

IN RECOGNITION OF THE PAST

FRI JUN 25 2004

Underground Railroad Tableau To Honor ① Contributions Of Area Participants

By MANLEY ANDERSON

David W. Shepherd, administrative assistant to Assemblyman William L. Parment, R-North Harmony, read a book — *The Debt* — and it gave him an idea.

That idea will literally be translated as a bronze tableau, expected to be completed in three or four years as a three-figure sculpture by local artist David Poulin and placed in Dow Park opposite James Prendergast Library.

Shepherd explained that the book's story opened in the rotunda of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., and contained several paintings of various presidents. He said the author noted that very little of public art reflected contributions of people of color or the experiences of African Americans in the United States.

The national census of 1860, according to Shepherd, showed the value of the country's slaves to be greater than the combined worth of all of the nation's banks and railroads.

"That, to me," he said, "demonstrated the value of the uncompensated labor of the slaves to the capital value of the country."

Shepherd's thoughts after reading the book were the impetus for formation of the steering committee for "The Underground Railroad Tableau Project."

See TABLEAU on Page A-6



Diane Peterson of the Underground Railroad Tableau Steering Committee speaks during a presentation in Dow Park on Thursday.

P-J photo John Whittaker