



Rotary Group Discusses Downtown Revitalization

The Rotary Club of Winchester met at noon Tuesday at the Franklin County Country Club. President Russ Spray recognized Rotarian Steven Crain from the Shelbyville Rotary Club, who presented the Winchester Club with a "Global Club Award" on behalf of District 6780. The certificate and a patch for the Rotary Banner were given for support of the District-Wide Rotary Water Projects being carried out around the world in countries with a need for basic water supplies.

Program Leader Gene Seaton then introduced Sean Crabtree, Managing Member

of the Crabtree Group, who is currently serving on the Winchester Downtown Professionals and Merchants Association Committee. He spoke on "The Revitalization of Downtown Winchester."

A Franklin County High School and MTSU graduate, Mr. Crabtree, a business consultant, began by talking about "the great things going on with the downtown Winchester revitalization. Our vision is to recruit and retain an optimal mix of small business in the Winchester downtown district so as to support the city of Winchester, the surrounding municipalities, and Franklin County as a whole." He noted that the Downtown Group expects to accomplish this through three main areas of focus: Design/Maintenance, Events/Promotion, and Economic Restructuring.

With a display of artistic renderings of the new downtown and blue prints, Mr. Crabtree said the "construction to begin Phase I should start following this year's International Dogwood Festival." He said the group

had received notice last week that they could proceed to open up bids for construction "for the area all around the square and down First Avenue."

"We will look to build a consistent theme throughout downtown and help businesses develop a niche," he stated, "A database is being created for cross-marketing and cross-fertilization of businesses, enabling us to get just the right businesses in place. We have looked at Main Street programs in Bolivar and Dyersburg, as well as other cities, and have seen a four-fold increase in sales and collections of sales taxes."

Rotarian and Winchester Mayor Terry Harrell added that "grant monies will first be used on sidewalks, street lighting and landscaping around the square. This is part of a nine-year sales tax return program for improvements in the area that has already returned about \$400,000 just in the first year."

"The monies are being spent through the city," Mr. Crabtree added, "with a very detailed layout of the sidewalks being developed. The committee is doing a great job keeping the consistencies in place, such as power and communications utilities going underground."

The Winchester Downtown Group will meet soon, he said, to settle on citizens who will head up the five sub-committees and answer questions such as what opportunities exist in each area, what is the plan to achieve goals, where will support come from, and how will results be measured?



ROTARY GUEST SPEAKER--Sean Crabtree, center, was the guest speaker Winchester Noon Rotary Club meeting Tuesday. He spoke on the up Winchester Downtown Revitalization Program. Pictured at left is program leader, Gene Seaton, and at right is club President Russ Spray.