

More flood recovery steps fall into place

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

Another step forward to normalcy after the disastrous flood of 2008 took place last Monday as the Hy-Vee Pharmacy returned to their original location with a newly remodeled and expanded store.

The Hy-Vee Pharmacy has been temporarily located in the Iowa Telecom building while renovation of their former quarters in the Medical Facility building was underway.

The Pharmacy occupied the middle unit in the facility, with Dr. Wever occupying the east section. When Dr. Wever expressed an interest in exploring another location, the Pharmacy agreed to lease the additional floor space. The result is a new Pharmacy which has been expanded from 900 square feet to over 2,480 square feet.

The addition now gives the pharmacy an opportunity to offer an increased line of health products, as well as giving customers more room to browse as they wait for their prescriptions.

Although there certainly has been losses from the flood, the opening of another mainstay in the community gives all of us a sense of opti-



A view inside the new Hy-Vee Pharmacy

timism that the community is recovering. Although progress is slow, every

positive step is a reason to celebrate.

Congratulations to the Hy-Vee Pharmacy on their new store.

Columbus Women's Fitness Center now open for business

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

With the completion of some final details last weekend, the new Columbus Women's Fitness Center opened for business on Monday. The center is located in the former Columbus City Hall, and represents the recovery of the New You Fitness Center from the flood.

The center will operate with a key pad entry system, so everyone that has expressed an interest in joining the center is encouraged to stop by the Gazette Office, Northwestern Mutual Insurance, or H&R Block and complete an application and inform us of your requested access code. The lock system will be updated regularly, so the sooner you join the sooner you will have access.

Fees will be \$30 per month, due on the first of each month, with the November fees prorated to \$15. The

light timer has not been installed as of yet, so members are welcome to come whenever it is convenient, but you are asked to turn on the lights if you are the first to arrive in the morning, and turn off the lights if you finish by closing time, approximately 8:30 p.m.

This center is possible because of the generous donation of equipment from New You Fitness Center, and the volunteer help of many individuals in converting the old City Hall to an attractive fitness center. If you were a former member of New You, please consider coming back, and if you are a prospective new member, you are welcomed and encouraged to join.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the following board members: Polly Prior, Donna Carpenter, Carla Shellabarger, Sue Schweitzer, Chris Hedrick, Diane Bohling, Paula Shellabarger, Dorothy



The new Columbus Women's Fitness Center

Morrison, or Jeannine Clark.

This center is another step forward in the flood recovery efforts,

and it represents one more business or service in the community that did not fall prey to the flood of 2008.

Sewer problems plague City Council

By Jim Rudisill

Sewer backup problems in the south end of Columbus Junction might have several causes and a range of possible solutions, city officials were told during the council's November 12 regular meeting. Several city residents, including council member Hal Prior, have complained for several months about basement drains backing up and other problems. The council agreed to look into the problem after Keith and Cindy Milder, 101 Fulton Drive, complained in August about backup flooding in their basement.

The Milders had also reported problems in 1993 and 1996 and the city had conducted smoke tests and other inspections to try and identify illegal connections to the city's sewer lines. City officials said after those efforts were made there appeared to be a drop-off in problems until the recent complaints.

John Meyer, an engineer with French-Reneker Associates, Fairfield, who has worked with the city for several years on sewer, street and other improvements, told the council last week that he had inspected lines in the affected area and found some possible reasons for the backups. He also proposed several solutions, although he acknowledged a couple was unlikely because of their high cost.

Meyer said a major sewer line that runs from the end of Chautauqua Park all the way to Flatiron Drive has little change in elevation and can be quickly impacted by heavy rain events or other changing conditions.

"It's laid as flat as possible and any time there is a glitch, it can plug," he told the council.

He said Prior's house, which is located on Springer Avenue, is connected to the line and the flat grade and likelihood of plugs was probably the main reason for his problems.

"You need to put (the line) on a regular cleaning list and make sure it stays clean," Meyer told the council, explaining the lines should be cleaned once or twice a year.

The city could also reduce the flow going down the line by relocating a nearby lift station to a new site. That would divert some of the sewer flow to a different line. Neither the cleaning nor the relocation would require engineering or a major expense, Meyer assured the council.

The city could also conduct new smoke and other tests to learn how many residents have improper roof and drainage connections to the city's sanitary sewer system. Meyer said a single house roof connection is capable of overwhelming an eight-inch sewer line and causing backups. If there are several such connections, combined with sump pumps, line breaks and other infiltration problems, it would not take long for problems to develop.

Meyer said a solution to that problem was the key to solving the city's backups.

"The ultimate solution is to get rid of inflow and infiltration," he said.

City officials agreed that since the last testing in the mid-1990s, some residents could have made improper connections. Meyer said he would suspect any roof drains that went into the ground. He said the city could begin an inspection and ask property owner where those types of lines were present to show where the outlet was located. If the owner could not pro-

vide a site, it likely was emptying into the city's sewer line.

While cleaning lines, diverting to underused lines and disconnecting illegal drainage connections would be among the least costly efforts the city could do, probably totaling under \$20,000, another potential solution would have a much steeper price tag. Building a relief sewer line would likely cost around \$150,000, Meyer said.

City officials agreed the city should try the less expensive options first. City workers reported they had already arranged for the lines to be cleaned on November 13 and would also contact a crew to televisive sections of sewer lines for breaks and other problems. Officials also pointed out problems might continue until soil conditions improve.

"The ground is so saturated, you get a rain and (backups) hit," council member Mark Huston said.

Officials said they would review conditions once some of the lines are cleaned.

In other action, Mayor Dan Wilson warned the city would have much less salt to spread on city streets this winter and cautioned residents to exercise greater caution while driving. According to Wilson and public works staff members Fred Lukavsky and Jeff Carey, a salt shortage has hit the Midwest.

"We have been advised it will be difficult to get salt and driving conditions might be bad," Wilson said.

Lukavsky said snow removing teams spread nearly nine loads of salt, totaling around 225 tons, on city streets last year. However, the city currently only has one load of salt, about 25 tons, with the prospect of

getting more slim.

"We're not going to be able to go overboard with salt," Wilson said.

Officials said they would likely focus any salting efforts on the Main Street hill to keep it open for fire and rescue equipment. They would use sand in other critical areas, such as intersections and steeper grades. Officials indicated they would not try to keep the Second Street hill open if heavy snowfall or other winter conditions developed.

In final action, the council approved the city's 2008 annual financial report. The report showed efforts to fight this summer's flood contributed to a \$2,988 deficit in the FY 08 budget's ending balance. The original projected balance had been \$90,350. City officials said they hope to recover the funding from FEMA and are expecting a \$148,000 reimbursement check this week.

The council also agreed to reschedule its next regular meeting from November 26, the day before Thanksgiving, to Monday, November 24.

Gazette to hold 2nd annual clothing drive on Family Night

The Gazette, in partnership with the local Girl Scout Troop and St. Joseph's Catholic Church, will again hold their annual used clothing drive on Family Night. If you have good used clothes that you no longer can use, it doesn't matter if it is childrens, adults, or even the clothing's season, please consider bringing them to the Gazette office. The clothes can be dropped off on Family Night, where the Girl Scouts will receive them, or if you are unable to come then, they can be dropped off at any time. We collected a large number of clothes last year, and found a home for every article. There is a need in our community, and your help goes a long way. Thank you.

Buckman prevails in Supervisor recount

Paula Buckman prevailed over Ken Purdy in this last weekend's Supervisor election recount. 2,251 votes were recorded for Buckman and 2,233 votes for Purdy. Buckman will join Frank Jamison and Chris Ball on the board.

Briefly -

2009 County Fair dates set

Dates for the 2009 Louisa County Fair will be Monday, July 20 through Saturday, July 25, 2009.

Ainsworth Opera House unable to present Nativity Scene this year

The Ainsworth Community Center Opera House, at 284 Railroad Street, will not have our annual nativity display this December. We are having outside work done on the building and will not be able to get everything done. If you have any questions please feel free to email Sharon Gillis at sgillis@iowatelecom.net or call 319-657-3061.

Car seat check-up for kids

Safe Kids Southeast Iowa Coalition will offer a Buckle Up Car Seat Check Up to be held on Saturday, November 22 from 10 am-1 pm, at the Columbus Junction Fire Station, 206 Eastern Access (across from Casey's). Parents are to bring their child with them so car seat technicians can check to see if the car seat is correct for that child. Parents will be taught how and where to properly install their car seat. If you have any questions, you can call Jeannette Fry at 752-4000 ext. 119. The car seat check up is sponsored by: FunCity; General Motors; Young House Family Service; Columbus Junction Fire Department; and the Des Moines and Louisa Counties Caring COMMUNITY Empowerment Board.

Community Club to hold blood drive today

THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY REGIONAL BLOOD CENTER ANNOUNCES THAT A BLOOD DRIVE SPONSORED BY THE COLUMBUS JUNCTION COMMUNITY CLUB WILL BE HELD TODAY, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH, FROM 1:30 PM TO 6:30 PM, AT THE AMERICAN LEGION HALL (99 2ND STREET). To donate, call Kirsten Shellabarger at 319-728-2414 to sign up. Walk-ins welcome. Donors who last gave blood on or before September 24, 2008 are eligible. Blood donation is a safe, simple procedure that only takes about an hour. Donors must be at least 16 years old, in good health, and weigh at least 110 pounds. A Blood Donor card or other photo I.D. is required to donate; 16-year-old donors must present a signed parental consent form, available from the Blood Center or for download from www.bloodcenter.org. Controlled high blood pressure and diabetics are acceptable.

Community Club to meet

The Columbus Community Club will meet this Thursday at noon at the Civic Center.

Get ready for Family Night

Be sure to mark your calendars for Family Night in downtown Columbus Junction on Wednesday, December 3, 2008. Watch next week's Gazette for more details.

CJ Raceway becomes CJ Speedway

Changes are what race fans can expect for the 2009 racing season in Columbus Junction, Iowa. Long time promoters Jeff and Faith Story have handed over their promoters caps to Wapello residents Don and Sharon Wood and Brian and Amanda Tipps. On September 24, a three-year lease (with the option of three more years) has been signed between the Louisa County Fair Board and the Wood and Tipps families.

The new promoters have already begun their changes with a change from the name of CJ Raceway to "CJ Speedway." Vast improvements are planned for the fairground's facility to both the grandstand and track area with clean up of the facilities already underway.

Under the new promotion, the Wood/Tipps families hope to bring fans and cars back to this southeast Iowa track. With the improvements and their willingness to listen, they hope the Columbus Junction race-track will be the place families will want to be on Friday nights. Already, area racers have committed to coming back to race at Louisa County's only racing facility.

Plans for the 2009 season, which is tentatively scheduled to begin in late April, will include five classes. 4 Cylinders, IMCA Stock Cars, Mod Lites, Hobby Stocks, and the new

class for 2009 will be modifieds. The rules package will allow IMCA Mods and USRA Mods to compete against each other, scales have been purchased. Hopes of bringing motorcycle races and sprint car races are also being considered. Some four-cylinder specials may also be added later in the year along with some late model specials.

Races will continue to be held on Friday nights. Admission prices are tentatively being set at \$8.00 for adults, \$7.00 for seniors. Students 11-16 - \$6.00 and new next season will be kids 10 and under admitted free with paid adult. The popular Lil' Racers Car Club will also be coming to CJ for 2009.

Some of the previous track personnel will return but the new promoters are looking for some new faces including a flagman and announcer. The Wood/Tipps families hope that area businesses will join them in bringing a good quality show to the 4/10 mile with sponsorships and employee nights. Other possibilities to bring fans to the CJ Speedway will be "community nights", inviting area communities to enjoy the thrills of auto racing.

There is a lot of work ahead for the Wood and Tipps families before the start of the 2009 racing season, but with the support of family, friends and area communities, they are looking forward to their first year as promoters.

A new website has been started where you can check out upcoming information. www.CJSpeedway.com will be updated regularly with announcements, information, and photos. Watch for more information to come.

The Columbus Junction Volunteer Fire Department and the Columbus Junction Ambulance Service will provide their services for the 2009 season. If you would like more information, to offer sponsorships or offer your support, call Don at 319-572-2206 or Brian 563-260-7234.