

# Controversy surrounds proposal bid for Laurelton Center

By: Sue Getz

LAURELTON – Some residents of Union County living near Laurelton have raised opposition to the sale of the Laurelton Center to a company planning to turn the facility into a drug-alcohol treatment center and community corrections center.

According to Rick Kerstetter, a Hartley Township resident who live near the former state center, a group of residents is banding together to oppose the plans.

Kerstetter has been posting fliers and information throughout the community to help form a task force to rally the community against the sale.

The group will meet at 7 p.m. on Jan. 5 at the Laurelton Community Center to come up with a plan.

Firetree Inc., the company interested in purchasing the property has offered a bid of \$885,000 for the property. The company started negotiations with the state earlier this month, but have not been completed.

Kerstetter said hundreds of residents in Laurelton and Hartley Township are banding together to oppose the sale of the property to Firetree.

Concerns about the sale focus around three main issues: security, loss of tax revenue and jobs. There is also a concern about the impact the proposed facility would have on the rural community.

Hartley Township officials have stated the property is not zoned for what Firetree would want to do, so it would have to be a change in zoning, and the company has not yet applied for a zoning change. In order for the zoning to be changed, a public hearing would have to be held giving residents the chance to speak for or against the project.

For more information about the task force against the proposed sale of the property, Kerstetter can be reached at 922-4634 or by e-mailing to whitetailpa@aol.com.