

Welcome to

BARGERGROVE?

Much of **White River Township** is unincorporated. But would it be better to align with **Greenwood** or **Bargersville** to ensure that government can meet residents' needs?

What will happen and what would it mean? More questions and answers, **Page A6**. Send your questions to newstips@dailyjournal.net

How would it work?

The White River Township Advisory Board and Bargersville Town Council would pass resolutions to create a study committee to look at merging the township with the town.

That committee would study different aspects of the plan, including tax impact, increases in needs for services and added money for the new town's budget. When the studies were done, the committee would present the information and a recommendation to the two boards. Board members would vote to approve or deny the merger.

If the boards approved the merger, it would then go to a public vote.

How long would it take?

In Zionsville, where officials hope to combine parts of two townships with the town, the committee's research was presented to the boards about a year after the committee was created. Their hope is to have the Zionsville merger plan on the Boone County ballot for a public vote in this year's general election.

Is the merger immediate?

In Zionsville, the merger will begin in 2010. Areas that are rural will be phased into the town and town services will be added as the rural areas grow and need services.

Answers to the following questions are unknown:

■ What will happen with township government, including the trustee and advisory board, and services those offices provide? State lawmakers are considering plans to change the way local government operates, such as eliminating some township offices.

■ How would the change affect property taxes? Changes legislators made in property taxes, including capping what taxpayers pay based on a property's market value, could have impact here. The taxes could go up, since township residents would now pay a town rate in addition to the county tax rate, but the overall tax rate could go down since expenses would be spread across a larger group of taxpayers.

■ What would the new, larger town be called? Would it keep the name Bargersville?

■ What would happen to the county's budget, such as sheriff's deputies and road projects, since White River Township makes up the largest unincorporated section of Johnson County? Some county officials are interested in that topic since some services could be reduced by significantly reducing the number of people served.

■ Can the public challenge the merger? Can another government, such as Greenwood, challenge the merger? The public will be able to have a decision on the merger when it goes to a public vote during a general election.

■ What if the public votes no in the referendum? Can the project be proposed again?

■ What will be the cost of studies and legal and financial services? Some officials are hoping to get some services donated.

SOURCES: Paul Friga, Indiana University professor; Boone County reorganization plan Web site; Ed Mitro, Zionsville town manager

TAX BASE

Here is a look at some of the businesses near Stones Crossing Road and State Road 135 in White River Township that could become part of Bargersville under a merger plan:



Marsh



Louie's



McDonald's

STAFF PHOTOS BY BRENT BOHLKE/
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Bargersville: At a glance

2006 population: 2,576
Size: More than 1 square mile

Boundaries: Intersection of Whiteland Road and State Road 135 to the north, County Road 200N in Union Township to the south and State Road 135 and slightly

farther east in some sections and Morris Meadows to the west

Governed by: Five-member elected town council
Pays taxes for: Town services, including police, parks, utilities and other departments

White River Township: At a glance

2000 population: 35,539, including areas annexed into Greenwood or Bargersville

Size: About 50 square miles
Boundaries: In general, from County Line Road in the north to County Road 300N in the south and from the Morgan County Line in the west to Honey Creek Road in the east, although some parts in

the northeast section as far south as Holt Street have been annexed by Greenwood, and Bargersville has annexed some southern sections as far north as Whiteland Road.

Governed by: Johnson County commissioners and county council

Pays taxes for: County services, including road work and sheriff's deputies