

Senior Center prepares to open next week

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

"When we first looked in after the flood waters receded, there was every reason to give up," said Senior Center Board member, Tom Huston. Anyone that was there that day would have shared this feeling. The complete inside of the Senior Center was devastated by last summer's flooding. Insulation was hanging down from the ceiling, the walls were destroyed, and all of the cabinets in the kitchen were damaged beyond repair. "The only thing that was left," said another board member, Polly Prior, "was the roof, framework, and cement floor. It was just a terrible mess."

Most groups would have abandoned the building, but the Senior Center Board made a commitment on that first day to find a way to create something even better out of a potential disaster. "We decided to borrow \$35,000 for the clean-up," said Huston, "with nothing more than a belief that we would find a way to pay for the clean-up and restore the building. It was quite a risk, but as things have turned out, it was a risk worth taking."

One of the major problems that the Center Board faced was a different community than those involved in the Center's opening in 1985. "Many of those original organizers were retired farmers," said Huston, "who were accustomed to coming together on the farm to accomplish things. They would work together on threshing crews, build barns, and the like. And this is how they built the Senior Center. We were concerned that a mindset like that was not available today, but as things have turned out, it is still here in our community." Huston credits much of the renovation to Polly Prior, "Polly never wavered from a belief that this building could be rebuilt. She was in my office talking about ideas for funding sources, and I told her that if it was going to be rebuilt, it would be because of her efforts. And this has held true throughout the process."

After the building was cleaned,



New cabinets and counter tops being installed in Senior Center last Monday

and the damage assessed, the Board, at Prior's urging, began to pursue grants from every available source. They just refused to take no for an answer. If they were turned down, they would go back and find out what they needed to do to get approved. And at the same time community members and organizations came forward with funding help. "We received help from so many individuals and groups that it is hard for me to name all of them," said Prior, "and it was not limited to just Columbus Junction residents. We have received money from all over the country. And just as importantly, people came forward with badly needed encouragement when the situation appeared hopeless."

And now, less than a year after the flooding, a sparkling new Center will reopen next Monday. Congregate Meals will be served at noon, and the Lions Club will hold their meeting in

the evening. And probably the first word that will be heard when these attendees enter the building is "WOW". Everything has been replaced and upgraded. There are new and better windows, flooring, siding and electrical service. The bathrooms are now handicap accessible. A new piano and wide screen television are in the Center. All of the kitchen cabinets and appliances are new and updated. New granite counter tops have been installed. The furnace and air conditioner are new with more efficient models. The round tables were saved, but new and easier to handle long tables have been purchased. And what will be immediately evident is the increased lighting. Many more fixtures have been installed, and the new lighting gives the interior an inviting sense to visitors.

Today, because of the vision of the original organizers who came together and built the Senior Center,

and the dedication of the current board members who never wavered in their belief that it could be rebuilt after the flood, we have a truly magnificent Community Center that is able to serve a wide range of functions. For anyone who is planning a wedding reception, family gathering, class reunion, or any other function, you are encouraged to consider renting the Columbus Community Senior Center. It has everything available to serve your needs.

"The help that we have received has been amazing," said Polly Prior, "I just can't believe that we are really going to reopen." And speaking for the community: "Polly, your dedication and commitment to seeing this through against enormous odds have been amazing to all of us."

Visit the Senior Center next week, you will be amazed at what has arisen from something that just a few months ago appeared to be lost.

District takes delivery on new fire truck

By Jim Rudisill

It took one year to get here, but the newest addition to the Columbus Benefited Fire District, a 2008 Spartan Metro Star MFD with a Toyne body, was welcomed to its new home April 20. Fire Chief Lynn Mincer said the department ordered the new unit from Toyne Manufacturing, Breda, Iowa, more than one year ago, but the wait was worth it.

According to Mincer, the 1000-gallon pumper would replace the department's 22-year-old cabover Ford. The older unit could no longer be used by departments the size of the 30-member CBFDF department because its UL listing had expired, he explained. "It wasn't legal anymore, so we sold it to a small department near Omaha," Mincer said.

Although the old truck had performed well for the district, Mincer said any nostalgia the firefighters had for the old veteran would quickly disappear because of the new unit's many modern features. The 400-hp Cummins engine and 3000 EVS automatic transmission should not have any problem getting to fires, even on the district's far northern borders near Riverside.

According to the website for Toyne Manufacturing, equipment on

the unit included a Hale Qmax 1500 gpm pump, Onan Hydraulic 8K generator, telescoping lights, Akron Apollo Hi Riser monitor and a Foam Pro 1600 Class A foam system. Mincer said the foam equipment would be a big asset, since foam would be immediately available instead of having to be loaded with buckets by firefighters. He also said miscellaneous equipment was salvaged from the old Ford that was sold, but the department did purchase new hose for the unit.

Mincer also pointed out the pumper could seat six regularly-suited or five SCBA-equipped (self-contained breathing apparatus) firefighters in the enclosed cab, which was equipped with both heat and air conditioning.

The unit cost \$340,000, which Mincer said was more than the department had spent in 2002 when it built a new fire station. However, the addition of the new pumper should assure protection to local residents for several years. Mincer said other department equipment included a 2006 tanker, 1998 rescue pumper, 1991 tanker, a quick attack truck and other equipment. The rescue pumper has been locally designed with the left side providing equipment for rescue



needs and the right side equipped to handle fire calls.

Mincer, who has served on the department since 1975 and been chief since 1992, said all the department's fire fighters have earned Firefighter 1 certification. There are also three paramedics and several EMTs, he reported. The current longest serving firefighter is Joe Howell, who has been on the department since 1962.

Mincer said the department is planning to hold an open house in

May or June and the public would be invited to get a better look at the new unit. He said the open house would also provide an opportunity for local residents to visit the fire station, which was inundated by flood waters from the Iowa River last summer. "We had over 50 inches of water in here, but we're (recovering)," Mincer said.

Good proof of that is the shiny new fire engine that is setting inside the station, waiting for its first call.

Ag Secretary Northey to visit area communities

Visits are part of Effort to Meet with Iowans in each of the State's 99 Counties

DES MOINES – Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey today announced that he will be in Louisa, Des Moines, and Henry Counties on Wednesday, May 6 as part of his effort to visit each of Iowa's 99 counties again in 2009 to meet with Iowans and discuss agriculture and the issues facing farmers in the state.

Northey will be hosting a town meeting in Wapello and Mediapolis

and will take part in the Mount Pleasant Chamber of Commerce "Live After 5" event in Mount Pleasant.

"I've learned from the meetings I've attended in each of the counties over the past two years and I'm sure this year will be no different," Northey said. "It's a challenging time on and off the farm and I'm excited to hear from Iowans about the issues facing agriculture."

The details of the visits follow here:

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

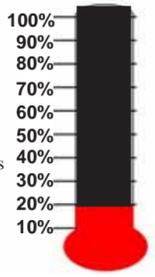
Louisa County – 1:30 p.m., Farm

Bureau, Hwy 61 South, Wapello;
Des Moines County – 3:30 p.m.,
Mediapolis City Hall, Community Room, 510 Main Street, Mediapolis;
Henry County – 5:00 p.m., 2257 235th Street, Mount Pleasant.
Northey, a corn and soybean farmer from Spirit Lake, is serving his first term as Secretary of Agriculture. His priorities as Secretary of Agriculture are the opportunities in renewable energy, conservation and stewardship, and telling the story of Iowa agriculture.

2009 United Fund Goal - \$20,000

Your contribution provides:

- Fire Protection 100%
- Education 90%
- Childcare 80%
- First Aid 70%
- Books 60%
- Youth Activities 50%
- Recreation 40%
- Wellness 30%



Briefly -

CCHS Art Show

An Artist reception will be held on Friday, May 1st, from 3:30-7:00 p.m., and the Show will open May 4-8, between 3:30-5:00. Visit the Art Complex on Springer Street and view award winning art works.

CCHS Horticultural Class plant sale

The Columbus Community High School Horticulture Class will again be holding their annual bedding and vegetable plant sale Monday, May 4 through Friday, May 8. The sale will be from 3:30-5:30 p.m. each night at the high school greenhouse (Springer Street). Plants include: tomatoes, bell peppers, jalapeño peppers, wave and double wave petunias, impatiens, zinnias, marigolds, tropicanna cannas, cilantro, other herbs, portulaca, dusty miller, tomatillos, coleus and dianthus. Questions or cannot make the sale, but would like to purchase plants? Please call Miss Lewis at 728-2231 x 3621.

CJUMC Mother/Daughter banquet

Columbus Junction United Methodist Church Mother Daughter Banquet will be held Wednesday, May 20 at 6 p.m. The evening will include Dinner/Dessert and a program. Tickets are \$6.00; 6 and under free. Tickets can be purchased at the church office. Bring a friend or just come yourself.

Car Seat Safety Check

A car seat safety check will be held at the Columbus Fire Station on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The check is free. If you have any questions feel free to call Jeanette Fry at Younhouse Services, 319-752-4000.

Columbus City Clean-Up Day

Saturday, May 9, 2009 – Have all items at the curbside by 7:00 a.m. Saturday morning. There will be a \$15.00 charge for all appliances and a tag must be attached to all appliances. Those include refrigerators, stoves, freezers, microwaves, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, water heaters, air conditioners, and florescent light fixtures. **We will not take:** tires, batteries, paint/paint cans, hazardous materials, spray cans, wood/demolition materials, garbage/anything in garbage bags or yard waste. Tags can be bought at City Hall on Monday, May 4, 2009, from 4-6 p.m.

Mother's Day Tea at Conesville UMC

The Conesville United Methodist Women will be having a Mother's Day Tea at the church on May 7, at 7 p.m. Lena Schrader from Columbus Junction will give a talk and show slides taken during her visit to the Holy Land. Refreshments will follow the program. All are welcome.

Cotter Clean-Up Day

Saturday, May 2, 2009 – All items must be set out by 7:00 a.m., Saturday, May 2, 2009. Appliances will require a \$15.00 tag, which can be purchased the day of clean up – No appliance will be taken without a tag. Tags can be purchased before hand at City Hall in Columbus Junction or the day of clean up. Separate items such as: Metal, Appliance, Furniture, Tires, and Batteries. We will not pick up: paint cans (not dry), hazardous materials, chemicals, and spray cans. Do not put anything in garbage bags – they will not be picked up. Any questions, call Dwight Britton at 319-728-2442. This clean up day is for Cotter residents only.

Etude Club to meet

Etude Club members will gather at Colonial Manor at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 5, 2009, to share with residents there. They will then move to the home of Jean Weston for their last meeting of the club year. Jean will present the lesson on "Happy Songs From Movies." Discussion will include an evaluation of the Spring Show, plans for the 2009-2010 club year, and signing up for committees and various duties for the coming year.

Conservation District to meet

The Louisa County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners will meet May 6, 2009, at 4:30 p.m. at the NRCS Office in Wapello. Topics on the agenda will be an update on cost share projects. For more information please contact the office at 260 Mulberry St. STE 2, Wapello, or phone 523-6411.

P.E.O. Salad Luncheon

Signs of Spring are springing up- flowers are blooming, birds are singing, the grass is greening, and the annual P.E.O. Salad Luncheon is springing up soon. Mark your calendars for Monday, May 4 and join Chapter CX P.E.O. for a time of fabulous food and fellowship. This annual fundraising event will be held at the American Legion in Columbus Junction from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. The cost is \$7 and all the proceeds support the P.E.O. scholarship fund. Carry-outs are available. Tickets may be purchased at Plants and Things, Special Effects, The Feed Wagon (all in Columbus Junction) or any Chapter CX P.E.O. member. The P.E.O. Salad Luncheon is a super way to celebrate spring.

Postage rates to increase

Postage rates will increase on Monday, May 11, 2009. The cost to mail a one-ounce letter will increase to 44 cents. Post card rate will increase to 28 cents. The additional ounce will remain the same at 17 cents. This is a smart time to purchase the forever stamp. The forever stamp sells at today's rate is good for one-ounce letter postage forever.

"Prevent Child Abuse" to meet

Prevent Child Abuse Iowa - Louisa County Council will meet Thursday, May 7th following the Interagency meeting at the Briggs Center in Wapello. 10:00 a.m. -11:00 a.m. Anyone interested is welcome to attend. Contact Lori Kuntz, Stork's Nest at 319-527-6378 for more information.

RSVP Spring Fling

The Columbus Junction State Bank invites YOU to join your R.S.V.P. Club friends tonight, Wednesday, April 29 at the American Legion in Columbus Junction from 4:30-6:30 p.m. A wonderful meal, catered by Mincer's Country Catering, will be served. A grand prize will be given- must be present to win. You can sign up for the exciting trips scheduled for 2009. This SPRING FLING is FREE so come and celebrate with a Really Special Variety of People.

Radio Club to meet

The Muscatine Amateur Radio Club will meet on Monday, May 11, at 7:00 pm at the Flickinger Learning Center, 413 Mulberry Avenue in Muscatine. (Please use the 5th Street entrance.) All amateur radio operators, and those interested in learning more about amateur radio, are invited to attend. For more information, visit muscatinehams.org.