

FROM YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Legacy of Ohio's 2003 Bicentennial Bell Program Still Celebrating Medina's History

By: State Representative, **STEVE HAMBLEY**

In 2002, the Ohio General Assembly created the Ohio Bicentennial Commission to oversee the celebration of 200 years of statehood in 2003. While bicentennial festivities occurred across the state, the Ohio Bicentennial Commission had at least one barn in each of Ohio's 88 counties painted with the bicentennial logo and also had 90 bicentennial bells cast – one for each county and one for both the Ohio House and Ohio Senate. The Verdin Company of Cincinnati was hired to develop the "World's Only Bell Foundry on Wheels" and cast these bells throughout the state.

While Ohio was the 17th state in the union, the Medina County Bicentennial Bell was the 17th bell cast in the two-year bell program that cost Ohio about \$1.9 million. The Brunswick Old Fashioned Days Festival (BOFD) was chosen to host the two-day bell-casting event for Medina County. At the opening ceremony of Friday, June 21, 2002, State Representative Chuck Calvert, Brunswick City Mayor Michael Hanes, Brunswick Old Fashioned Days Festival President Kevin Schemrick and myself representing the County Commissioners, officiated. During the ceremony, a "bronze ingot chain" involving children representing each elementary school throughout the Medina County was used to load the foundry with ingots that weighed two to three pounds each. This way, the next generation of Medina Countians

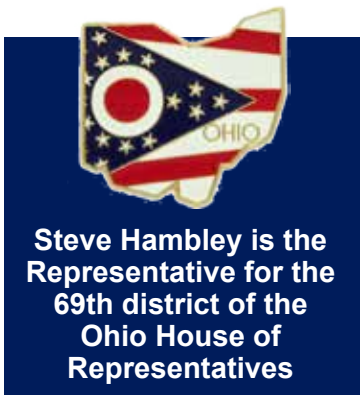
had a hand in commemorating the prior generations of our great county. Four hundred pounds of ingots were then heated in the portable foundry to 2200 F° using propane that was provided by The Gas House of Brunswick. Later that evening, the Verdin Company employees poured the molten metal into the bell mold as BOFD visitors watched.

The next day at noon, at the breaking of the mold ceremony, Wadsworth businessman and WWII Pearl Harbor Veteran, Everett F. Peters, Jr, as well as Ohio State Senator Ron Amstutz officiated. The 230-pound bell was then sanded and polished, so it could be etched with the name of Medina County and the Ohio bicentennial logo. Later that day, the polished bell was officially presented to the Board of Medina County Commissioners by State Representative Chuck Calvert on behalf of the State of Ohio. While everyone in attendance was invited to ring the bell, the honor of the first ringing was given to John Root, President of Al Root Company of Medina. After the BOFD celebration was over, the bell briefly traveled throughout the county at other community events through the bicentennial year. After a brief time in storage, it was later placed in the new lobby of the Medina County Prosecutors Building.

This year, in celebration of the Medina County Bicentennial, the Medina County



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Commissioners have literally taken the bell "on the road." They have mounted it to a trailer and will be traveling around the county at several community events and parades so that the public can once again see and hear the Ohio Bicentennial Bell. As I stated at the time of these ceremonies, the bell is not the commissioner's bell. It belongs to the people of Medina County.

The Ohio Bicentennial Bell program had three goals – educate, celebrate and commemorate. The ringing of a bell is meant to draw attention, very clearly to something important. Back in 2002,

it was a reminder to educate ourselves about our history, to celebrate our freedoms, and commemorate those who sacrificed to preserve our way of life. Today in celebration of Medina County's Bicentennial,

that repeated ringing of the Ohio Bicentennial Bell should encourage us to do the same: educate, celebrate and commemorate the rich history of our 200-year-old county, as well as our great nation.





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