



PHOTO BY GIBBIE BUCHHOLTZ FOR THE ZION-BENTON NEWS

The Zion Student Advisory Council was recognized at the May 15th Zion Township Board meeting.

## *Student Advisory Council gives input to Township*

Getting feedback and advice from adults is rarely an issue, but what Cheri Ditzig, Zion Township Supervisor, was interested in was input from youth in the community. With the blessing and support of Zion Elementary District Superintendent John Ahlgrim, Katrina Wiltse of Beulah Park School and Ditzig constructed a plan to create a Zion Student Advisory Council made up of youth from third thru eighth grade from every grade school in Zion.

Zion Township staff served as bus drivers to transport youth from the different schools to the quarterly meetings. Youth met at Zion City Hall where Commissioner Frank Flammini shared with them the ins and outs of recycling in the city. Sgt. Terry Richards, Lts. Kevin Leslie and Kirk Henderson met with the youth at Zion Police Department to talk about community issues.

Merleanne Rampale from SWALCO also met with them to share information on recycling. And youth took a field trip to Veolia Zion Landfill where Jim Lewis, the General Manager, shared with them what it takes to construct and operate a landfill and the importance of recycling.

When surveyed about what their greatest concerns were, their number one issue was potholes. When asked why, youth shared stories of getting injured while riding their bikes or walking and a mom who damaged her car and got a flat tire. Charlie Fisher, met with the students and shared with them how potholes are created and what they can do when they have one they are concerned about.

At the May 15th Town Board meeting, student advisory council members, as well as the advisors from each of the schools, were honored by Supervisor Ditzig and the trustees.

"We hope to make this program stronger next year, empowering the kids to not wait til they grow up, but to begin leading now," said Ditzig.

Youth are chosen to represent their school from their respective student councils.