would protect structure from adverse impacts of federal or state actions, but would have no impact on decisions at the local level, official said

By ARLENE HITTLE
Pharos-Tribune Staff

DELPHI — Placing historic Hamilton Street Bridge on the National Register of Historic Landmarks doesn't necessarily save the structure, said Dan Fogarty, director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation.

"In the long run, our determination won't save the

bridge. It could possibly delay its removal a little bit, maybe not," he said.

The 104-year-old "Whipple truss" bridge spanning Deer Creek collapsed under the weight of a PSI Energy truck July 30, 1995. City and county officials, as well as private preservation groups, have been debating its fate ever since.

Carroll County Commissioners want to demolish the bridge, placing the salvageable part elsewhere. Delphi Mayor Sam Deiwert contends that the bridge can and should be saved. He proposes lifting it out of the creek and rehabilitating it.

What inclusion on the national register would do, if the state decides Hamilton Street Bridge is still eligible in its damaged condition, would protect the structure

from adverse impacts of federal or state actions. It would have no impact on decisions at the local level, Fogarty said.

The decision to save the bridge will not come from the federal or state levels, he said.

"No matter what happens with any of these determinations, if the county wants it out, it will probably be taken out," he said. "Some people wish that wasn't true, but that's the reality of it."

Mark Dollase, western regional director for the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, agrees.

"National register listing does not prevent an owner from being able to demolish their property," he said.

Listing does, however, provide for a public review when a public entity is involved, Dollase said.

"That allows different groups to have some input on whether the bridge should be removed or not," he said.

Input could even come from the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, one of the agencies currently affected by the federal government shutdown.

If that group were to recommend the bridge be saved, it could relay its endorsement to the U.S. Department of Transportation, which could then refuse to fund the county's replacement bridge, Dollase said.

The DNR has not yet determined if the bridge is still eligible. Fogarty's office received a letter about the structure from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last week, and hopes to make a determination in the next couple of days, he said.

"We want to try to do it very soon," he said.



Police Department Will Stop Unlocking Vehicles

By KIMBERLY LARSON
Pharos-Tribune Staff

Presenting a huge stack of documents showing the number of vehicles unlocked by the department in 1995, Police Chief Jerry Arnold said the city would no longer provide the service.

Arnold asked the Logansport Board of Public Works and Safety Wednesday for permission to stop the service unless there is a child trapped in the vehicle or another emergency.

"Assistant Chief (Phil) Nolte and myself talked to Fulton, Lafayette, White County and Kokomo and most of the departments only unlock the vehicles

in emergencies," Arnold said.

The department averaged about 130 unlocks per month during 1995. Unlocking a vehicle can take as long as 45 minutes, Nolte said.

Arnold brought up the matter during visitor's comments, and Mayor Bill Vernon asked Arnold to write a petition and present it to the board at its next meeting Jan. 10.

The service will be discontinued beginning Feb. 1.

An extra key should be kept outside the vehicle to prevent locking them in a vehicle, Arnold said.

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Change Of Venue In Murder Case Taken Under Advisement