

Area government agencies well poised for 2011

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

Below you'll find our customary year in review, a tradition that all newspapers practice. Although it is interesting to look back and remember the happenings of the past year, it is more interesting for me to anticipate the coming year. And it looks like we are set to experience a great year in 2011.

If you listen to major news sources, the outlook for 2011 is pretty bleak, but I don't think that is necessarily the case here. Unlike our state and national governments, local governments appear to be heading into the new year in strong financial shape. And this isn't because of luck or that we are in an affluent area, it is because we have elected good stewards of our tax money. To illustrate my point:

Our school district has been able to maintain positive balances despite cutbacks from the state, and it isn't because of a lack of attention to our physical facility. All of our buildings are in good repair, and additional work is being planned. In addition, the school board recently met to hold a session on actions to take that will deal with possible further state cuts without severely limiting the services our students receive. Because of the diligence of our School Board and school administration, Columbus Community Schools are financially well poised for 2011.

Our fire department is in good financial condition. The department is well equipped, has very little debt, and is able to maintain cash balances to cover expected as well as emergency expenses. This is due to the advantage of having a benefited fire district, and the concern that our firemen show for the department. As a trustee, I am confident that no request comes to us that isn't justified. Our fire department, and board of trustees, take the condition of the fire department personally, and this personal touch shows in its fiscally strong operation.

Our ambulance service operates



Present Columbus Junction water plant that will be relocated in 2011.

very well. Through careful use of tax money and occasional private gifts, our ambulance equipment remains at a very high level and our personnel are well trained. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated and conscientious individuals providing this service to us.

Much of the same can be reported in the surrounding towns of Columbus City, Cotter, Conesville and Fredonia. These city governments, although experiencing the same financial cutbacks as everyone, are able to manage their operations in a manner that continues to provide all of the necessary services, as well as make improvements. Every audit shows that these towns are being operated in a fiscally sound manner. They exemplify the statement made that if one wants to see midwestern

common sense in action, just visit a small town council meeting.

But the big story in 2011 will be the projects being undertaken by the city of Columbus Junction. At a time when most cities are cutting back and finding ways to do without, our city is looking towards possibly one of the most ambitious years in its history. Bids will be taken in March for both the relocation of our water plant, and also the construction of the new levee. We will not see any reduction in services from the city because of these projects, as they will be funded by grants that have been aggressively sought by city officials.

Our council realized that these new changes were necessary for the welfare of the town, but rather than place a burden on the budget, they formed a can-do attitude and found

ways to finance them. In addition to these projects, a REAP grant will be used to make major improvements at Chautauqua Park, and help from Keep Iowa Beautiful will be used to improve our entryways this summer. Some evidence of this is already visible in the clean up of the Swinging Bridge area.

This is quite unusual in these economic times to have all area governmental agencies sound when much of the rest of the country is operating in a deficit. From our school, to our cities, to our emergency services, 2011 will again be a year of growth and further improvements. It's something we can all be proud of, and everyone who is serving on one of the councils or boards should be congratulated. I can't wait to report on the coming year.

Briefly -

Balloon release in Morning Sun

Morning Sun Care Center will celebrate Balloon Ascension Day on Sunday, January 9th from 2:00 to 4:00. Residents and community members will write a message or make a wish, attach it to a balloon and watch it soar into the sky! After the launch, join us for cookies, coffee, and hot chocolate. Families, friends, and community members are encouraged to attend. Please call Terri at 319-572-3017 for more information.

Flu vaccine available from Public Health

Flu cases are being reported across Iowa. Protect yourself and your family by getting your flu vaccine now. Louisa County Public Health has a limited number of discounted vaccine doses available to adults and children who do not have insurance to cover the cost of the vaccine. The cost is \$10 per dose and will be available at the public health office in Wapello every Thursday from 1 to 4 p.m. If you require special times to get the vaccine please contact public health at 319-523-3981. To be eligible for the discounted vaccine the applicant must sign a statement stating that they either have no insurance or that vaccinations are not covered by their insurance plan. Medicare will pay for the vaccine.

Grandview-Letts Lions soup supper

The Grandview-Letts Lions Club will hold their annual soup supper on Saturday, January 22, 2011, from 5-7 p.m. at the NEW Community Center and Library in Letts. The all-you-can-eat menu includes: Chili and Wisconsin Cheese soups, homemade pies, celery, carrots, pickles, crackers and drinks. The cost for tickets is: (Advanced from any G-L Lions member) \$5.00; (At-the-door) \$6.00; (Ages 6-12) \$3.00; (Ages 5 and under) Free.

Half Hour Club to meet

The Half Hour Club will meet on Tuesday, January 11 at 1:30 p.m. at Assisted Living in Columbus Junction. Hostesses are Doreen Fuller and Rita Chaney. Rosemary Harris will have the program. Roll call: Favorite Winter Pastime.

Junior Class parents' meeting

There will be a junior class parent's meeting at 5:30 p.m. at the student center on Wednesday, January 12th. We will discuss and plan the after-prom party. All junior parents are encouraged to attend. Any questions, call Cindy Johnston at 319-728-5032 or 319-212-0330.

Lego 4-H Club will shovel snow

The Lego Dynamite 4-H club will shovel your drive and sidewalk for a free will donation. Funds collected will be used for our club's operating expenses. If you would like this done please call leader Tessa Pugh at 319-212-0422 or contact a member of the club.

Legion Fish and Chicken Fry

The American Legion will be holding a fish and chicken fry on Saturday, January 15th at the Legion Building. Serving will be from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. The price is \$8.00.

2010 Year in Review

January 6, 2010- Marlin O'Donnell retires as police chief after 17 years of service. A reception was held to congratulate Marlin.

City council is turned down on their grant request for funding for a new levee.

Changes in recycling procedures in the county were published.

A request is made for census workers.

Agnes Theresa Slater's obituary was published.

January 13, 2010 - Heavy snowfall threatens area with spring flooding.

County Department of Public Health urged residents to get H1N1 flu shots.

Hobbies and collections program was held at the Heritage Center.

Esterlyn a rock band performed at the school to raise funds for the County Ambulance Service.

January 20, 2010 - Community Foundation awarded \$93,000 in grants to area organizations.

City Council gave the okay to begin looking into the possibility of city ownership of a local phone and data company.

Louisa County Small Business Academy begins eight-week course in county for prospective small business owners.

Senator Grassley held a Town Hall meeting at the Civic Center.

Democratic and Republican Caucus dates and locations were published.

Leroy "Bub" Forbes obituary was published.

January 27, 2010 - Louisa Development Group holds County Business Festival.

Columbus Junction State Bank reports a successful year to stockholders.

Columbus Junction State Bank donates to L&M playground fund.

ISU Extension offers grants for students to intern in Louisa County.

Woodrow Shearer celebrates 97th birthday.

Jerry Gerot Jr. is awarded the Lion's Diamond President's Award. Carey Family produces cook-

book.

Obituaries include Patrician Anne Carroll, Thatcher Ray Helmig, Pauline Alberta Gerst, Donald E. Buckman and Walden Arthur Askren.

February 3, 2010 - Despite difficult weather, construction continues on Colonial Heights assisted living facility.

JEL students from Columbus Community and Wapello held a program during halftime of the Columbus and L&M basketball game.

Louisa County Habitat for Humanity dedicates area's 11th home.

Louisa County Community Services offers "Meet and Greet" opportunities for persons with disabilities.

February 10, 2010 - Ramona Wink's Christian television show, "Walk the Walk," aired at a Dubuque television station is featured in the Dubuque Telegraph Herald newspaper.

Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation schedules auction for February 27th.

Lucile Smylie celebrates 99th birthday.

Lewis Funeral Homes schedules widows' Valentines luncheon.

Roundy students participate in Jump Rope for Heart.

Great River Medical Center offers summer teen volunteer program.

FCCLA year's activities were reviewed.

Obituaries include Marjorie Haines Young, Charlotte Knutson, Luke M. Heck, Ezra Barnett.

February 17, 2010 - County Pheasant Forever organization held their 20th annual banquet.

City Council discusses methods to deal with delinquent water bills.

University of Iowa students begin work with Community Development Center to schedule beautification events in the community.

Ag Secretary Northey to be keynote speaker at county corn and soybean banquet.

Haley Wellington, daughter of Cristin and Tony Wellington, is named CWO Princess of Hearts; and Tyler Burroughs, son of John and Cheyenne Burroughs, is named CWO Prince of Hearts.

Great River Hospice holds flower sale.

Obituaries include James Robert McFarland Sr., and Dean Hamilton Gipple.

February 24, 2010 - After another snowfall, the National Weather service increases the chance of area flooding to 90%.

Events for Earth Week and Keep Columbus Beautiful are published.

Representative Tom Sands announces plans to run for re-election.

Columbus FFA and FFA Alumni announce plans for auction.

Helen Clark celebrates 90th birthday.

Lee Still and Margaret Quigley are chosen Colonial Manor King and Queen of Hearts.

SE Iowa Ag Research Farm in Crawfordville holds annual meeting.

Obituaries include Myrna Larkin, Jack McFarland and Bernadine Dorothy Hawkins.

March 3, 2010 - Plans for the second annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in town are announced.

Columbus Junction City Council announces plans for Beryl Roundy's 100th birthday celebration.

Kindergarten round up is held at Roundy Elementary.

L&M National Honor Society partners with Monsanto Corporation to increase teen vehicle safety awareness.

World Day of Prayer is held at the Columbus City United Methodist Church.

Laurie Salazar announces candidacy for Louisa County Treasurer.

Columbus City Free Methodist Church sponsors "Truth Project."

Hope Bible Church hosts first Friday morning coffee.

Obituaries include Lois Houseal and Virgie Ross.

March 10, 2010 - Earth Week Poster and essay entries from students turned in.

Katie Nielsen, former resident of Columbus Junction, escaped harrowing experience while parapenting in New Zealand.

Danny Gipple was named 2009 Habitat Volunteer of the Year.

2010 March Winds Blow performance was held at Columbus Community School.

Bob and Sue Reid sold Main

Street Laundry to Jose Estrada and Family.

AmeriCorps NCCC team begins work with County Conservation Board.

Colonial Manor invites public to their 35th Anniversary celebration.

Vicki Frank announces her candidacy for Louisa County Treasurer.

Kathrin Lieberknecht celebrates 96th birthday.

County Heritage Center is closed for clean up and placement of new exhibits.

Columbus School hosts southeast district FFA leadership conference.

Obituaries include Thomas E. Jones, Doris McAtee, Evelyn Werner, and Doris E. Schreiner.

March 17, 2010 - City Council imposes a 10% late fee on delinquent water bills and \$25 penalty for users who receive a shut-off notice.

Area law enforcement agencies perform drug search at Columbus Schools, and declare school to be drug free.

Victory Christian Center Church gives \$1,500 raised by rock concert to local ambulance base.

Legion Auxiliary holds Poppy Poster Contest.

River Products Co. honored for accident free year.

Community Bank employees donate to Easter Egg Hunt from their blue jeans day.

Pleasant Grove Church hosts neighborhood potluck.

School Board sets later start date for 2010-2011 school year.

Obituaries include James Paulding, Lorraine Smylie and Don Williams.

March 24, 2010 - Roundy Elementary students send thank-you cards to Beryl Roundy in recognition of the school's 10th anniversary.

City officials begin watching area rivers for possible flooding problems.

Legion Auxiliary hosts a county meeting.

Tri-Rivers Auction raises over \$10,000 for Interpretive Center.

Vera Wiley celebrates 94th birthday.

FFA holds honor roll party.

Sixty-five students confirmed at St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

Columbus Junction State Bank remodeling nears completion.

Second annual St. Patrick's Day parade held in town.

School Board deals with reduced funding from State.

Obituaries include Woodrow Shearer and William Gilpin.

March 31, 2010 - Spring-cleaning program is kicked off in town.

Greg Gerling, son of Donna and John Carpenter and the late David Gerling, a professor at the University of Virginia, is recognized for his work in an article published in UVA Today.

Louisa County Board of Health elicits local input for community health assessment.

Norma Schweitzer celebrates 90th birthday.

Ramona Wink's television program, "Walk the Walk," is now broadcast also on KGBE TV in Tulsa Oklahoma.

Jim and Thelma Paulding scholarship fund donates to Roundy Elementary.

Earth Day activities are announced.

Victory Christian Center Church holds Spotlight talent show.

Obituaries include Lucille Jennings, and Martha Ellen Moore.

April 7, 2010 - Work progresses on the recovery of the Columbus Motel from flood damage.

Annual Easter Egg hunt is held at Chautauqua Park.

Connie Lewis, with the help of Dick Clevenger, Warren Lewis and Dean Rickey, install a new sign at the Swinging Bridge.

Hospice Compass serves brownie sundaes at Colonial Manor. Nematode, the soil woman, visits the Columbus Library.

Lt. Governor Patty Judge in Des Moines greets Kate Ponomarenko a Columbus art student during Youth Art Month.

Obituaries include Delbert Black and Patrick Dean Brackett.

April 14, 2010 - City of Columbus Junction is awarded a \$2.9 million grant from the Department of Commerce for the relocation of the city's water plant.

Community's Earth Day activity schedule is published.

Community Center receives a \$20,000 Strengthen Rural Iowa grant.

Idea proposing a Conesville re-

union is published.

Area residents participate in Special Olympics in Eldridge, Iowa.

Old Keck Men's Glee Club and Etude Club performed at Heritage Center.

Randy Griffin announces his candidacy for Louisa County Board of Supervisors.

Tips for Farm Safety were published.

Obituaries include Irvin White, Catherine Ann (Arnold) Farrier, Donald E. Lihs and Velma Mae Lee.

April 21, 2010 - Ramona Wink releases her new book, "Walk the Walk."

Roundy teachers visit Arizona school to observe SIOP model.

Relay for Life Committee begins making plans for county event.

Open House held in all county offices in celebration of National County Government Month.

Patricia Woepping earns Silver Spurs award from Farm Bureau.

Six students are confirmed at Spring Run Church.

Paula Buckman is named Community Foundation Executive Director.

Monsanto Company, Tri-Rivers Conservation Foundation and Louisa County Conservation Board are honored for environmental efforts.

Columbus FFA holds member and parent banquet.

April 28, 2010 - Mincer Ford joins Ford's 25-year partner group.

Area fire departments share in grant to obtain a new fire-training simulator.

A new sign is installed at Great Beginnings Preschool.

Louisa County receives \$4,000 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs.

Rebuild Iowa Office plans to visit Louisa County to discuss flood rebuilding efforts.

Beat for Peace group; performs at the Englert Theatre in Iowa City.

Many local National Day of Prayer events are scheduled.

Highlights of Earth Day in Columbus Junction were published.

Obituaries include Clara E. Hills, Shirley Gabriel Till and Charles Riley.

Year in Review
continued next week