

City affiliates with Keep America Beautiful

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

At a meeting last Wednesday, Columbus Junction made the first steps to become a national affiliate with the Keep America Beautiful organization.

Representatives from Keep America and Keep Iowa Beautiful were on hand to hold the initial phase of the training program. Those attending the program were updated on the goals and mission statement of KAB, and encouraged to set local goals.

In the next step, the local chapter will need to set an organizational body, elicit members from the community, do a survey of focus areas in the community rating the areas as to whether they are litter free to highly littered, and hold local certification training workshops.

The local chapter agreed to have all of the preliminary steps in place by the end of February, 2010. The local chapter will work in unison with the City Council and the various committees that were established during the summer workshops. The Gazette will keep readers updated as the chapter moves closer to final national affiliation.



Pictured above is a formerly weedy area on south Main Street where clean up work has begun. Weeds have been mowed and brush will be eliminated. Although this is a small project, it represents a beginning by the Keep Columbus Beautiful members. If you would like to become involved, please leave your name at City Hall or the Gazette Office.

Area Soldier returns flag favor to Roundy

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

Before embarking on his current assignment in Iraq, Roundy Elementary teacher, Christina Schenk presented Staff Sergeant Tim Penick with an American Flag that was flown over our nation's capital. Sergeant Penick was the third area soldier to receive a flag.

Last Monday, Sergeant Penick returned the favor when he visited the Roundy Elementary students and presented Miss Schenk with an American Flag that was flown over his camp in Tahai Iraq.

While at Roundy Sergeant Penick explained to the students what his responsibilities in Iraq were, detailed life in Iraq, and answered questions from the students. He told of the friends that he has made in Iraqi citizens, and said that he takes great enjoyment when these citizens come forward and thank the Americans for what they have done to help the country. When the students asked Sergeant Penick why he was serving in the military, he answered, "I am very proud to have this opportunity to serve the United States."

Sergeant Penick is the son of Verlinda and Marvin Prior of Columbus Junction.



Staff Sergeant Tim Penick presents an American Flag that was flown over his base camp in Tahai Iraq to Roundy Elementary teacher, Christina Schenk.

City discusses watershed development for Monkey Run

By Jim Rudisill

The proposed development of a watershed management plan on the south fork of Monkey Run could help reduce flooding in portions of Columbus Junction, city officials learned during the October 28 city council meeting. The plan could even boost efforts to cut down basement flooding that has plagued areas in the south end of the community.

During her regular monthly report, Columbus Community Development Center Executive Director Mallory Smith updated the council on the proposal. She explained representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Geode Resource Conservation and Development, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and other officials met October 26 to begin discussing the idea.

Smith said a grant application could be submitted to fund the program, which would focus on developing and eventually implementing a variety of recommendations to reduce runoff throughout the watershed.

Council member Phil Kaalberg, who attended the October 26 meeting, told the council the state and federal officials at the meeting had indicated if studies showed waterway flooding was impacting residential

areas, funding might be also available to mitigate those effects. He suggested residents along Fulton Court, Springer Avenue and other areas who reported basement flooding this year might benefit from those studies.

According to Mayor Dan Wilson, the south fork of Monkey Run flows northeast from near the Cedarcrest Country Club and eventually empties into Smith Creek, a tributary of the Iowa River. Flooding along Monkey Run has been severe in the past and could also be a factor in recent basement flooding in the south end of the community. The city hired French-Reneker Associates, Fairfield, earlier this year to study the problem following the basement flooding complaints.

Smith said the local watershed group would continue to meet and might develop a grant application later this year.

In addition to the watershed program, Smith also reported on several other activities she and assistant director Nitza Lopez-Castillo had conducted over the past several weeks. These included completion of Hispanic Heritage Month, which ran from September 15-October 15. Smith said Lopez-Castillo had worked on this project and had done a "spectacular job."

"It was a nice experiment and something to grow from," Smith said.

Smith said Lopez-Castillo was also working now on expanding a Minority Enterprise Construction Council program into Wapello. She said the council would help develop training and educational programs to aid minority businesses with bidding and other activities.

Smith also announced the groundbreaking ceremonies for the Community Health Center of Southeast Iowa would be held November 12. Construction on the building, which will be located at the intersection of Spring Street and Louisa County Road X-37 in Columbus City is expected to take from six to 12 months to complete.

Smith and Wilson reported on an upcoming November 2 meeting with officials of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). According to Wilson, the USDA has a program that can provide infrastructure and utility upgrades in the downtown. Wilson said the program had been discussed earlier this year, but had not been pursued.

However, the idea recently resurfaced and Wilson said it could possibly include replacement of the downtown sidewalks. He said the program normally would not cover sidewalks, but if the sidewalks were removed as part of a general utility upgrade, new sidewalks could then be installed.

Several old vaults are located

under some parts of the downtown sidewalks and officials have been eager to fill those because of safety concerns. Wilson said he would keep the council updated.

The council also received an update on the recent development of a Keep Columbus Beautiful affiliate with the Keep America Beautiful (KAB) campaign. Cecile Carson, a representative of KAB who has been working with local residents, told the council the development of a local affiliate was a positive step towards developing a comprehensive beautification program in the community.

The local program started several months ago after officials began looking into possible entryway beautification efforts. Eventually Keep America Beautiful and Keep Iowa Beautiful representatives began meeting with local residents and developing both long range and short range beautification ideas.

Carson said she hoped to have a report that focuses on those ideas available soon and would return to the community to discuss its proposals.

In final action, the council approved the city's 2009 financial report. According to the report, the city ended the 2008-09 fiscal year with a balance of \$533,313. There was a total of \$1,504,228 in expenditures.

Briefly -

Legion Auxiliary to meet

The American Legion Auxiliary will meet Tuesday evening, November 10, at 7 p.m. Kay McConahay will be hostess.

"Autumn Leaves" Concert set

The Columbus Community High School Music Department will present its annual fall program, Autumn Leaves, on Friday, November 6 at 7:30 p.m., in the high school gymnasium. The 6th Grade Choir, Junior High Choir, High School Concert Choir, Hot Tea, Jailbyrds, Chanteurs, and High School Jazz Band will perform. Admission is \$3 for adults and \$2 for students unless they present an activity pass. The Music Boosters will provide refreshments during the evening. This year's theme for the High School Concert Choir's second half of the program is "A Blast From The Past," with a great number of hit songs of the 40's, 50's and 60's. Come enjoy a fun-filled evening of song and dance!

CCIC to meet

CCIC will meet on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 at the Columbus City City Hall beginning at 6:00 p.m. This will be a potluck meeting with drink and table service provided. Remember to bring a \$5.00 gift for the exchange. Margaret and Darlene will host.

City Council to meet tonight

The City of Columbus Junction will hold a regular Council meeting today, Wednesday, November 4, 2009, at 5:30 p.m., in the New Civic Center/City Hall.

FFA Haunted Barn

The Columbus FFA will be holding a haunted barn this year at Tanner Davis' home (19172 Highway 92, east of Columbus Junction). The dates for the haunted barn will be: November 6th, and 7th. The hours of operation will be from 7:30-10:30 p.m. on those nights. The cost will be \$5.

FCCLA Pringles Project

The FCCLA are collecting empty Pringles cans so they can send cookies to active service people from the Columbus Junction area. They are also wanting addresses for these active duty people. Please drop off empty Pringles cans at the high school office and e-mail addresses to Lois Mincks @columbus.k12.ia.us or call 319-728-2231 ext. 3332. Thank for your help with this Christmas project. We would like to send them by mid-November.

FFA looks for leaf raking jobs

The Columbus FFA will be raking leaves on Saturday, November 7th. If your leaves need raking and you are unable to do so, please contact the Columbus FFA or Katie McWhirter at 728.2231 x 3621.

Half Hour Club to meet

The Half Hour Club will meet on Tuesday, November 10th at 1:30 p.m., at the Columbus Junction Museum. Hostesses are Judy Chapman and Janet Pretz. The program will be C.J. History by Frank Best. Please bring your reading list and filled shoe boxes.

Honor Flight participants to speak at Letts Community Center

On Sunday, November 8, 2009, at 2 p.m., at the Letts Community Center, area World War II veterans will speak of their Honor Flight Trip. Pictures, a slide show and an interesting conversation will take place. This event is sponsored by the Letts Public Library (refreshments provided by the Letts Public Library Board of Trustees).

JCAB looking for yard work

The JCAB 4-H club is looking for yard work jobs. It is for donations for our club. Please call 319-657-3054.

Retired School Personnel to meet

The Louisa County Retired School Personnel met for lunch at the Button Factory in Muscatine. A tour of the area followed. Four members were present for the business meeting on October 20, 2009. Next meeting will be Tuesday, November 17, 2009, in Columbus Junction. They will meet at 10 a.m., at "Our Shop," 106 Main Street, to start the tour of three Columbus Junction businesses. They will then have lunch at 11:30 a.m., at 92 Roadhouse. The group will tour Our Shop, Plants and Things, and Simply Soothing. Come join us.

Pleasant Grove Church supper

Pleasant Grove Community Church will be having their annual Chicken n' Biscuit Supper on Wednesday, November 11th from 4:30 to 7:00. This promises to be another delicious meal of Creamed Chicken on a Biscuit (or Maidrites for the kids) a large assortment salad bar, lots of pie to choose from for dessert, and coffee, tea, lemonade to drink. Free Will offering. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

Veterans' Day Program at Roundy

On Wednesday, November 11th, at 10:00 a.m. Roundy Elementary students will have an assembly in honor of Veterans' Day. All area Veterans, family and friends are invited to attend the assembly with our students. If anyone has memorabilia that they would like to display for the event, please contact Sue Vogeler at 319-728-6218.

School Board to meet

The Board of Education for Columbus Community School District will hold a public meeting on Thursday, November 5, 2009, at 4 p.m., in the Columbus Administrative Office.

Medicare Part D meeting at Senior Center

Every Fall Medicare prescription drug plans (Part D) announce changes to their premium, co-pays and the drugs they cover. Stay on top of these changes. You may be able to save money by choosing a different plan. November 15th through December 31, 2009, you can change your Medicare Part D plan for 2010 or enroll in Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D) if you haven't done so. The Columbus Junction Senior Center is hosting a Medicare Part D Check Up Event Wednesday, November 18th from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call 319-728-3148 for an appointment with a SHIP counselor. Appointments are required. You will need to bring your Medicare card, current Part D plan card and a list of your medications from your pharmacy, which includes drug name, quantity and dosage.