

## **2002 Annual Report Executive Summary**

### **The Town of Austin Enterprise Community**

AREC experienced a tremendous growth during 2002. – Programs, Staff, Office Space, etc. – A great deal of effort focused on community outreach. – Always keeping our Mission Statement at the forefront: “To promote and improve the quality of life for AREC residents through economic development, affordable housing, education, health care, transportations and social service projects.” Youth Development Junior Leaders of Austin Program 7th & 8th Grade junior leadership program – focus on developing leadership skills and community projects (8 students in 2002) Austin Youth Volunteer Corps Program 9th & 10th Grade – totally volunteer - outside of school times (31 students in 2002) Focus on community involvement and projects – Clearinghouse Project @ Chris Future Leaders of Austin Program 11th & 12th Grade leadership program – focus on fine tuning leadership skills and community awareness coupled with development and implementation of community projects (24 students in 2002) – constructed picnic tables and trash receptacles for Austin Park. Child Care Scholarship Program Direct subsidy for parents living within the AREC zone – allows for 12 weeks of financial assistance to working families. To date 11 families have been assisted since November. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Scott County AREC Partnership in Bowl for Kids Sake and High Five Mentoring Program (68 matches @ Austin) Education Teacher Mini-Grant Program Annually, the AREC provides mini-grants to the faculty of the Austin School system for a variety of educational programs and projects beyond normal school funding. Teacher Mini-Grants - 41 applications received in 2002 requesting \$12,600: awarded \$6,300 FAFSA Counseling Center The AREC Executive Director is certified as a FAFSA Counselor in order to provide technical assistance to families in Austin with students entering or continuing education at post-secondary or vocational schools. AREC offers direct assistance with form completion, understanding of financial aid rules, and provides assistance with on-line filing. AREC Senior Night Programs The AREC offers twice yearly programs designed to provide financial information to students/parents and college/vocational entrance information. AREC hosts the event and invites all regional and state universities and colleges along with regional and local vocational or technical colleges and all civic or philanthropic organizations providing scholarship or other financial opportunities for students. AHS Graduating Senior Scholarship Program Any graduating senior of Austin High School, planning to attend a Post Secondary School, full or part-time, is eligible to apply for this scholarship. There are ten (10) \$200 scholarships awarded to assist with the purchase of books and other school related supplies. Non-traditional Scholarship Program Any resident of the Austin Rural Enterprise Community planning to attend a Post Secondary School, full or part-time, as a returning student or entering for the first time as a non-traditional student, is eligible to apply for this scholarship in the amount of \$500.00. Three scholarships are awarded. GED Programs The AREC works in conjunction with the Scott County Literacy Council in promoting GED classes. Funding and space have been made available to assist Austin families. Housing Austin Pride Award Program The Austin PRIDE Award was designed to recognize Austin homeowners and business owners who demonstrate true PRIDE in their property and community. Each month the AREC Board of Directors will identify one residential property to be recognized during the regular AREC Board Meeting and whose property will display the AREC Austin PRIDE Award sign in their front yard. A business is selected each quarter and will display a banner announcing their award. Winners will also be announced via the Community Channel. Each winner and their families will also be recognized following the year at the Annual PRIDE Award Dinner. Eligible activities may include landscaping, exterior home repairs or additions, or the general clean up of existing property. Austin residents and the Austin Beautification Committee provide nominations for consideration. Twelve (12) residential properties recognized in 2002. Three (3) businesses recognized in 2002 Down Payment Assistance Program. The AREC offers down payment assistance to income eligible families desiring to purchase a home within the Austin EC Zone boundaries. Eligibility is based upon family size, annual household income, and credit history of the applicants. The eligible amount of assistance is determined by the “gap” need between loan

commitments and purchase price of the home. During 2002, eleven (11) applications received. To date, eight (8) applications approved. One (1) lot donated for affordable housing. One (1) lot donation pending for affordable housing Housing Rehabilitation Program The Austin Rural Enterprise Community provides deferred forgivable and low-interest loans to eligible homeowners for health and safety or weatherization repairs, such as installation of a new heating system, roof repair, screen installation, new windows, insulation, or to repair or remodel dwellings to make them accessible and useable for household members with disabilities. To be eligible for this assistance the participants must meet certain requirements, including income eligibility and home ownership. Since this program began in 2001, the AREC Housing Rehabilitation Program has helped 11 Families with much needed repair. In 2002, six successful rehabilitations were completed. During 2002, fourteen (14) applications received. To date, eleven (11) applications approved. To date, funds in the amount of \$10,000 have been donated to the Caring Construction Company under the United Way of Scott County . These funds have been used to underwrite the cost of thirty (30) handicap accessible ramps for Austin low to moderate-income residents. Families were required to meet the AREC housing rehab criteria. Audrey-Linden Neighborhood Association Program The purpose of the Audrey-Linden Neighborhood Association is to promote a better neighborhood and community through group action. Organized on June 27, 2002, the group consists of forty-five (45) property owners on Audrey Lane, Linden Drive, and the stretch of Main Street adjoining the two streets in Austin. The AREC and Executive Director Charlotte Mathis facilitated the organization of the association and are helping them to obtain a non-profit organization status. To date, forty-five (45) homeowners belong to the neighborhood association. The Audrey-Linden Neighborhood Association is now self-governing and meets on a regular schedule. Additional neighborhoods will be organized each year. Homeownership Seminars The AREC continually strives to educate the residents of Austin on the importance and responsibility of owning a home. It encourages planning and financial management. To date, the AREC has offered two homeownership seminars to the public; classes are available anytime by appointment. Yes! You Can Own a Home Seminar held at Tri-Hawk Automotive in Austin on June 18, 2002. Thirty-eight (38) residents participated. ü In December 2002, the AREC offered another homeownership seminar to the public at the AREC office. ü Homeownership/Financial literacy counseling classes offered by appointment ü The AREC operates the Live the Dream – Own a Home program in cooperation with Home Federal Bank. ü Beginning 2003, all homeowner rehab property owners will be required to participate in our Homeownership/Financial literacy-counseling program. Other Housing Activities ü OVO Transitional Housing Program Five (5) lots donated for affordable housing development as transitional/homeless units for families with children. ü Austin Woods Project AREC supported development of fifteen (15) lease/purchase modular homes utilizing Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Health Care Austin Rural Health Clinic Medical services provided by Dr. Kevin Rogers, M.D., and staff of Nurse Practitioners for sixteen (16) hours per week. Housed inside the AREC office building and funded through EC and Indiana Department of Commerce NAP Tax credit dollars. Health Care Assistance Program Cooperative program with Scott memorial Hospital providing medical services through Dr. Priscilla Villaroman. To date 25+ individuals have benefited from program, which became effective November 1st. Austin Health Fair Celebration The AREC annually sponsors the Austin Health Fair Celebration. The past two celebrations have been huge successes and have proved very beneficial to our community and its residents (attendance 1700+ for 2002). Many state and local organizations offer free health screenings, and many others are on hand to educate participants in several other areas of health care. Other features of the Annual Health Fair are the Fire Safety Trailer, Stat Flight Helicopter, and a blood drive made possible by the American Red Cross. Community Outreach Austin S.O.A.R. Awards Program Many Austin residents and employees spend time and effort to provide assistance through local organizations or their employers, which has direct benefit to our residents and works toward improving the overall quality of life for Austin. The SOAR Awards were created to publicly recognize and honor these individuals. Although most organizations have some type of recognition program or award, our residents and employees often feel as though Austin folk do not receive the same level of recognition we see in our other local communities. By providing an annual event, this will inspire other residents or employees to become

involved and help to boost our overall community pride. Psi Iota Xi/AREC partnership for Austin Library A joint venture between the AREC and a local civic group, Psi Iota Xi Sorority, a community event was held and funds were raised to purchase reference materials and collection items for the children's corner of the Austin Public Library. In addition, a computer was donated to allow Internet access. Futures Unlimited –assistance with ADA workstations A mini-grant from AREC allowed for the purchase of ADA workstations for use in a developmentally disabled program serving Austin clients. Earned Income Credit Office Provide local outreach and information regarding the Earned Income Tax Credit Program and assist local residents with earned income credit issues and filing of appropriate forms. Town Forum Program To provide opportunities for community residents to discuss local, state and regional issues through community forums. During 2002, forums included U.S. Representative Baron Hill, 9th Congressional District, Indiana State Senator Jim Lewis, State Representatives Dennie Oxley and Terry Goodin, and staff members for U.S. Senators Richard Lugar and Evan Bayh. Other Community Outreach Efforts ü American Red Cross – disaster services program ü Scott County Emergency Management Program – Executive Director serves on County Crisis Team ü Jennings Township Volunteer Fire Department – continue to fund and assist with needed equipment ü LifeLong Learning Center – continue to support educational programs from birth to death ü Scott County Community Clearinghouse – funds provided for utility and rent assistance – volunteer efforts for holiday food and toy baskets Economic Development Austin Main Street Program A National Main Street program was initiated by the AREC in conjunction with the Town of Austin. AREC is the Main Street Governing Body with the AREC Executive Director serving as the Main Street Director. Focus will be on economic redevelopment, design, promotion and organization for the newly created Austin Main Street District. RLF Loan Program Business development loans totaling \$135,500 were awarded to 3 new enterprises, which include a legal services office, a multiuse banquet/retail center and a daycare facility. AREC Business Inventory Guide Created a biannual inventory guide of existing community business which provided valuable information for business recruitment, microenterprise development, research, community statistics and “where to call” local resources.