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ENERGY GRANT ALLOWS FOR PARK UPGRADES

Uniontown, PA – A Fayette County park will soon undergo upgrades to increase safety and security, thanks to a grant from the West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund.

The \$50,000 grant, which required a \$25,000 match from Fayette County Commissioners, will allow the Office of Planning, Zoning & Community Development to install 25 solar-powered street lights across two parking lots at Jacobs Creek Park.

Located along state Route 982, Jacobs Creek has undergone a number of upgrades in recent years in preparation for the creation of a Master Site Development Plan, which is administered through the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Community Development Specialist Sue Martin said the grant will help the county get a headstart on that plan, which the Jacobs Creek Watershed Authority has been instrumental in developing.

“We’re hoping to have everything done by the end of the year,” Martin said. “When creating the plan, better security was one of the major things we found out people wanted, so by lighting the parking lots, we can make the park safer at night and hopefully prevent illicit activities and vandalism.”

“The Fund is pleased that it can support these upgrades to increase safety and security at Jacobs Creek Park,” Joel Morrison, WPPSEF Fund Administrator, said. “This project fits well with the Fund’s mission to help communities and bring positive change to the area.”

Chief Community Development Specialist Arthur Cappella said fishermen accessing Greenlick Run Lake within the park will also benefit from new lighting.

“Jacobs Creek is way off the beaten path, so to speak, so at night, when the moon isn’t out, it can be pitch black out there,” Cappella said. “This grant is significant because our parks committee has been working on getting better security at the parks for several years now. Security is always our number one objective.”



Martin said the lighting is just one more thing that will continue making Jacobs Creek “a place people want to go.”

“We’re kind of ahead of the game here, because we haven’t even finished the master site plan and we’ve already achieved getting grant funding,” Martin said. “Hopefully this begins the momentum for our whole plan and we can really build it up and do a lot with it.”

In addition to the lighting, Cappella said, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission recently signed an agreement with Fayette County to patrol the park on a regular basis, as an added security measure.

Local Share Account funding previously allowed for the installation of new restrooms, comfort stations and a kayak dock in the park.

Cappella said future funding could allow for the elimination of one of the park’s access points, streamlining the park roadways and further increasing visitor safety.

“We appreciate the grant and are looking forward to working with West Penn Power in the future,” Cappella said.

Fayette County Commissioner Dave Lohr said he’s grateful West Penn Power is helping the county complete a major project.

“I thank them for that,” he said. “There have been some issues there and I’m sure this will help.”

Fayette County Commissioner Chairman Vincent Vicites thanked West Penn Power for their efforts to enhance Jacobs Creek.

“This lighting will help the overall effort at implementing a new master plan to enhance recreational activities at the park,” he said.

“I am thankful to West Penn Power for this grant,” Fayette County Commissioner Angela Zimmerlink said. “Having energy-efficient lighting installed will greatly benefit this county park not only in energy savings but also security.”

The West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund is a nonprofit organization which invests in the development of sustainable energy technologies that benefit West Penn Power ratepayers in Pennsylvania. For more information, visit www.wppsef.org.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.info.

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