

News

Macomb County Board of Commissioners



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 14, 2011

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Agreement Reached to Restore Macomb Orchard Trail

MOUNT CLEMENS, Mich. — The Macomb County Board of Commissioners and Macomb County Orchard Trail Commission, in concurrence with the Office of the County Executive, today announced that a settlement has been reached with International Transmission Co., (ITC) over access to power lines running along parts of the county's Macomb Orchard Trail.

The agreement states ITC will pay the county \$500,000 for a vegetation easement along the Macomb Orchard Trail. This sum will (in part) replace vegetation along portions of the trail in Shelby and Washington townships, where the power company will be trimming, cutting, and removing trees. ITC will also repair any damage to the trail caused in the process of trimming around power lines.

The line, which runs adjacent to a portion of the 24-mile-long Macomb Orchard Trail, has been at the heart of a three-year stand-off between residents, local and county officials, the Macomb Orchard Trail Commission, and the power company, which crossed private property to clear-cut trees that it said interfered with the operation of its power lines along the trail.

Macomb County Commissioner Don Brown, who represents Washington Township, said the settlement allows for re-forestation of the trail with compatible vegetation, ensures proper compensation for the easement, and allows the power company access to Macomb County's Jewell-Spokane electrical transmission path.

It also insures an abundant supply of electrical energy is present to avoid endangering the health and welfare of nearby residents and business served by the power line, said both Brown, and Board of Commissioners Chair, Kathy D. Vosburg.

"We called a special Board of Commissioners meeting to deal specifically with this issue," Vosburg said. "Once a decision was reached among members of the Board, we moved expediently and responsibly to make sure all electrical power needs would be met."

Brown, who also serves on the Macomb Orchard Trail Commission, has been a leading advocate of the trail's creation and development. The agreement avoids a costly and potentially lengthy court battle, but is little consolation to those who use the trail, or to residents who reported coming home to find trees in their yards being cleared without warning, he said.

"We negotiated in such a way that homeowners and the county would be treated with the respect and courtesy we deserve," he said. "We hope this sends a message to anyone doing business in Macomb County that our residents' rights can not be disregarded, and that we value and protect county assets such as the Macomb Orchard Trail."

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