

# Standing Water plagues local area

**Briefly -**



Water standing in fields and ditches north of Conesville



Culvert on Highway through Fredonia



New culvert being installed at Fairgrounds



Damaged beans north of Columbus Junction

**By John Carpenter  
Gazette Staff**

Several years of excessively wet summers have taken its toll on the area this summer. Unlike a drought, where crops and other vegetation suffers, heavy wet weather can cause property damage and hamper travel.

Some of the heaviest areas of standing water can be observed in Conesville. Nearly every ditch, as well as flat areas have standing water. Conesville is unique in the fact that its soil is primarily sand. In normal rains this ground is the first to drain, but when the rain becomes overbearing, as it has the last couple of years, this sand will become saturated and there is no place for the water to go. It can take a considerable amount of time for sand to drain after saturation.

A meeting was held last week in Conesville with area citizens expressing their concerns to the Muscatine County Board of Supervisors. The meeting revealed that the Conesville area experiences a problem that is common in many rural areas, inadequate or inoperable culverts in some roadways, and ditches that have become overgrown. In addition, a drainage district is in existence on the west side of Hwy 70, however no district is in place on the east side.

A proposal discussed was to encourage property owners along the east side of Hwy 70 to join the exist-

ing drainage district, thereby allowing the Supervisors to direct tax funds to clean out or place culverts in roadways. The county would also attempt to purchase land adjacent to the Highway to widen the ditches.

Funding would then be sought to allow the construction of drainage ditches to move the water. The thought is that ditches could be constructed on the east side of Hwy 70 moving the water to Gedeney Lake, then to the river, with water on the west side being channelled by ditches to Honey Creek then the river.

Additional tiling in farm fields and even through the city would also move water to these ditches, and eventually to the river. A study is being undertaken by the County Engineer into the feasibility of these ideas. A similar problem also exists in Fredonia. A number of drainage districts north of Fredonia drain water into the city. Most of the water is caught in a holding area south of the railroad tracks in the northeast part of the town. This holding area was created by sand being removed to build the railroad tracks.

As the area experiences heavy rains, the water moves from this holding area west along a ditch adjacent to the railroad. However, the water will back up when it reaches the highway, as the culvert under the road isn't adequate enough to move the water

through.

The Fredonia City Council has been exploring a plan where a new tube can be placed under the highway, and cleaning out the ditch adjacent to the railroad, thus allowing the water to flow to the west of Fredonia. After crossing the highway, the natural flow of the water then is to the south, so the plan is to then place a new tube under the road leading to the former Kingsbury Inn, allowing the water to eventually flow to the river.

This project would be an expensive undertaking for a small community, however federal funds are available to help offset these costs. But in order for the city to apply for these funds, Fredonia residents must present costs that they have incurred repairing damage to their property as a result of the flooding. Councilman Rob Bright stated that the town is very disappointed in the small number of costs that have been presented so far, and he encourages all of the residents to help in determining their expenses so the town can pursue federal help in alleviating this problem.

High water has also hampered the fairgrounds in removing water. A culvert has been in place on the levee next to the fairgrounds for a number of years allowing water to drain from the fairgrounds into the catch area next to the river. The culvert has a flap installed so water flowing back

from the river cannot enter the fairgrounds. But with the amount of rain received the past summers, the culvert has eventually broken, and as the river backs up water enters the fairgrounds.

There hasn't been enough dry weather this year to allow the Fair Board time to replace the tube, so the only way to remove water was to pump it back over the levee. However, with a forecast of dry weather for a period of time, work began this week on installing a new tube to flow water back to the river.

A final area of concern is the effect that the wet weather is having on area crops. Heavy rains early in the season caused much of the nitrogen applied to the corn crop to be washed away. Corn began the appearance of early maturing, but closer inspection showed that the corn was drying up because of the lack of nitrogen, and ears are very small or nonexistent on many stocks. Also, a disease called "Early Death Syndrome" has been causing bean plants to protect themselves from the excessive moisture, creating the appearance of maturing, however the bean pods are not producing beans. Time will tell what the harvest yields.

The rain has certainly created a difficult summer, but hopefully plans can be put in place to help prevent the problems in the future that excessive rain brings to the area.

## R.S.V.P. to enjoy music of Patsy Cline

The R.S.V.P. Club of the Columbus Junction State Bank is hosting a day trip to see a musical concert tribute- A Closer Walk With Patsy Cline at Circa 21 Dinner Theatre in Rock Island, Illinois on Wednesday, September 15. This production shares the life history of Patsy Cline and reminds the audience of the songs that she made famous- Walkin' After Midnight, I Fall To Pieces, Crazy and Back in Babies Arms. This is a matinee performance. We will leave Columbus Junction at 9:30 a.m. and be home by 5:30 p.m. The price is \$85 and includes the show and buffet meal with dessert. You do NOT need to be a member of the R.S.V.P. Club to go on this trip. There are a few seats left for the trip. Contact Ramona Wink by this Friday, September 3rd to sign up. We need 30 to go. Home- 319-728-7041, Cell 319-212-0366, Email wink123@lisco.net Discover the joy in traveling with a Really Special Variety of People!

## News from Legion Auxiliary

American Legion Auxiliary will meet on Tuesday, September 7th at 7:00 p.m. Vivian Loyd will be hostess. All Members: Your dues of \$17.00 for 2011 are now due. Please mail to: Earlene Lekwa, 213 Springer Avenue, Columbus Junction, IA 52738.

## CCHS Class of 2000 reunion set

The Class of 2000 ten-year reunion will be held at Rumors and Excuses on September 4th at 5 P.M.

## Columbus City Labor Day schedule

Columbus City City Hall will be closed on Monday, September 6, 2010, in observance of the Labor Day holiday. The regular Council meeting has been changed from September 6th to Monday, September 13, 2010 at 6 p.m.

## Cookies plus Kids

An Informational Meeting for all Columbus Community High School Students (Parents are encouraged and welcome to attend) on Wednesday, September 15 at 6:30 p.m., at the Columbus Senior Center. Questions, please call Mike and Renea Jay at 319-530-4010 during evening hours.

## Emma Beckman Chapter moves meeting date

Due to the Labor Day holiday, Emma Beckman Chapter #445, Order of the Eastern Star will have their regular meeting at the Masonic Center on September 7, 2010 at 2 p.m.

## Etude Club to meet

The Etude Club will meet at the Senior Center, Tuesday, September 7th at 7 p.m.

## Keep Columbus Beautiful to meet

It's time to get organized for fall clean up and beautification projects! The new Keep Columbus Beautiful committee invites everyone to participate in a planning meeting today, Wednesday, September 1st from 5:00 to 6:00 pm at the Civic Center. For information on Keep Columbus Beautiful or to volunteer, contact Mallory at 319-728-7971 or [cdc@columbusjunctioniowa.org](mailto:cdc@columbusjunctioniowa.org) or committee chair Jim Gabriel.

## Marr Park Labor Day schedule

In observance of Labor Day, the Conservation Education Center at Marr Park will be closed Monday, September 6, 2010. The Washington County Conservation Board wishes everyone a fun, safe holiday weekend. We hope you find some time to get out and enjoy our parks!

## Flu vaccine now available

Louisa County Public Health has flu vaccine for the 2010-2011 influenza season. Clinics will be open for the public every Thursday from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. starting September 2, 2010. Vaccinations are \$25 per person. The vaccine will provide 12 months of protection against three strains of influenza including H1N1. If you have had the H1N1 vaccine previously you may still receive the new vaccine at no risk. businesses or other organizations that would like to hold a vaccination clinic may contact public health to make arrangements. Flu clinics will be scheduled to be held at locations around the county during the month of September. For additional information please contact Louisa County Public Health at 319-523-3981.

## Please practice school cross walk etiquette

School crosswalk etiquette: If a student is in the crosswalk, the car needs to stop. Cars have not been stopping as the students walk across to the Springer Street Arts Complex. Please be aware of pedestrians' right-of-way.

## Gazette Holiday deadline

Due to the Labor Day holiday the deadline for news and advertising for next week's Gazette will be noon on Friday.

## C.J. Lions Club to serve annual Holiday Breakfast

The CJ Lions are once again serving breakfast (pancakes, eggs, sausage, coffee, juice and milk) on Saturday, September 4th, and Sunday, September 5th, from 7:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M., at the Columbus Junction Senior Center. All you can eat: Adults - \$6.00, and children under 12 - \$4.00. Good food from good people for a good cause (Lionism).

## Correction:

In the story last week regarding Our Shop, we need to correct the following: Pat Solomon teaches needle tatting, not crocheting. Betty has been shuttle tatting since she was a young lady. They meet the first Monday of the month in the food court in West Burlington, Iowa. The Gazette apologizes for any confusion that was caused.

# City Council retains recycling service

**By Jim Rudisill**

The cost will be slightly higher, but Columbus Junction residents will continue to receive a weekly recycling service, the city council agreed during its regular August 25th meeting. The council had been presented with two proposals at its August 11th meeting and agreed at last week's meeting to go with the one most community residents appeared to support.

Kim and Gabe Hewitt, Morning Sun, had proposed to either raise their monthly fee for recycling by \$1 and dropping the current weekly service back to semi-monthly; or raise the fee by \$1.75 and keep the weekly service. By going with the second proposal, city officials said the city's payment to Hewitt Sanitary would climb from \$3.71 to \$5.46 per residence per month. The officials said the increase would go into effect on September 1st and would likely be passed directly on to residents. However, they said the increase would not appear on bills until October.

After being presented with the options at the last meeting, city council members had agreed to delay a

decision until the August 25th meeting to give residents time to contact officials and say which alternative they favored. Officials said there was a clear winner.

"I received several calls and everyone was interested in maintaining the current system," Mayor Dan Wilson said.

Council member Hal Prior said he had not received any calls, but had made a point to talk to people about the issue and reported the same result. "Everyone I asked wanted to keep going the way we are," he said.

Other officials agreed and unanimously approved the higher rate. The increase is the first for the recycling firm since it began the service 13 years ago.

Incidents involving the city's trash collection also were discussed. Local businessman Lonnie Harless complained that people were using his business dumpster, which is provided by Rueckert Sanitation, for disposing of their trash. He said much of the illegal dumping is coming from a nearby apartment. City officials suggested if Harless could provide envelopes or other items that have a

name on it, the city would send a warning letter. City clerk Julie Heindel said that action has stopped similar activity in other areas of the community. Harless said he has never tried sorting through the material because it is especially rank and offensive. Officials said the problem was a recurring one that others have also complained about; and they would continue to discuss possible solutions.

The council also received a report from Trees Forever Field Coordinator Roger Hunt on the Trees Forever trEE-02. According to Hunt and the Trees Forever website, the program will help 10 Iowa communities that were affected by flooding in 2008 to plant 2500 trees over the next year. Hunt said a tree-planting event would be planned in the Columbus Junction this fall at the new community health center. A second planting event would be held in the spring and a third and final event the following fall.

In final action, the council approved a tax abatement application submitted by Elias Gutierrez for renovation work he is planning at 113 E. Walnut. Gutierrez is planning to con-

vert the Columbus Bowl building, which was flooded in 2008, into a food processing plant, specializing in Latino/Hispanic specialty food products. In his application, Gutierrez estimated the cost of improvements to the building would be around \$250,000. He proposed a 10-year, graduated abatement that could save his company around \$22,000 in city property taxes. The abatement would not affect property tax payments to other taxing bodies. Normally the abatement program for commercial properties provides a three-year, 100% abatement of city taxes. However, at its August 11 meeting, the council approved an amendment to the ordinance that would allow the council to consider alternative abatement requests. Gutierrez's application must still be approved by the Louisa County Assessor's office.

The council also approved a proposal to name a section of Locust Street in front of the American Legion Building The Roundy Way, in recognition of local resident Beryl Roundy. Officials said they would conduct a ceremony during Columbus Day activities in October.