

Foundation offers details of new grant

The Wayne County Foundation recently announced a challenge for local non-profit organizations to increase their fundraising through a match program using targeted resources from the foundation.

Steve Borchers, executive director of the Wayne County Foundation, joined "P-I Live!" last week for a discussion of that program and updates on other foundation activities in the county.

This is an excerpt from that viewer-participation show moderated by Dale McConaughay, Viewpoints editor of the Palladium-Item, who was joined by the newspaper's public affairs reporter, Bill Engle.

To view an on-demand replay of the entire show, which included an opening segment discussion with Richmond Mayor Sally Hutton, go to www.pal-item.com/pilive. The website also includes other past episodes of the Palladium-Item's weekly public affairs program featuring people and events in the news locally.

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Moderator: Early this month you had an announcement about any charitable, not-for-profit, schools, etc. in Wayne County being eligible for a new matching grant program. There are stipulations on that,

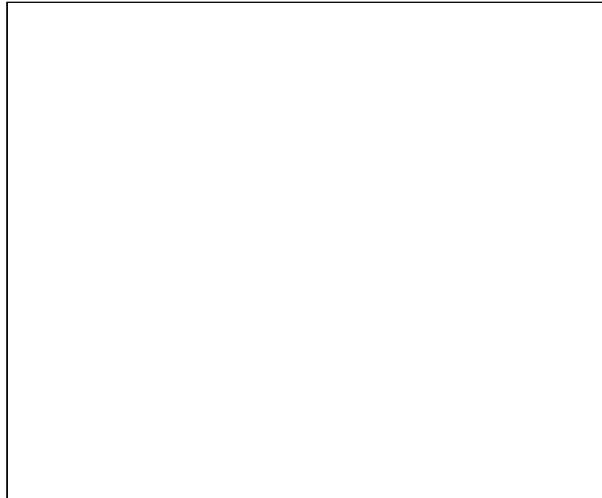
but it seems like a good deal in these hard times. Can you tell us a little more about that?

Steve Borchers: Well, we hope that it's a really good deal. It's all part of some changes we've made to the overall foundation grant-making function this year.

One of the things we've done, we used to have three cycles of competitive grant-making that were aligned with about nine different program categories. What we've done is eliminate the program categories. We've gone to two competitive grant-making cycles. One of the problems has been that there are a lot of organizations that really need operating dollars.

Operating dollars is one of the things that the foundation has not really addressed in the past. We're not very well geared to giving ownership of operating dollars because it's hard to measure. The default position has been if we make it program-based, a grant to be program-based, that's a little easier to measure, give the impact and it's more discreet. ...

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So when we went to two competitive grant-making cycles that are largely project-based, we created this challenge-match opportunity as a way for area organizations to raise operating dollars.

We budgeted \$150,000 for the challenge match initiative and we've set this up in a way so that our participation will largely be driven by the community's participation. ... It's really up to the organizations to sell their programs, sell what they do, articulate and interpret their work to the community and trigger the foundation dollars in-kind.

... We put a big emphasis on organizations attracting new donors and increased contributions from existing donors. So it's not a free-for-all. There's a little work involved here. But the organizations we talked to when we were developing this said, you know, these are the kinds of things we need to be doing anyway. This is best-practice So we have ... this idea that we will match dollars from new donors on increases in contributions from current contributors.

We have some limits based on an organization's budget size — it will be either \$5,000 or \$10,000. And we have a limit on the amount per gift per organization in an attempt to drive a broader base of participation. ...

Moderator: A lot of organizations depend on you for the help. (The Wayne County Foundation) really is a good barometer of what the needs are, and times are still tough, aren't they?

Borchers: Yes, but I'll reinforce the idea that we're not just there to help meet need but also to realize opportunity as well. So there is both, a lot of need and a lot of opportunity.

For more information about the Wayne County Foundation as well as this matching grant operation, go to www.waynecountyfoundation.org .

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