

Chinese delegation looks at how Evansville cleaned up, restored former scrapyard

Working to protect the earth for future generations

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EVANSVILLE — Evansville's landscaping at the Civic Center and the Ford Center impressed Ping He, president of the Washington office for the International Fund for China's Environment (IFCE), during a visit to the city Wednesday.

He was part of a Chinese delegation that visited the Pigeon Creek Greenway Passage's Mead Johnson Trailhead, to inspect the park and the Shirley James Gateway Plaza, which previously was a General Waste Products salvage yard littered with scrap and toxic materials.

Glenn R. Boberg, Evansville's Department of Parks and Recreation deputy director, said the Chinese engineers, scientists and presidents of various agencies were "looking at how the U.S. is taking our environmental trouble areas — junkyards, salvage yards — and converting them into other uses and how to do that."

When He returns home to China, he's planning to take this "know-how" with him.

"We are sharing one Earth, so we're working together in cooperation between the U.S. and China to protect the Earth for future generations," He said.

The delegation, made up of two groups, the North Engineering Design Academy of Research and IFCE, was brought to the U.S. by Apex Companies LLC and Hunsucker Goodstein and Nelson PC (HGN).

Apex prepared the remediation plan and conducted the total cleanup of the former General Waste site in Evansville, and HGN managed the financial and administrative duties of the Pigeon Creek Greenway Trust Fund.

"From seeing what it looked like the first day I stepped foot on the property to now, it's hard to believe it's the same piece of property," Terrie Swanson, project manager for Apex Companies, said.

The Evansville visit was part of a two-week trip to view similar sites across the country.

Miles Bolton, Apex Companies director, said the tourists were impressed with what

they saw and learned in Evansville.

Ruijie Li, director of Municipal Environment Engineering Design Institute, smiled and said he was happy to visit Evansville's beautiful city that is concerned about the environment. Li thanked everyone for the opportunity to learn from the United States.

"So we can do a better job in China with environment protection," Li said. "So we can build a beautiful Earth together."

Evansville and the Indiana Department of Transportation built the trailhead with more than \$2 million in federal funds, riverboat taxes and a donation from Mead Johnson. The trailhead and the first phase of the greenway was completed in 2007.

Boberg said the sixth and final phase of the project, the Industrial Corridor, is scheduled to be finished around October.



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