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Cedarville Leaders and Students Plan Village Revitalization

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- What do you do when you love your village and have a vision for how it might continue to grow and flourish? For three local Cedarville couples, the answer is obvious: you beautify it.

Tom and Deidre Sizer, Randy and Deb Strobridge, and Eddie and Carol Ropp are joining forces with the village of Cedarville and Cedarville University industrial and innovative design (IID) students to revitalize downtown.

The project began in March 2021 and seeks to enhance the infrastructure and aesthetics of downtown Cedarville through cleaning, maintenance, design and construction projects. It is focusing on the intersection of routes 72 and 42 up to Colonial's Pizza on Cedar Street.

"We want to make downtown a welcoming place for students, visitors, and residents," Randy Strobridge said.

"We view ourselves as facilitators who are getting things moving," [Deidre Sizer](#) added. "We're working with village maintenance workers, the mayor, the chief of police and many others to kickstart the process the right way." In addition to her involvement with the revitalization, Sizer is also the tutoring and office coordinator at [the Cove](#).

Already, the group has painted sidewalk curbs, cut brush in the alley behind Beans-n-Cream, pulled weeds, painted the Barber of the 'Ville storefront, finished stonework on an undeveloped storefront, and trimmed trees. Additionally, Ropp has been in communication with the township and village to commission a mural on old firehouse garage doors located behind the Cedarville Opera House.

In addition to construction and cleanup, the six-person group has contacted business owners in town, discussed fundraising and grant-writing and sought out designs from junior and senior IID students currently studying at the [International Center for Creativity](#) in Dublin, Ohio, which is Cedarville's education partner for the final two years of the program.

"They're excited about helping us," Ropp noted. "The students at the ICC lived here for two years, and so they definitely have a vested interest in coming back, helping out, and sharing ideas."

ICC instructors have divided students into five groups, with each focusing on different areas of downtown. Initial designs will be presented in early October, at which point ICC students and officials will walk through downtown to discuss preliminary ideas. Final designs are due November 18.

"We're anticipating some pretty large overhauls in the ICC designs, so we'll likely pick and adapt them to choose what works best for the town, business owners and available funds," Sizer added.

“We love that business owners have been on board and that people want to come alongside and help us,” Strobridge said. “People are talking with each other, and if we can make that happen — motivate them to improve downtown, see the big picture, encourage collaboration — then we’ve done our job.”

The ICC is a Columbus, Ohio-based firm that delivers "creativity" consultation for companies, artists and individuals, and partners with Cedarville University to deliver a cutting-edge, industrial and innovative design major. Cedarville University is the only Christian university in the nation to offer a degree in industrial and innovative design.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,715 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including the [Bachelor of Arts in Innovative and Industrial Design program](#), strong graduation, and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit cedarville.edu.

Written by Heidie Raine