

## M E M O

To: the Champaign County Board

From: the Lincoln Legacy Committee

Date: August 1, 2018

Re:

ANNUAL REPORT of the  
LINCOLN LEGACY COMMITTEE  
2017-2018

The Lincoln Legacy Committee is a citizens' committee charged with oversight of the Lincoln Exhibit at the Champaign County Courthouse. The group began ten years ago with a Memo of Understanding between the Champaign County Board and the Champaign County Forest Preserve as design and construction of the Lincoln Exhibit became the final piece of construction of the Courthouse.

The Board consists of Anke Voss (Champaign County Historical Archives – Urbana Free Library), Ray Cunningham (Mayor of Homer and President of the Homer Historical Society), Kay Grabow (a retired instructor in Dist. 116), Kent Tucker (Lincoln historian/collector from Rantoul), and Barbara Wysocki. Members of the County Board have continually served as liaisons and Stan Harper currently fills that role. This year, Barbara Garvey (Director of the Museum of the Grand Prairie), joined the Board and is also serving as the local liaison to Looking for Lincoln – a part of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area of which Champaign County is a coalition member.

Highlights of this year's activities include:

- \* participated in the Archives Bazaar held in conjunction with the annual C-U Folk & Roots Festival at the Urbana Free Library in October, 2017. Members of the Board were on hand – alongside other cultural/historical groups -- to make the community aware of our presence at the courthouse.
- \* hosted 400 students from local schools as they toured the courthouse, visited a courtroom, and learned about Lincoln's presence and role in Champaign County history.
- \* accepted and dedicated a gift of a Hesler Lincoln photographic image from Kent and Marilyn Tucker as a memorial to their daughter. The dedication in December, 2017 also marked Champaign County's inauguration of Illinois' 200 years of statehood.
- \* accepted an offer from the Looking for Lincoln association to replace a number of Lincoln waysides in Champaign County. Actual replacement of the broadsides will take place in August. The sites scheduled for replacement include the wayside outside the courthouse and another at Busey Bank. There is no cost for replacement.
- \* as a Looking for Lincoln community, the Lincoln Legacy Committee created a community board – an informational piece about Champaign County's Lincoln offerings for use at the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and the National Heritage Area national convention.

The news that has most affected our activities with school groups at the courthouse has been some significant changes within the court system. For the first time in ten years, there is a full complement of

judges. This is good news, but it does mean that available courtrooms are at a premium for public tours. It also means that Court Security staff is now assigned to duty in each courtroom and not available to talk with students and that the Jury Assembly room is occupied by jurors and again not always available for student visitors.

In addition, the County will be losing the services of Sgt. John Carleton through retirement. Sgt Carleton has truly been the lynchpin, facilitator, and coordinator of this student program. He arranged for a courtroom, checked on the availability of other speakers, and talked with the students about security and procedures in the courthouse, job opportunities and other topics raised by the students.

The upshot of these two major developments is that Sheriff Walsh has already informed local schools about the need to further restrict opportunities for school visits. Anticipating a significant drop in student visits, the Lincoln Legacy Committee will be exploring alternative ways to tell the story of Lincoln in Champaign County.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Wysocki, Chair on behalf of  
the Lincoln Legacy Committee