

## Phase One of revitalization completed

By John Carpenter  
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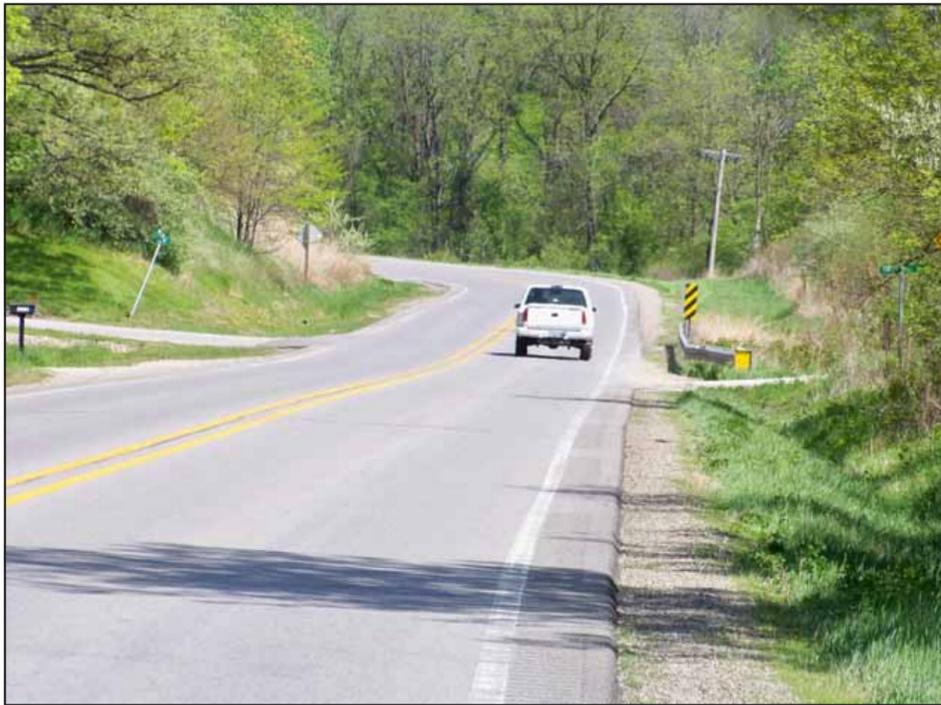
The words: "environment, architecture, recreation, and diversity," were echoed throughout the community last week as members of RDG Consulting, Keep Iowa Beautiful and Keep America Beautiful held a three-day work session in town to help with plans for revitalizing the Columbus Community.

Up to eight individuals representing the three organizations were here at various times during the visit. They toured all areas of the community and held numerous discussion groups with members of the public in an attempt to gain an understanding of our community's history, and help set a road map for our future. The consultants spent countless hours analyzing the information, which constituted the first phase of the project. The purpose of this phase was to arrive at the community's strengths and weaknesses. From the information gathered, the consultants will then enter into phase two, which will be offering suggestions to help us overcome the weaknesses and emphasize our strengths.

A public meeting was held on late Friday afternoon to discuss the findings. The following areas were discussed:

· **Environment** – All of the visitors were very impressed with our natural surroundings. They were especially influenced with the greenery along our entryways. They emphasized the natural valley that one drives through as they enter from the west, and the wonderful long range view of the community that is seen from the east as one approaches the Iowa River. They felt that a lot of possibilities regarding signage is available from both directions.

· **Architecture** – According to the consultants, our downtown is very rare in Iowa. Rather than having traditional brick storefronts as many towns have, we have maintained a number of buildings with cast iron



A view of the valley as one enters town from the west.

fronts. They felt that, with minimal cost, many of these buildings could be restored to their original beauty. They suggested that the town be described by two business districts: the upper business district, which would comprise of Main Street with an historic architecture; and a lower business district, which would comprise of the Econ-O-Mart and medical facility area which would have a more modern architecture.

· **Recreation** – The consultants saw endless possibilities for trails and recreation in the downtown area. They were particularly interested in trails originating at the fairgrounds and extending south to Chinkapin Bluffs and north and east to the rivers. They felt that with possible camping facilities being placed at the fairgrounds, a number of visitors would come to enjoy the trails. Although our terrain does present some

challenges, the consultants felt that the advantages will outweigh these problems.

· **Diversity**. The consultants were very impressed with the diversity of races and ages in the community. They felt that with the proper co-mingling of these various groups, we could easily become a destination for travelers, as well as new individuals and businesses looking for a new place to locate.

Of course, a number of weaknesses were also noted. They included better repairs of sidewalks, more signage on the highways, trash pickup, and maintenance of neighborhoods. Of particular concern was the appearance of the back areas of business buildings.

Phase two of the program is now underway. The group will return in a few weeks with hard drawings of areas where possibilities exist, and sug-

gestions for funding sources to make these improvements. The program will be broken down into a series of projects so a potential timeline can be set for completion of some or all of the projects. To help kick-start the renovation, Cecile Carson of Keep America Beautiful told the meeting attendees that the Keep America Beautiful organization is prepared to give up to \$20,000 for the completion of the first project that the city chooses.

This will be a long process, and maybe all projects will never be undertaken. But the community has a lot to gain as each project is completed. As Gerry Schnepf of Keep Iowa Beautiful stated last Friday, "The journey has just begun," but what a great journey into the future it will be. The Gazette will continue to keep you updated as the steps proceed forward.

## Relay for Life heads to the toilet

The Relay For Life meeting was held Monday night at the Sombbrero Restaurant. This year's Relay event will be at the L-M High School Track on August 1, starting at 12:00 p.m. Ceremonies will start with the lighting of remembrance candles, which will be put out at closing 12:00 a.m. The Survivors Supper will begin at 4:30 p.m., followed by the Survival Celebration.

We need more teams: We have one team from Letts, Wapello and Grandview. We have no teams from Morning Sun or Oakville. Please call Karen Varnum at 523-8147, Melinda

Rees at 728-2153 or Verlinda Prior at 728-2568. It's not hard to captain a team and it is a lot of fun. If you would just like to be on a team, that works too.

This will be the tenth year for the Louisa County Relay. We have had some crazy years. Two tornadoes, lots of rain and a flood. We have made a lot of money for the American Cancer Society and each year they are making great progress in the treatment and prevention of cancer. The money is important, but the real success of the evening is when our county comes together to celebrate

life.

Soon, you may see some purple toilet lids in your town. It's a new game we are planning to raise money. If you get a purple toilet lid in front of your house, read the instructions carefully. Have some fun.

Next meeting of the Relay For Life will be held at the L-M Elementary School at 7 p.m. on June 1st. Please come and join us.



## Wienermobile visits CJ



Last week the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile visited downtown Columbus Junction courtesy of Tyson Fresh Meats Inc. A raffle benefiting "Hunger Relief," the major philanthropic effort of Tyson, was held and the winners were awarded an opportunity to take a ride in the Wienermobile. Pictured above are the winners, left to right: Salvadore Alvarez, Rebecca Santos, bun lady Frances Ayala, and Doug Bunn.

All proceeds from the raffle went to Hunger Relief. 75% of the money went to the local Food Bank, and 25% went to "Share Our Strength." Free hot dogs were served on Main Street courtesy of Tyson Fresh Meats, Inc.

## Briefly -

### Clydesdales in town on Friday

The Budweiser Clydesdale team will be at the Econ-O-Mart parking lot on Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Anyone wishing to have their pictures taken with the team are invited to stop by.

### Museum to extend hours on Alumni Banquet weekend

The Columbus Community Heritage Museum will be open Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. All Alumni classes and others are invited to visit the museum that day.

### City Council to meet tonight

The City of Columbus Junction will hold a regular Council meeting today, Wednesday, May 13, 2009, at 5:30 p.m., in the New Civic Center/City Hall.

### 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.

### Doctor's office closed tomorrow

Dr. Masonholder's office will be closed all day May 14.

### Family Night parade

Family Night Parade May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009 6:45 p.m. Columbus Community School Track Parade will feature mini-floats created by your child's classroom sharing areas of study from the 2008-2009 school year. Refreshments will be provided after the parade. Parking will be available at the high school or elementary parking lot.

### Free Coffee at Senior Center

The 2nd Thursday Free Coffee will be May 14 at the beautifully remodeled Senior Center. Come and begin your day with a cup of coffee, some lively conversation and a tour of the building. Everyone is welcome. The Columbus Community Senior Center is a definite attribute to our city and an example of what can be accomplished with community pride and hard work. And all in less than a year since the flood. Don't drink coffee? We have tea and hot chocolate. Please come and join us. Also, mark your calendar for our 4th Thursday coffee on the 28th.

### Conservation Board to meet

The Louisa County Conservation Board will meet today, Wednesday, May 13, 2009, at 5:30 p.m., at the Louisa County Conservation Board Office.

### Letts UMC Mother/Daughter Banquet

The annual Mother-Daughter Banquet will be held at the Letts United Methodist Church on Wednesday, May 20, 2009. Serving starts at 6:30 p.m. The theme this year is "Birds." Kathy Dice from the Louisa County Conservation office will present the program. Make reservations with Margaret Thomas (319-726-3286), Margaret Ann Carter (319-726-4252), Joyce Crull (319-726-5671), or the church office (319-726-3641) by Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. Please bring a salad to share.

### Lions Club Spring Breakfast

The Columbus Junction Lions Club will hold their annual Spring Sausage/Pancake/Egg breakfast at the newly re-opened Columbus Community Senior Center on Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. They will be serving pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, coffee, milk and a fruit drink from 7 a.m. until 11 a.m. both mornings. Cost for all you can eat will be \$6.00 for adults, and \$4.00 for children under 12.

### Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:30 at Butch's River Rock Café in Oakland Mills. We will meet at Spring Run Church at 10:30 a.m. to car pool.

## Area Reunions

### CCHS Class of 1974

Attention Class of 1974: Anybody interested in helping plan our 35<sup>th</sup> year class reunion, meet at Denny and Jan Wagoner's on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, at 7 p.m., or call 319-728-2638.

### Conesville School Reunion

May 23, 2009 is the scheduled date for the Conesville School Reunion. Invitations are being sent but anyone interested in Conesville and/or the old school is invited to attend. You don't need to be a alumni, just show some interest and you're in. Registration will begin at 12:00 noon with a full meal immediately following @ 12:30 p.m. catered by Kalona Kountry Katering. You do need a reservation. Any questions can be answered and/or reservation made by calling Fran @ 319-728-2319 or Rose @ 319-728-2027. See you there.

### CCHS Class of 1999

The class of 1999 will be holding their 10-year reunion this summer. The dates for the reunion will be July 31<sup>st</sup> and August 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be chances to get together on both days. Plans for the reunion will be sent to classmates through their email or phone. Class of 1999 members can send their email addresses to [kasey\\_keltner@hotmail.com](mailto:kasey_keltner@hotmail.com) or phone numbers to 319-728-3032. Otherwise, we will try to contact you. If there are any questions you can send them to the same email address or phone number.

### CCHS Class of 1989

Attention 1989 Grads from Columbus Community High School. We are asking for your help. We are in the beginning stages of planning our 20-year class reunion. Time has flown by! The first step is to gather classmate addresses, along with email addresses. Please forward any classmate information to Debbie (Buser) Bunting at [debbunting@hotmail.com](mailto:debbunting@hotmail.com). If there are any questions or concerns, please contact Debbie (Buser) Bunting and/or Jennifer Hills-Dunker at 319-212-0490. Your help would be greatly appreciated!

The annual Alumni Banquet for Columbus, Cotter and Conesville schools will be held on June 13, 6:30 PM, at Roundy Elementary School. Tickets are \$10 each and are available from Sherry Pine at the Columbus State Bank (728-2436) and Carol Ann Howell at the Community Bank (728-2226). Since the banquet was cancelled last year, we will honor 50-year classes of 1958 and 1959, and 25-year classes of 1983 and 1984. Please buy your tickets early so we can plan for food and space. If you have questions, please contact Jerry Bell or Jim Howell.

Columbus Class of '69 - how about a get together June 27, 2009, at 6:00 pm at the Thirsty Camel for dinner to celebrate 40 years from graduation. This also includes anyone that attended Cotter University, Conesville or Columbus Junction that may have attended, moved away, and/or didn't even graduate with us - it doesn't matter. If you are interested in attending, please send an e-mail message to Connee Holliday at [hollidayjr@farmtel.net](mailto:hollidayjr@farmtel.net) or Diana Wellington at [wllngt236@aol.com](mailto:wllngt236@aol.com). Please title the message with "Class Reunion" or such so we won't delete it as junk mail or spam. Parents of '69ers: Please pass this information on to our classmates who live out of town. Or, if you can't make it to dinner, send an e-mail with any information about you and your family that you might like us to share with the others. So that we can give the Thirsty Camel an approximate number of attendees, please respond to us no later than June 20, 2009.

### Wyman School Alumni Banquet

The 74<sup>th</sup> annual Wyman School Alumni Banquet for all former students, teachers, and all those having an interest in the school, will be held July 11, 2009. The get-together will be in the United Church of Crawfordsville with doors opening at 5:30 p.m., and the banquet and entertainment starting at 6:30 p.m. The last class to graduate from the Wyman School was in 1956, although, kindergarten through sixth grade classes were held there until the school was closed in 1978. For more information or to make reservations, please call Frieda Finke at 319-658-2316.