

Council discusses GPS and levee work

By Jim Rudisill

A proposal to improve farming operations in the area by installing a GPS receiver and antenna on the Columbus Junction water tower will be considered by the city council, which received a presentation on the plan during the council's March 11 regular meeting. Tom Poeltler, general manager and co-owner of Elder Implement, Muscatine, and several other company representatives told the council the equipment would allow farmers to follow earlier field routes more closely and improve cultivation procedures. "Farmers will be able to drive their tractor within one inch (of a previously traveled route) year after year," Poeltler said.

Elder Implement currently has locations in Muscatine, Durant, Mediapolis, Winfield and Houghton and the representatives said they have already completed arrangements with other organizations and agencies to install similar equipment that would provide service within a 13-county area of eastern Iowa and western Illinois. The representatives said water towers are the preferred site to locate the equipment because of their stability and height. However, elevators and grain legs have also been used. Farmers in one area can pick up signals from a different ground receiver if they have fields outside of their normal location, company representatives said.

Poeltler said the company had agreed to pay \$500 annually for the other sites and suggested that amount for Columbus Junction. "It's not a large revenue stream for us. It's basically a service to our customers," he told the council.

There is currently communication equipment installed on the tower that is used by the local ambulance service and the school. City officials also said they had been cautious when they had been approached a few years ago and asked to approve using the tower for other communication purposes. In that instance the proposal never went any further, but they remained concerned about potentially creating a precedent for more equipment requests.



Levee south of Fairgrounds which will be eligible for SBDC Grant consideration

City officials agreed to ask city attorney Tim Wink to review a proposed contract. The council also authorized two company representatives to climb the tower and take pictures that will be sent to a St. Louis company that would install the equipment. The company would develop a design plan that would be presented to the city council at its March 25 meeting. Council members indicated they would consider the proposal after Wink reviews the contract and the design plan is presented.

In other action, the council approved a resolution to seek a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to repair sections of the Iowa River levee. According to the resolution, the city experienced the loss of vital infrastructure that adversely affected the city and its residents because of the unprecedented flooding to hit the city during the summer of 2008. The city now intended to reconstruct the Iowa River levee

to avoid future adverse affects and was requesting an unspecified amount of funding through the CDBG's Supplemental Disaster program for the work. The Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission is working with the city to develop the grant application. As part of the resolution, the city provided assurance it would provide any required local match and would maintain the levee for its useful life. Officials did not provide any time schedule for when any funding would be awarded.

Mayor Dan Wilson said the CDBG request is one of several ongoing efforts to recover from the flooding. "We've got a lot of things in the works and hopefully some of the money will come through," he said.

The council accepted a \$36,469 bid from Kluesner Construction, Farley, to repair around 1230 feet of Second Street. The work would include replacing curb and gutter on the

east side of the street from Cherry Street to Gamble Street. City officials said water is not draining off the street, but is soaking into cracks and other street defects that causes more deterioration to occur. City officials said the project cost does not include any driveway improvements on private ground, but residents along the route could contact the company to extend their driveways when it does the city portion.

In final action, the council learned a citywide cleanup will be held Friday, April 24. The cleanup day will follow the same pattern as past events, with city residents purchasing tags from city hall for larger items. Council member Phil Kaalberg reminded the council that an agreement between the Louisa Solid Waste Agency and the Muscatine Transfer Station would allow Louisa County residents to arrange for disposal of household chemicals at the Muscatine site.

Business District Mainstay announces retirement

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

"In my whole working career I've never had to drive more than a mile and a half to work," is a statement not many people can make, but it is true for Gary Todd. Gary will be retiring from Community Bank this Friday after forty-two years of service, and he has used this lack of commute time to become a force in the downtown business district as well as a valuable leader in our community.

Gary Todd was born north of Cotter, Iowa. His family moved to the Muscatine area for a brief period, but returned to the Columbus Junction Community while Gary was in 4th grade. He completed his education in the Columbus Community School, then attended the University of Iowa.

In 1960 Gary married Karen (Wilson). They have two children: Dr. Michael Todd, DVM, and wife, Lana of Columbus Junction, Iowa; and Brenda Deters, and husband, Hank of Gardner, Kansas; and six grandchildren. Also in 1960 Gary began working for Farm Service. He was hired to work in the office, then advanced to sales. In 1967 Gary was informed of a management position with a Farm Service in Manchester, Iowa. He visited the site and after an interview was offered the job. "On my way home I stopped at the Bryn Mawr restaurant to get something to eat," said Gary, "and sat down with Spin Duncan. I told Spin where I had been, and never thought any more about it." At that same time Ray Hendrickson was leaving Peoples National Bank, and bank president Clyde Crawford contacted Gary and offered him a job.

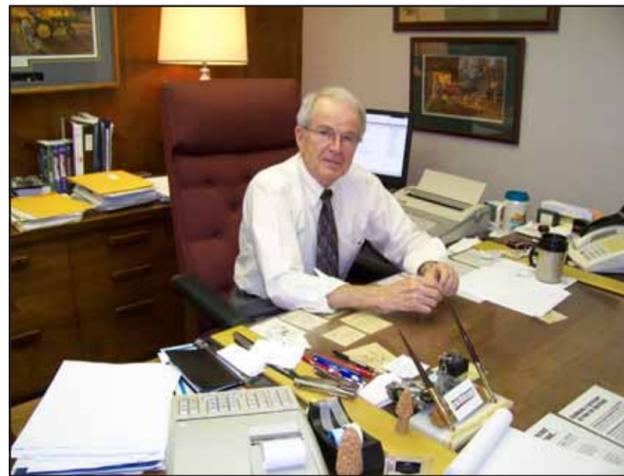
"I didn't realize it at the time, but accepting the bank job kept me within that mile and a half range," said Gary. He began in bookkeeping and progressed to a teller position, then lending, and today serves

in administration. He was elected to the Board of Directors of Peoples National Bank in 1974. In 1981 Peoples National Corporation was formed, where Gary was elected to the board, and in 1983 the corporation purchased Community National Bank in Muscatine. Gary was elected to the board of Community National Bank immediately after the purchase.

In July of 1997 the two banks merged. In 1999 CBG Corporation purchased the stock of Peoples National Corporation. Gary was then named CEO of the Columbus Junction location and was appointed Vice Chairman of the holding company board. "It's amazing when I think about it," commented Gary, "when I joined Peoples National Bank our assets were less than 3 million dollars. Today we are 215 million dollars, and one of the 50 largest banks in Iowa."

Gary recalls the farm crisis in the 1980's as one of the most difficult times in his career. "It's hard to work through difficult credit conditions with long-time customers," he remembered, "and a lot of hard decisions had to be made." But he also has many fond memories of his career "I've had the opportunity to meet a lot of wonderful people, and I especially enjoy watching the success of someone who we helped start."

The two biggest changes that Gary has witnessed in his banking career are the increased regulations and the move to automation. "We are affected by so many more laws today. When I started we would take out a one-part note form, fill in the terms, and the customer would sign it. Today it takes multi forms to accomplish the same thing." Regarding the move to automation, Gary sees that as an advantage. "In today's computer age we can offer so many more services and conveniences to our customers, and the computer also eliminates the tedious work we used to do which allows us more time to



do the important thing, serving the customer."

Along with his banking life, Gary has served on numerous committees and organizations in the community. "Gary was a tremendous resource in organizing the early days of the Louisa Development Group and the Community Foundation," said Economic Development Director, Mallory Smith, "his knowledge of people and situations were invaluable to us." Gary has also been a long-time member of the Columbus Community Club as well as many other

Columbus Schools Alumni Banquet scheduled

Mark your calendar now for the Columbus-Cotter-Conesville Alumni Banquet, June 13th. Due to cancellation of last year's banquet because of the flood, we will be honoring two 50-year (1958 and 1959) and two 25-year (1983 and 1984) classes. If you'd like to be involved in planning the banquet, contact Jerry Bell or Jim Howell.

Columbus City Council fills vacancies

The Columbus City Council has appointed Bob Watson and Duncan Bell to fill the vacancy of council. Both council seat appointments shall be for the remaining term which expires December 2009. Both council seats will be up for election in November, 2009. The public has a right to petition for a special election fourteen days after the publication of this notice.

Briefly -

At the Historical Society

WAPELLO, Iowa - Abe Lincoln, the nation's 16th president, will be a guest of the Louisa County Historical Society Saturday evening, March 21. Internationally known, Richard F. "Fritz" Klein, one of the nation's foremost Lincoln actors, will portray Lincoln and bring his period of history to life. Klein has been featured in the New York Times, on the History Channel, the Discovery Channel, C-Span, and USA Today. He is president at Lincoln Institute For Education at Springfield, Ill. The program will begin after the society's annual soup supper and a brief meeting. The soup supper begins at 5:30 p.m. at the Louisa County Heritage Center, 609 N. James L. Hodges Ave., Wapello. The cost for the entire evening is only \$6.

Boy Scouts Pancake Supper

Pack 54 Cub Scouts from Letts, Grandview and Fruitland will be holding their annual All-you-can-eat Pancake Supper on Monday, March 30, 2009, from 5-8 p.m., at the L-M Elementary School. The menu will include: Pancakes, scrambled eggs, whole hog sausage, coffee, milk, and orange juice. The cost will be: 7th grade-Adult - \$5.00; Grades K-6 and Seniors (55) - \$3.00; Preschool - Free. Tickets can be purchased from any Cub Scout of Pack 54. Tickets can also be purchased by calling Mary Ann at 563-263-8886, Karen at 319-726-4515, or you can purchase tickets at the door.

CCIC to meet

C.C.I.C. will meet on Tuesday, March 24th at the Columbus City City Hall at 7:30 p.m. Esther Timmons will be hostess.

Help with Meals on Wheels

The Congregate Mealsite is looking for volunteers to help with the delivery of our Home Delivered Meals. Please call Barbara at 319-728-2412, Monday-Friday between the hours of 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Blood checks at Econ-O-Mart

Econ-O-Mart will be hosting blood pressure, blood sugar and SpO2 checks on Wednesday, March 25, from 9-11 a.m. This is a FREE community service sponsored by the Morning Sun Care Center. There will also be offered a Total Cholesterol Count. Free will donation will be accepted for this test to help cover the cost of the testing strips. Everyone welcome.

Grandview/Letts Lions blood drive

The Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center announces that the Grandview/Letts Lions Club will be sponsoring a blood drive on Thursday, March 19th from 1:30-6:30 p.m. in the Grandview Bible Church. If you find that you are often turned away because of iron deficiency, you can start eating foods rich in iron (cheerios, pork, eggs, watermelon, etc) ten days before donating blood. To make an appointment to donate, please call Jack Carter at 319-726-4252.

Great Beginnings fundraiser

On Sunday, March 29, the Great Beginnings Preschool will be having their annual fundraiser. The event will start at 4:30 p.m., at Columbus Junction United Methodist Church with entertainment. At 5:00 p.m., there will be a spaghetti supper (free will donation) followed by a silent auction of three quilts made by the preschool students. The public is invited to come and join us.

Legislative Forum

A Legislative Forum will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2009, with Senator Tom Courtney and Representatives Dennis Cohoon and Tom Sands at the Burlington Public Library from 9:15-11:00 am.

Master Gardeners to meet

The Louisa County Master Gardeners will be meeting at 7:00 PM on March 24, 2009, at the First Presbyterian Church in Wapello. Mallory Smith, Executive Director of Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation, will be presenting an overview of the Foundation. A short business meeting will follow. All Master Gardeners and MG Interns welcome.

Benefit for Rosalinda Zuniga Nunez

There will be a benefit to help cover funeral expenses for the family of ROSALINDA ZUNIGA NUNEZ. Rosalinda passed away unexpectedly on March 1, 2009. The date of the event will be Saturday, March 21, 2009 at the Circle of Pride Rodeo Grounds, HWY 70, South of Conesville, IA. The event is from 3:00-9:00 p.m. \$10.00 at the door/all you can eat. Activities include: Music (D.J.); 50/50 Raffle; Raffle Prizes; Pinata for the kids; and a Bake sale.

Pancake Supper at CJ United Methodist

The Columbus Junction United Methodist Church will host a pancake supper on Friday, March 27th, with serving from 4:30-7:30 p.m. The supper is being sponsored by the Louisa County Mission Group, which involves a number of churches from Louisa County. The cost of the meal is \$6.00, with kindergarten and younger eating free. Also, a family of four can eat for \$20. All proceeds after expenses will be used to support the following: The Stork's Nest; Reading is Fundamental, and the Louisa Ministerial Group. This is an opportunity to enjoy some good food, good fellowship, and also help support local missions. So be sure and mark Friday, March 27th on your calendar.

Shellbark Club to meet

Shellbark Club will meet Thursday, March 19th at 11:30 a.m., at the 92 Roadhouse.

Community Club to meet

The Columbus Community Club will meet this Thursday at noon at the Civic Center

Baked Potato Supper

Columbus City United Methodist Church will hold a Baked Potato Supper on Thursday, March 19 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Free will offering.

School Tetanus Clinic

Louisa County Public Health has 62 doses of Tetanus Vaccine that we are making available free of charge for qualifying Junior High/High School students needing a booster. To qualify, you must meet the CDC (Center for Disease Control) underinsured requirements. Those requirements are: You must not have any health insurance or have insurance that does not pay for the tetanus vaccine or be Medicaid eligible. We will have clinics in the Public Health Office on Highway 61 in Wapello on March 19th and 26th from 1-6 p.m. No appointment is necessary. Call the Public Health Office at 319-523-3981 with questions.