



# Lake Views

Spring 2010  
Volume 29, Issue 1

## MWCD survey says?

### Information key for planning in 2010, beyond

We asked you for some input and help. Thank you very much for taking the time to get back to us.

Late in 2009, the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) mailed nearly 7,700 customer satisfaction surveys to its five primary customer groups. These groups are cottage site lessees, seasonal campers, overnight campers, vacation cabin guests and dockers at MWCD marinas.

More than 2,100 surveys were returned to the MWCD. Responses will help MWCD staff members in evaluating the district's facilities, services to its guests and planning for the future.

"We have always emphasized an open line of communication with our visitors, guests and lessees," said Scott Barnhart, MWCD's chief of recreation. "This survey proves that we need to ask for input on a regular basis so that we can meet the needs and expectations of our visitors, guests and lessees."

In 2009, the MWCD Board of Directors adopted a goal stating: "To address our recreation operations in light of current economic conditions and customer



*Many of the respondents to the customer satisfaction surveys from the MWCD indicated that they supported the security services offered by the MWCD on land and water.*

demands."

To meet this goal, the MWCD determined that it needed to measure customer satisfaction and solicit feedback on a regular basis. The customer satisfaction survey was one of the tools implemented to gauge the performance of the MWCD staff and facilities, and to measure the needs and demands of the MWCD's guests and customers.

MWCD staff has been using the information to make improvements as identified through the surveys, as well as to consider planning goals in the immediate and long-range future.

A statistical review of the surveys was presented to the Board of Directors and staff. A summary can be found on the MWCD website at [www.mwcd.org](http://www.mwcd.org).

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## Lake Views

Published by:  
Muskingum Watershed  
Conservancy District  
1319 Third St. NW  
P.O. Box 349  
New Philadelphia, Ohio  
44663-0349  
Telephone: (330) 343-6647  
Toll-free: (877) 363-8500  
Internet: www.mwcd.org  
e-mail: lakeviews@mwcd.org

Call, write or e-mail for free subscription

Office hours:  
Monday-Thursday 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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### Mission Statement

*Responsible stewards dedicated to conservation, recreation and flood control in the Muskingum River Watershed, striving to enhance the quality of life in the region.*

# In memory of ...

## Raymond Eichel, led MWCD during career of 40-plus years

The Muskingum River Basin and Ohio lost one of the state's long-time water management and conservation leaders when Raymond E. Eichel died March 10, 2010, at the age of 89.

Eichel was the former general manager and secretary-treasurer of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) over a 24-year period from 1965 to 1989. Only the MWCD's second chief



**EICHEL**

executive, Eichel served the MWCD for 43 years prior to his retirement.

"Mr. Eichel served the MWCD and the citizens of the Muskingum River Watershed with commitment and honor," said John M. Hoopingarner, MWCD executive director/secretary. "He was well known throughout Ohio and provided a great deal of knowledge and assistance for programs that benefited the state's residents."

Eichel held numerous leadership roles around the State of Ohio, including with the Ohio Conservancy District Conference and

the Ohio Parks and Recreation Advisory Council. He served three terms as chairman of the Conference during his 25 years with the organization, and spent three terms as chairman of the Council over a 20-year period.

He also was a member of the Ohio Resources and Recreation Commission on an appointment from the governor, a member and former trustee of the Water Management Association of Ohio, a member of the National Recreation and Park Association, Ohio River Basin Commission, Ohio Mid-Eastern Government Association, National Watershed Congress, Malabar Advisory Council and the Muskingum River Basin Advisory Committee.

He was inducted into both the Ohio Conservation Hall of Fame and the Ohio Water Management Hall of Fame in 1990, following his retirement.

He also was recognized by the School of Natural Resources at Ohio State University as a member of its "Honorary 100" distinguished alumni group.

Eichel was the second executive leader of the MWCD, following Bryce C. Browning.

He is survived by two adult children. His wife Donna, whom he was married to for 63 years, died in 2005.

# Richard Eschbaugh, Seneca Park linked together for over 40 years

Richard H. Eschbaugh was a Seneca Lake Park institution.

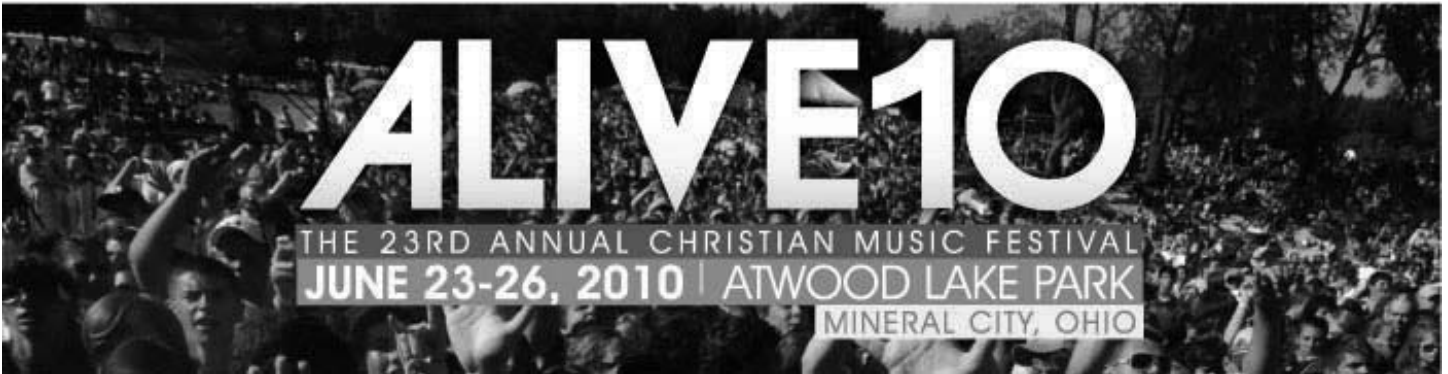
Eschbaugh, who had a career of more than 41 years at the park and spent many years as the park superintendent, died Jan. 15, 2010.

A Korean War veteran who served in the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Division in the U.S. Army, Eschbaugh was awarded the Bronze Star and the Campaign Ribbon with four battle stars.

Following his military service, Eschbaugh began his work for the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District at Seneca Lake Park.

He served in various capacities at the park for more than 15 years before being named park superintendent.

Eschbaugh was the park superintendent for 25 years prior to his retirement. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Eloise, and two adult children.



# ‘Alive’ at Atwood in June

## Lineup set, campgrounds prepare for 4-day festival

The Alive Festival is ready for its first four-day run at Atwood Lake Park from June 23-26.

The contemporary Christian music event that attracts visitors from around the United States and Canada, will feature more than 50 artists and speakers.

A complete lineup of performers and speakers, as well as early discount ticket information and details about camping, as well as other overnight stay options, is available at the Alive Festival website at [www.alive.org](http://www.alive.org), or by calling (330) 966-0023.

Alive 2010 will be the first year that the festival will be held at Atwood Lake Park. In 2009, Alive officials and the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) signed an agreement to host the festival at Atwood Lake Park beginning in 2010. The park – which has more than 600 permanent campsites along with cabins, a swimming beach, hiking trails and activities all summer long – is located along Atwood Lake in Carroll and Tuscarawas counties.

“The Alive Festival is now in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year of presenting the best contemporary Christian music performers and speakers for church groups, youth groups and families,” said Bill Graening, Alive Festival director. “We are eagerly anticipating the 2010 festival at beautiful and expansive Atwood Lake Park as the beginning of a new and exciting chapter in the festival’s successful history.”

A secluded 7-acre grass amphitheater inside the park has been prepared for the festival. The area includes development of a 40-by-70-foot temporary stage and two giant 15-by-20-foot video walls. Space also is being prepared for food vendors and other vendors that take part in the event. Graening said nearly 10,000 people are expected to camp at the park during the festival, while others will stay at Atwood Lodge and at area hotels and motels.

The area’s overnight lodging destinations and tourism agencies have cooperated with Alive Festival officials in promoting the event.

“The economic benefits to the region from a tourism perspective



*The staging area for the Alive Festival is located inside Atwood Lake Park.*

that will be created by the Alive Festival will be enormous,” said Dee Grossman, executive director of the Tuscarawas County Convention and Visitors Bureau. “When you consider that many people attending the performances and events associated with the festival will be spending at least one and possibly several nights in the area, and that in addition to the ticket prices, each attendee will be purchasing meals, gas, souvenirs and other items, the impact will be a wonderful – and much needed – boost to the economy.

“We also believe that once new visitors see what is available here, they will come back; and as returning visitors see additions to our tourism product, they will plan future visits as well.”

Work at the festival site inside Atwood Lake Park began during 2009 and will be completed for Alive 2010, said Scott Barnhart, MWCD’s chief of recreation.

MWCD and Alive Festival staff members also have developed strategies to address traffic flow, safety planning, information services and more, Barnhart said.

Festival fans can purchase tickets and reserve camping sites through the Alive website, Graening said. A full schedule and updates are posted to [www.alive.org](http://www.alive.org).

# Options sought for Lodge

The future of Atwood Lodge has been the focus of concern for the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) over the past several years. The MWCD owns the facility located in Carroll County.

Lagging business, a challenging economy and rising costs of operation and maintenance are primary factors that have prompted action by the MWCD Board of Directors to address the situation.

“We cannot afford to continue to operate Atwood Lodge beyond the 2010 season,” said John M. Hoopingarner, executive director/secretary of the MWCD.

The MWCD Board of Directors has committed to keep the lodge open until early October. In the meantime, the Board has directed the MWCD staff to prepare and implement a plan to divest the lodge from MWCD operations. The facility has been in continuous operation since it opened in 1965.

The lodge operation consists of a 104-room hotel, restaurant, meeting center, two golf courses (an 18-hole course and a nine-hole, lighted par-3 course), 17 vacation cabins and indoor and outdoor swimming pools situated on 600 acres overlooking Atwood Lake.

Operating losses of more than \$1 million in 2009 coupled with cumulative losses in previous years have prompted this action.

“This has been a very difficult decision for the obvious reasons – dedicated employees could be losing their jobs, public services supported by the taxes paid by the lodge could be affected and the long service to the community by the lodge may be coming to an end,” Hoopingarner said. “But despite the tremendous efforts of federal, state, county and local leaders, as well as business officials, the economic challenges simply are too great to overcome.

“The MWCD is hopeful, along with many others, that a new direction can be identified for the lodge, and that it will be a positive contributor to the region for generations to come.”

The MWCD said that room occupancy for 2009 was slightly more than 30 percent,



*Atwood Lake Lodge has been a fixture in the lake community of Carroll and Tuscarawas counties since it opened in 1965.*

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**Room occupancy for 2009 was slightly more than 30 percent, with an estimated 60-percent occupancy rate needed to break even.**

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The MWCD has worked throughout the past year with various entities interested in the continued operation of Atwood Lake Resort in its present or other capacities, Hoopingarner said. In September, the MWCD, Carroll County commissioners and Kent State University Tuscarawas agreed to form a partnership for potential grant funding and/or other possible opportunities. The MWCD also advertised this fall for proposals for the outright purchase of the resort from interested buyers without success.

The MWCD currently is working with leading experts in the resort industry to develop a solution.

Board members have heard from several community leaders and public officials who urged the Board to consider keeping the lodge

open until other options could be identified and implemented.

Hoopingarner said MWCD officials have discussed the situation with public officials and community leaders from both Carroll and Tuscarawas counties, and federal and state legislators, who have been working closely with MWCD officials to develop a plan for the continued operation of the resort.

“Despite the best efforts of all involved, the continued ownership of the lodge by the MWCD, which is a government agency dedicated to flood reduction and water conservation, is not appropriate and is an increasing operational and financial burden on our primary mission to serve the residents and property owners of the Muskingum River Watershed,” Hoopingarner said.

■ See LODGE ... Page 5

# Golf cart policy takes effect

A policy to legalize the use of golf carts on property of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) takes effect in the spring of 2010.

Based on the recommendations of a task force that held meetings and conducted research on the topic, the MWCD Board of Directors approved a golf cart policy in 2009. Owners of golf carts who meet equipment standards and pass an inspection can license their cart and acquire a permit from the MWCD to legally operate the carts on MWCD roadways and property.

Inspections of golf carts can be scheduled with MWCD staff members. The MWCD is conducting the inspections free of charge for golf cart owners. The MWCD is receiving no licensing fees or other payments from the

State of Ohio for the program.

Because most of the MWCD roadways are identified as public roadways by the State of Ohio, they are subject to the state's traffic laws, which include the operation of golf carts.

Ohio law requires that the MWCD develop a policy and regulations for the legal operation of golf carts on MWCD roadways and property.

The task force was comprised of seasonal campers, cottage site lessees, youth camp managers, adjacent property owners, MWCD Development Advisory Committee members and MWCD staff members. Input also was received from the Ohio Department of Public Safety and the Ohio Attorney General.

A copy of the policy and regulations, as well as additional information, are available online at [www.mwcd.org](http://www.mwcd.org), at the MWCD main office at New Philadelphia and at each of the five MWCD lake park offices (Atwood, Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, Seneca and Tappan lakes).

The MWCD policy applies only to golf carts operated on MWCD public roadways and property. It does not cover the operation of golf carts on any other public roadways, public property or private roads and private property.

For more information, or to schedule an inspection and obtain permits, contact Tony Luther at the MWCD toll-free at (877) 363-8500 Ext. 2273, or at [tluther@mwcd.org](mailto:tluther@mwcd.org).

## Lodge

from Page 4

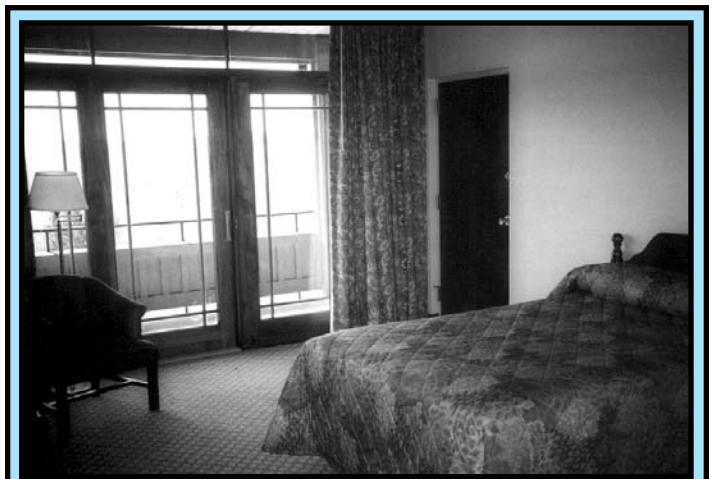
It would not be fair nor possible to increase lease rates and/or camping and docking fees for the other recreational programs operated by the MWCD to cover the additional costs needed to keep the lodge open, Hoopingartner said. The losses sustained by Atwood Lodge have seriously impaired the ability of the MWCD to make improvements at its other recreation facilities in the Muskingum River Watershed, he added.

Atwood Lodge is one of Carroll County's top employers, according to county officials. It also pays significant taxes to the county and township where it is located, as well as bed taxes that assist the Carroll County Convention and Visitors Bureau in its work to market the county as a tourist and overnight destination. During recent years, the lodge has had an annual payroll of nearly \$2 million and paid more than \$300,000 per year in real estate and other taxes to local governments. During peak operations, it employs about 150 workers.

The MWCD, a political subdivision of the state, was organized in 1933 to develop and implement a plan to reduce flooding and conserve water for beneficial public uses in the Muskingum River Basin, the largest wholly contained watershed in Ohio. Since their construction, the reservoirs (including Atwood Lake) and dams in the MWCD region have been credited for saving more than 7 billion worth of potential property damage from flooding, according to the federal government.

Funds collected by the MWCD assessment of property owners in the region for maintenance and rehabilitation of the reservoirs and dams are prohibited by law from being used to financially support operations at Atwood Lodge, Hoopingartner said.

For more information about Atwood Lodge, or to make a reservation, visit [www.atwoodlakeresort.com](http://www.atwoodlakeresort.com) or call toll-free (888) 819-8042.



## Atwood Lodge

- \* Opened in 1965
- \* 104 guest rooms
- \* Meeting facilities
- \* Restaurant
- \* 17 vacation cabins
- \* 2 golf courses
- \* Indoor and outdoor pools



*The horse camp area inside Pleasant Hill Lake Park offers spacious pads designed to accommodate trucks and trailers.*

# Horse camp offers space

Section at Pleasant Hill Lake Park provides 24 camping pads

Equine enthusiasts can enjoy the growing trail system in Ohio's Mohican Country with overnight stays available for riders and their horses and equipment at Pleasant Hill Lake Park.

The park has opened 24 camping pads in a separate portion of the park that are large enough to accommodate trucks, trailers and other needs. An additional 13 unpadded sites also are located in the horse camp area.

The bridle and hiking trails around the park located in Ashland and Richland counties connect to nearby Malabar Farm State Park and offer scenic overlooks and some old growth forests. Winding streams, rock outcroppings and waterfalls are located along the trail.

More than 40 miles of trail are available to riders and

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**Reservations are available by  
contacting the park at (419) 938-7884  
or via e-mail at [pleasanthill@mwcd.org](mailto:pleasanthill@mwcd.org)**

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horses.

Reservations for camping at the horse camp inside Pleasant Hill Lake Park are available by contacting the park by telephone at (419) 938-7884 or by e-mail at [pleasanthill@mwcd.org](mailto:pleasanthill@mwcd.org). Campsites are available for \$16 per night and group camping events are welcome subject to availability. Details also are available at [www.mwcd.org](http://www.mwcd.org).

# MWCD to manage Piedmont Marina

Piedmont Marina and the marina campgrounds are now being operated by the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD).

The marina is open seven days a week and has a new telephone number at (740) 658-1029.

Beginning May 28 and through the summer recreation season, the marina will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days

a week.

The marina features boat docking, fuel, boat rentals, basic supplies and a lunch counter.

It also has a campground with 90 sites, a six-room motel and a cabin. Piedmont Marina is located a short drive from the intersection of Rts. 22 and 800 on the borders of Belmont, Guernsey and Harrison counties.

The previous owner's lease for the

operation of the marina was terminated at the end of last year.

Rates for the campgrounds are available at the MWCD website at [www.mwcd.org](http://www.mwcd.org), via e-mail at [tappan@mwcd.org](mailto:tappan@mwcd.org), or by calling (740) 922-3649.

Rates for docking boats at the marina in 2010 also are available via e-mail at [info@mwcd.org](mailto:info@mwcd.org), or by calling the marina or the MWCD at (877) 363-8500.

## Camping, docking, cabin rates 'frozen'

The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) is not increasing fees for camping, vacation cabin rentals and overnight docking in 2010.

Members of the MWCD Board of Directors agreed during recent meeting to freeze rates for the year in preparation for the summer recreation seasons.

"Given the current economic conditions and the feedback we have received from our guests, we believe it is appropriate to maintain rates for the upcoming year," said Scott Barnhart, MWCD's chief of recreation.

For overnight docking, eligible boat owners will pay annual fees of \$60 for overnight docking for one boat and \$210 apiece for additional boats.

It will be the fourth consecutive year that the docking rates have not been increased. Boat owners who obtain docking space from a marina located at an MWCD lake pay fees established by each marina.

The MWCD operates lake parks featuring overnight camping at Atwood, Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, Seneca and Tappan lakes. Camping is available all year long and the parks are fully operational with scheduled events and activities from the Memorial Day through Labor Day holiday weekends. The MWCD also operates campgrounds at Leesville Lake (near Clow's Marina), along the North Fork of the Kokosing River in Knox County and at Piedmont Marina.

Also for the fourth consecutive year, rates will not be increased at the family vacation cabins located at four lake parks. Rates at the family vacation cabins located at Atwood, Pleasant Hill, Seneca and Tappan lake parks have not been increased since 2007.



## Tappan Lake Park honors long-time camper

*Tappan Lake Park and the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District celebrated the end of an era when one of the park's long-time campers, Chuck Foster, announced he was "retiring" from camping after the 2009 season. Foster, who spent several decades at the campgrounds and was a volunteer who provided assistance to the Tappan staff over the years, was honored at a party held at the park. He received a certificate of appreciation and a plaque to commemorate the occasion. Foster (center), poses for a photo with Scott Barnhart (left), MWCD's chief of recreation, and John Birney (right), Tappan Lake Park Manager. Foster was the first official volunteer in the MWCD lake parks and received the honor of "Campground Volunteer Emeritus" by the MWCD Board of Directors in 1994. He is the only volunteer to have received this recognition.*

## Does your group need a speaker?

Area groups and organizations in the Muskingum River Watershed in need of presentations for their business meetings can call on the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) for help.

The MWCD has staff members available who can provide details about the conservancy district's history, mission, operations and more. MWCD speakers can provide Power Point slide presentations, distribute handouts on their topic and answer questions.

For more details or to "book" a speaking engagement, please contact Darrin Lautenschleger at the MWCD main office at New Philadelphia by calling toll-free at (877) 363-8500 Ext. 2226, or by sending an e-mail to [darrin@mwcd.org](mailto:darrin@mwcd.org).



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