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**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:**

**"IN THE
SPOTLIGHT"
WITH LAMAR
KOONTZ**

**JULY
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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**"IN THE SPOTLIGHT" WITH LAMAR
KOONTZ**

Lamar Koontz has had a successful year. Over the past few months, she has helped La Porte County's Local Coordinating Council boast tremendous growth in participation and membership. She has been rewarded for her hard work by being nominated the Indiana Prevention Resource Center's July Prevention Professional of the Month. "It's nice to be recognized," Koontz said warmly.

Koontz currently serves as the Coordinator for the Drug Partnership of the Local Coordinating Council in La Porte County.

Throughout her career, Koontz has been a valuable advocate for public health and safety. As nursing major at Pasadena City Community College, Koontz never imagined that her future could be in something other than nursing. However, a professor inspired her to think of her life in terms of having a duty to better the public. "The head person at the nursing school said [that] many of you might quit actively practicing nursing as an R.N....you [still] need to be involved in good community health," she explained. "When my children were still in school in 1979, the drug problem was bad nation wide. Because of my children, I tried to get involved (with prevention)."

Koontz followed her high school sweet heart-turned-husband to La Porte County, Indiana. It was there that she started her prevention career. She helped lead a youth anti-drug group in the local school system. The program was so successful, with about twenty to twenty-five members, that the school superintendent asked her to work for the La Porte County's Drug Free School Program.

After completing five years with the program, Koontz moved on to work with the Red Cross. "When I worked for the Red Cross I applied

for a grant from the LCC...for student peer HIV/AIDS/Drug and Alcohol education in the local middle and high schools," she said, noting the lack of community awareness of the problem.

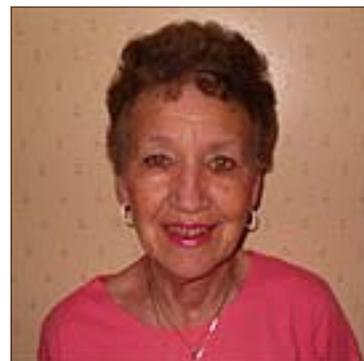
Shortly following her retirement from the Red Cross, Koontz was offered the position of the Coordinator for the Local Coordinating Council (LCC) for La Porte County. She gladly accepted.

With the LCC, Koontz has worked on numerous programs for La Porte County. Her current project, "Teen Nights," is a program that offers teens safe social get-togethers with activities that are planned and coordinated by the youth and held all over the county to maximize participants. "We've had several events for 'Teen Nights,' but not enough," Koontz explained. "The concept is really a good one, [although] it's not a total success yet." The La Porte County LCC provides adult leadership and funding for the program.

Also during the past year, the La Porte County LCC has been meeting with all the schools in the county to explore the possibility of joining together to apply for a federal grant. This grant would enable county middle schools to put science-based prevention into their curriculum.

Koontz's greatest goal this year, to increase participation in the committee meetings, has met with tremendous success. Using a new bi-monthly meeting schedule, Koontz said that attendance for the meetings has increased greatly this year. "We have an average attendance of about thirty-five at our meetings," she said. "And have forty-two agencies involved."

The participation increase has inspired Koontz the most. "Our Treatment Committee has taken on the daunting task of bringing residential treatment to our



community. It's coming along," Koontz explained. "The Justice Committee decided they wanted to work on underage drinking and driving and created a wonderful brochure...now our Prevention Committee is working on teen activities. We've had our greatest increases in seventh and eighth grades, [so] our activities will be focused on seventh and eighth grades." Koontz added that the council has recruited youth representatives for their advisory committee as well.

"Our committees are taking ownership of problems and coming up with solutions," she added. "I think that's one of the best things we've done."

This year, Koontz and the La Porte County LCC, under the leadership and direction of Circuit Court Judge Robert Gilmore, will be teaming up with the Juvenile Services Symposium to hold a summit on addiction in La Porte County on October 15, 2004.

Koontz has been with the LCC for five years now. LCCs are funded by the state government through the Governor's Commission for a Drug Free Indiana. There is one LCC for every ninety-two Indiana counties.

"This job just gets busier and busier," she added. "I probably should retire from this job, too, but I can't. I love it."