

Passing the 30 second rule

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

"Do we pass the thirty second rule?" Simply stated, the thirty second rule refers to what impression we give a newcomer to our city in the first thirty seconds that they enter town. Is the entryway descriptive, attractive, welcoming? Most of us are unable to answer these questions, we know how to get into town, and what we see when we enter is what we've always seen and come to expect. The city's Development Committee has been wrestling with this issue for the past couple of years. Discussions have been held on potential locations and designs for welcoming signs, various landscaping projects in strategic areas, along with several other ideas. But these discussions have slowed down recently with the flood damage, causing plans to be reconsidered. However, things kicked into high gear last week when representatives from Keep Iowa Beautiful and Keep America Beautiful met with city leaders and expressed their interest in helping the community with this project.

"We have been very impressed with the energy your community exhibited in dealing with the flood and its subsequent recovery," said Keep Iowa Beautiful representative Gerry Schnepf, "and we would like to help keep this energy moving forward." This goal has also been shared by Mayor, Dan Wilson. "We have a tremendous momentum working right now," said Wilson, "and help from organizations like Keep Iowa Beautiful and Keep America Beautiful is just what we need to keep and capitalize on this momentum."

Cecile Carson from Keep America Beautiful said, "We're here to do more than just give suggestions, we are prepared to bring in some outside experts, and also provide funding." Carson explained that a group from RDG, a consulting firm from Des Moines, is willing to visit the community over several days in the spring and help put together a plan. The project that will be worked on is the city entryways. Carson explained that the first step is to get the community interested in the project, and get their input on various topics. "There is a wealth of ideas out there," said Carson, "and it is important to have your citizens come forward with these ideas." She said that initially we need to come up with a theme for the city, for example rivers or bridges, and from this theme design a logo. Then the entryways can be designed



The corner of Western Access and Hwy 92, one of the city's entrances that will be studied.

to reflect this theme. Other areas discussed at the meeting included capitalizing on the unique architecture of our Main Street buildings, finding ways to improve the appearance of the viaduct from street level, and come up with plans for the backside of downtown buildings.

Understandably, all of these are long-range projects, but the city and Keep Iowa Beautiful are anxious to get started. The first step will be obtaining your input and ideas. Whether you are a lifetime resident, or new to the community, your suggestions will be crucial in helping to formulate plans. Everyone has had thoughts on this subject, and now is your opportunity to express them. On page 8 of this week's issue you will find a questionnaire. Please take the time to fill out the questionnaire and return it to City Hall or the Gazette Office. The success of this project can only be accomplished with your help.

Following is a news release that the Gazette recently received further explaining the program:

The city of Columbus Junction's community leaders, Keep America Beautiful, Keep Iowa Beautiful and the consulting firm of RDG have entered into a unique partnership. Over the next 12 months they will utilize

the recent flooding history in the community and vitality of its citizens to develop a plan of action that will not only help in the recovery, but, serve to move the community into the future as a more attractive place to live, work and play.

Community leaders with the urging of Mayor Dan Wilson will be utilizing and expanding the community development committee under the leadership of Tim Wink (city Attorney) to involve all segments of the diverse population of the community to participate in this effort.

At the same time, Keep America Beautiful (KAB), Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) and RDG will be assembling a team of special volunteers and professionals that will work with the expanded development committee to build on existing efforts and to design and implement a new community identity and image. Additionally, the combined group will utilize citizen input and develop a number of "hands on" projects that will enhance the overall image and attractiveness of Columbus Junction. The results of this effort should encourage residents and enhance the community while building increased levels of pride, respect and commitment. The Columbus Gazette will be

polling its readers to provide ideas and to respond to a number of questions regarding community improvements and image. The response to those questions will be utilized and reviewed by the expanded development committee. That committee and the team from KAB and KIB will be meeting the first full week in May to undertake the intense and detailed planning effort. To make sure that the project is also fun and enjoyable (as well as the hard work) - the combined groups will be called the "C.J. Resuscitators" (short for Columbus Junction Resuscitators) bringing a new spirit for the future to the community.

This is an exciting and wonderful opportunity for our town, and it has become available because of the determination, compassion and concern for the community that each of you exhibited during the flood of 2008 and the subsequent recovery. With your help we can now put this disaster behind us, and move into a new and better era for the citizens of the Columbus Community. City leaders are looking forward to your returned questionnaires, so if you have ever felt strongly about an area that could be improved, this is your chance to be heard.

Briefly -

CCHS Class of 1984 to meet

The Class of 1984 will be meeting on Wednesday February 18th at the 92 Roadhouse 7:00 pm. This is to make plans for their 25th Class Reunion.

Story Hour at the Library

Story hour is on Tuesday, February 17, after school until 5 p.m., for kindergarten through 3rd grade. We will celebrate February - story, crafts and movie. If school dismisses early or is canceled, we will reschedule story hour.

City Council to meet

The City of Columbus Junction will hold a regular Council Meeting today, Wednesday, February 11, at 5:30 p.m., at the new Civic Center/City Hall.

Columbus City Council Vacancy

The City of Columbus City has a vacancy on the Council and is looking for anyone willing to serve as a Council Member. Please contact Mayor Mark Shear or City Clerk Lisa Hills or you may submit your name to the City by February 28th, 2009.

Free coffee at Meal Site

Please join us for the regular 2nd Thursday free coffee at the Meal Site in the City Hall in Columbus City on February 12, beginning at 8:00 am. Then our 4th Thursday coffee will be held on the 26th in the Hope Bible Church basement at 8:30. Everyone is welcome.

Senator Grassley in Wapello

U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley invites you to a Town Hall Meeting in Louisa County on Wednesday, February 18, 2009, from 5-6 p.m., at the Wapello Ambulance Building, 400 Highway 61 South, Wapello, Iowa.

Jump Rope for Heart

Roundy Elementary Students in grades 3-5 are participating in Jump Rope for Heart. Along with learning new jump rope steps they are also learning about things they can do to keep their hearts healthy. Students will be asking for donations for the American Heart Association until Feb. 20. They will celebrate that day during their Physical Education class with all types of jumping activities! If making a donation by check, please make the check out to the American Heart Association. If you have any questions or would like to make a donation please call Mrs. Vogeler at Roundy Elementary at 728-6218.

Kindergarten Round-up

Will your child be old enough to attend school at Roundy Elementary, Columbus Junction, IA, this Fall? Roundy Elementary is preparing for Kindergarten. If your child was born before September 15, 2004 and is not currently enrolled in the Columbus Preschool Program, KFC Preschool, or the Great Beginnings Preschool Program, please call the school at 728-6218.

¿Usted cree que su hijo/a tendrá la edad necesaria para empezar el Kindergarten en el Otoño del 2009? ¿Tendrá su hijo/a la edad necesaria para asistir a la Escuela Primaria Roundy en Columbus Junction, IA este otoño? La Escuela Primaria Roundy se está preparando para Kindergarten-Si su niño/a nació antes del 15 de Septiembre del 2004 y no está inscrito actualmente en el Programa de Preescolar de Columbus, el Programa Preescolar de KFC, o en el Programa Preescolar Great Beginnings, por favor llame a la escuela al 728-6218.

Blood Drive at L&M School

The Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center announces there will be a blood drive on Thursday, February 12th from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the L&M High School gymnasium located on 14354 170th Street, Letts. To donate call Karlee Koester at 319-726-3421, ext. 135. Walk-ins are welcome.

Cattlemen to hold banquet

The Louisa County Cattlemen's Association will hold its annual Banquet on Wednesday, February 25, 2009, at the American Legion in Columbus Junction. The event will start with a social hour at 5:30 p.m. Dinner will be served at 6 p.m. Tickets will be \$10 at the door, or in advance. Entertainment will be by Brooke Turner. For more information and tickets, call Wade Edwards at 319-657-3054.

Conservation Board to meet

The Louisa County Conservation Board will hold a meeting today, Wednesday, February 11, 2008, at 5:30 p.m., in the Louisa County Conservation Board Office.

Masonic Lodge Soup Supper

There will be a ham and bean supper at the Columbus City Masonic Lodge on Friday, February 13th. Serving will be from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. A free will donation will be accepted.

Blood Drive in Morning Sun

Morning Sun Community is sponsoring a blood drive for the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center on Monday, February 23rd from 3:00 pm to 6:30 pm at Morning Sun Community School, 311 Division Street. Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center is the exclusive provider of blood and blood products to Unity Healthcare. For more information call Michele Hemphill at 319-868-5781. Walk-ins welcome.

P.E.O. to meet

The next meeting of PEO Chapter CX will be held at the home of Shannon Salazar on Monday, February 16 at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be co-hosted by Emily Wilson and the program will be "The President's Letter." All members are encouraged to attend.

Shellbark Club to meet

Shellbark Club will meet Thursday, February 19th at 11:30 a.m., at Pork's in Winfield.

Pleasant Grove Church supper

Pleasant Grove Church is having their annual Sausage and Pancake Supper today, Wednesday, February 11th, from 4:30-7:00 p.m. Come join your friends and family for good food, good conversation, and wonderful fellowship. Please tell all your neighbors and invite them to support the "little white church" on the hill. Four miles east of Columbus Junction, 18783 Hwy 92, Free Will Donation.

Integrity Dental participates in Give Kids a Smile® Day

Give Kids A Smile® Day highlights disadvantaged children's need for dental care

Columbus Junction, IA - Last week children from local low-income families received free dental services as part of national Give Kids a Smile® day. In Iowa last year, over 4,100 children were served by nearly 170 Iowa dentists and over 600 other volunteers. Nationwide, 53,000 dental team members participated in Give Kids a Smile®.

"At Integrity Dental in Columbus Junction we realize it is challenging for families during a tough economy to focus attention on their children's oral health. Unfortunately, neglect can lead to greater health problems that cannot be ignored. With Give Kids a Smile®, we have the opportunity to treat some of the kids that might not otherwise be seen and educate the public on what more needs to be done to help children get the dental care they need," said Dr. Willie Wever.

Nearly 1 in 4 children ages 2 to 11 years old have untreated cavities in their baby teeth according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The National Institutes of Health report that 80 percent of tooth decay is found in just 25 percent of children, primarily from low-income families. Here in Iowa, only 41% of children enrolled in Medicaid received any dental service in 2005,

which isn't surprising when you understand that our state Medicaid program spends less than 1.5% on dental services for children and adults."

"With the reality of hard economic times setting in, more and more Iowans will need Medicaid for their health care needs," said Dr. Wever. "Despite a much needed increase in Medicaid funding last year, the unfortunate reality is that reimbursement levels for Iowa dentists are still set at pre-2000 levels, which most times doesn't cover the actual cost of services. We hope that by seeing the increasing demand of dental health care at events like Give Kids a Smile®, our policymakers will do more to ensure coverage for Iowa's children and families, as well as adequate reimbursement levels so that more Iowa dentists will see Medicaid patients."

In 2008, Iowa dentists donated well over \$1 million worth of dental care during Give Kids a Smile® events and the inaugural Iowa Mission of Mercy, and through ongoing initiatives like Donated Dental Services.

"We need to participate as a community and as a state to provide this much needed oral health to children in Iowa. We need to find the political will to solve this problem," said Dr. Wever. "It won't happen overnight. But if enough people continue working on it, it will happen." Pictured is Lisa Cox at Integrity Dental providing care for Give Kids a Smile Day.



Senior Center receives grant funds



The Community Foundation of Louisa County, the Community Foundation of the Great River Bend, and Embrace Iowa worked jointly to distribute funds to the Columbus Junction Community Senior Center for flood recovery efforts. Pictured is Polly Prior, Senior Center Board member.