

'Looks good, boys'

Salem Township center is being dedicated in Glenn Mills' memory

By **JANICE R. KIASKI**
Staff writer

RICHMOND — "Looks good, boys."

The late Glenn Mills, a Salem Township trustee for 20 years before his death on April 22, was a man of few words, according to fellow Trustee Tom McConnell, who imagines those three words are how Mills might have assessed the progress made so far at the Salem Township Senior Community Center.

The center is a facility Mills had always hoped would one day be available to constituents.

And he would have been humbled yet happy to know, adds McConnell and Trustee Terry Bell, that the



Glenn Mills

facility on state Route 152 south will be named in his memory during an open house and dedication scheduled for Sept. 1.

"I think he'd be excited," says Judy Mills, the fiscal officer for the township that purchased the building in May 2006 and has overseen improvements there to be showcased during the upcoming event.

The dedication ceremony itself from 6:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. will formally acknowledge the building as the Glenn Mills Community/Senior Center but it will be just a part of what is a full day of events there.

Doors open at 10 a.m. with coffee and doughnuts available until noon. The Jefferson County Retired Senior Volunteer Program and Jefferson Community College will each have informational booths from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. along with the American Red



See **CENTER** Page 7A ⇨

Janice R. Kiaski

SATURDAY, AUG. 25, 2007

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Center

Cross Jefferson County Chapter from noon to 7 p.m.

The Richmond United Methodist Church will host a chicken barbecue there from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. with meals available for \$8 for adults and \$4 for children. Proceeds will benefit the church's mortgage. The Country Classics 4-H Club, meanwhile, will have a bake sale and refreshments available from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. There also will be a dance from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Admission is free.

Throughout the day, the public is welcome to stop by and check out the progress made at the two-story facility the township purchased from the Richmond Lions Club with Community Development Block Grant funds making possible modernization improvements such as upgraded electrical work, handicap-accessible restrooms, a spruced-up kitchen, a refurbished main meeting room, new carpeting downstairs and a new wood floor on the second level.

There also has been exterior work done and a new sign bearing Glenn Mills' name.

But McConnell and Bell acknowledged, too, that volunteers have pitched in to provide "sweat equity," with several 4-H groups making themselves available for general cleaning and painting.

"We have \$16,755 in this building," explained Bell, noting the remainder of the estimated \$45,800 CDBG funding was used to pave three streets in the village of Annapolis. Salem Township takes in 42 miles and communities including Richmond, Annapolis, Fairfield and East Springfield.

"It'll be a two- to four-year ongoing project," Bell said of the wish list of improvements hoped for at the center, including modernizing the kitchen, paving the parking lot, installing air conditioning and adding bathrooms upstairs.

The township also is working in conjunction with the Richmond Volunteer Fire & Rescue Co. located nearby on a proposal to use the center as a gathering place in the event of a disaster, equipping it, for instance, with generators to provide shelter and meals.

McConnell said he would like to see the center be used possibly to re-establish the community food pantry program.

But for now, the facility already is getting good use, and that was the whole idea,



Janice R. Kiask

IMPROVEMENTS MADE – DEDICATION PLANNED – The Glenn Mills Community/Senior Center will be dedicated during an all-day open house Sept. 1, giving visitors an opportunity to check out improvements, including on the second floor where a new floor has been installed. Ready for the event are, from left, front, Tommi McConnell and Charli McConnell, helpers; and Judy Greer, the township's fiscal officer; and back, township trustees Tom McConnell, Terry Bell and Jim Mills, the latter of whom is filling the unexpired term of his father.

according to Bell and McConnell.

"We've had 40 events here since the third week of December," Bell said, noting the center has been used for everything from graduation parties and meetings to teen dances and exercise groups.

"With the activities here so far we're very, very pleased," said Bell, who can be contacted at (740) 765-4974 or (740) 317-5693 by groups or individuals interesting in using the center.

It is available for free to nonprofit township groups and organizations using the facility for meetings or functions. However, if non-profit groups are using it for fund-raisers, they will be assessed the same fee established for other uses. The current rate for township residents is \$100 for the building with \$50 returned if they handle clean-up duties. For non-residents of the township, the building can be rented for \$150 with \$75 returned provided cleanup is

done.

"Our function as a township is we want to break even, keep it functional for the community and cover our costs," said McConnell, who explained the average monthly operational expenses are about \$296, including heat.

Having a building for use by the community was an idea Glenn Mills had embraced for as long as 15 years, according to McConnell and Bell.

Jim Mills, the son of Glenn Mills who is serving out his father's unexpired term as trustee, explained his father retired from Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp. two decades ago, dedicating his time to the township as a trustee and also driving a bus in the Edison Local School District.

"Dad really liked the township and the people around here," Jim Mills said, "and mom would be very proud about all this."

Jim Mills said the family will be out in

Continued from Page 1A

FYI:

■ The grand opening of the Glenn Mills Community/Senior Center will be held Sept. 1 beginning with coffee and doughnuts from 10 a.m. to noon; informational booths throughout the morning and afternoon; a chicken barbecue hosted by the Richmond United Methodist Church from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at a cost of \$8 for adults and \$4 for children; dedication ceremonies from 6:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.; a bake sale and refreshments by the Country Classics 4-H Club from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.; and a free dance there from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

■ Residents or groups interested in using the Glenn Mills Community/Senior Center on state Route 152 south, can contact Terry Bell, Salem Township trustee, at (740) 765-4974 or (740) 317-5693.

full force for the dedication, including his mother, Carma, and his siblings: Lynda Petty of Columbus, Nancy Smyth of East Springfield, Carma Clarke of the Atwood Lake area, Mary Price of Richmond and Glenn Jr. of Columbus

As the center begins a new chapter of its history, the trustees acknowledged its past, too. The Richmond Grange No. 1750, a farmer-oriented organization, purchased the property in 1950 from Edwin T. and L. Virginia Hawkins and built three years later what many community members still remember as the Richmond Grange Hall, a well-used facility for meetings, receptions, dinners and Saturday night roller skating. It became an inactive building, however, for a five-year period from about 1985 to 1990 until the Richmond Lions Club took over ownership. The township officially took over ownership of the building on May 25, 2006, having purchased it for \$3,500 from the club.

McConnell said the township would like to see the open house of activities become an annual event.

And the rest of the time, the trustees want the building to be an asset for the young and old in the township.

"It's here for the people," Bell said.

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