

CCHS Junior Class visits Community Club

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

The Columbus Community Club entertained the CCHS Junior Class at their regular monthly meeting last week.

The class listened to reports from many community groups and organizations with the purpose of describing to the students the many people that are required to make a community work.

Reports were given by the Wildcats First Group, Louisa County Fair Board, Tyson Foods, Louisa County Supervisors, Columbus Junction Benefited Fire Department, Louisa County Ambulance, Columbus Medical Facility, Columbus Senior Center, City of Columbus City, Columbus Junction Police Department, Columbus Junction Public Library, Community Development Center, Iowa State Extension, Columbus Community Schools, and the City of Columbus Junction.

The students were encouraged to consider joining or helping in these organizations after their graduation.

The meeting was held at the American Legion Building.



Briefly -

Cookies and Kids Soup Supper

The Cookies and Kids group is sponsoring a Soup Supper at the Columbus Senior Center on Tuesday, February 22, 2011, 5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Chili and Wisconsin cheese soup will be served. You will get a bowl of soup, a dessert and lemonade or coffee for \$4.00. Adam Ross, Associate Pastor at New London Christian Church will give an inspirational presentation at 7:15 p.m. and everyone is welcome to attend. All proceeds go to help defray costs incurred by Cookies and Kids member Marina Ramirez on her mission trip to Russia in March. If you are unable to attend the soup supper but would like to make a donation, call Mike Jay at 319-530-6775 or mail check to: Mike Jay, 27253 165th Street, Columbus Junction, Iowa 52738.

Early Childhood Board to meet

The Des Moines/Louisa Early Childhood Area Board (formerly Empowerment Board) will be meeting at the First Presbyterian Church, 801 Middle Street, Mediapolis, IA, today, Wednesday, February 16, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.

Habitat for Humanity Soup Supper

Louisa County Habitat for Humanity will host their annual Celebration Soup Supper, Sunday, February 27 at the United Methodist Fellowship Hall in Wapello from 5 - 7 p.m. There will be entertainment, a brief recognition program starting at 6:15 p.m., and door prizes. Everyone is welcome!

County Cattleman's Banquet set

The Annual Louisa County Cattleman's Banquet will be held on Wednesday, February 23, 2011, at the American Legion in Columbus Junction, Iowa. Social hour begins at 5:30 p.m. with supper at 6:00 p.m. The evening will include awards, Iowa Cattleman's Report and Speaker, Craig Grothe. Tickets available at the door. For more information, contact Tom Bonnichsen at 319-729-2020 or Wade Edwards at 319-631-1708.

Visual Support Group to meet

The February meeting of the Louisa County Visual Support Group will meet on Thursday, February 17th at 1 p.m. We will meet in the East Room of Corner Market located at 340 North 2nd in Wapello. Susan Howard from the Department for the Blind and Handicapped in Des Moines will be our speaker. Everyone is welcome to attend. Any questions, please call Lois Richers at 319-527-2630.

Longbeards Banquet scheduled

The eleventh annual Louisa Longbeards Banquet is being held Saturday, March 5th. A prime rib supper will be served at the Briggs Civic Center, Wapello. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for guests to participate in games, raffles, and review items for silent and live auction, etc. Early bird ticket packages and supper tickets must be purchased by Tuesday, March 1. Any questions concerning the banquet or becoming a member, please contact Dave Boysen at 319-572-1551 or Todd Shutt at 319-572-1522.

PEO to meet

The next meeting of PEO Chapter CX will be hosted by Ruth Buser at the Colonial Manor Assisted Living Library on Monday, Feb. 21 at 7:00 p.m. and co-hosted by Bev Nielsen. The program will be the President's Letter. All members are encouraged to attend.

Parents ITBS meeting scheduled

Parents of 6th-11th grade students are encouraged to attend an informational presentation about the upcoming ITBS and ITED tests. The meeting will be held at the Las Vegas Ballroom on Saturday, Feb. 26th from 6-7 p.m. The Columbus Parent Organization will provide light refreshments. School administrators and staff will be presenting information about the importance of the tests, and ways parents can help their children be prepared to give their best effort. For more information, you may call the school at 319-728-2231. Translation services will be provided.

Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, February 17th at 11:30 a.m. at 92 Roadhouse in Columbus Junction.

Frieda Sojka to appear on Paula Sands

Local business owner Frieda Sojka, of Pride of Iowa Marketplace, will be on the Paula Sands Live show on Tuesday, February 22nd at 4:30 p.m. The show is on KWQC Channel 6.

Habitat for Humanity applications

Louisa County Habitat for Humanity will be taking applications for their next home in Louisa County which will be built in Morning Sun. Applications are due by February 26th. Construction is expected to begin this spring after a family has been designated. To qualify for a Habitat home, the family's income cannot exceed 60% of the median income for Louisa County; they must help with the construction of the home with sweat equity hours; and be able to make a modest, monthly mortgage payment once the home is built. Once constructed, the family will purchase the home with a zero interest mortgage. Monthly mortgage payments, including taxes and insurance, would normally be around \$350 or less. To request an application call President Trish Woepping at 1-800-249-8428 (pin 4352).

Legislative Forum

A legislative Forum will be held Saturday, February 19, 2011 with Senator Tom Courtney & Representative Dennis Cohoon and Representative Tom Sands at the Burlington Public Library 210 Court Street Burlington, Iowa 9:15-11:15 am.

Great Backyard Bird Count

The Columbus Junction Community Development Center invites you to participate in The Great Backyard Count (GBBC). This is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. The GBBC count will take place February 18 to 21. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. The Community Development Center will collect Columbus area tallies through Friday, February 18 and will publish the results in the following week's newsletter. Drop them off at City Hall or email cdc@columbusjunctioniowa.org. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. Let's have a Columbus GBBC! See www.birdsource.org/gbbc/ to begin preparing.

City Council discusses budget issues

By Jim Rudisill

Nearly \$4.5 million in approved grant funding will swell Columbus Junction's proposed 2011-12 budget to over \$5.8 million, compared to this year's estimated spending of around \$1.3 million. The city council reviewed the budget during its regular February 9 meeting.

A \$2.9 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to relocate the city's water treatment plant is the largest of the outside funding that will swell the local budget. Another \$920,000 in revenue to help fund the relocation project will come from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

The city will also receive \$695,000 in CDBG funding to upgrade the Iowa River levee east of town. Officials reported the grant funding will be deposited in the city's water fund. Most of the expenditures are expected to come in FY 11-12, but some might be spent in

the current year and other spending could be extended into FY 12-13.

Officials acknowledged the grant funding would make comparing the upcoming budget to previous budgets difficult. "It kind of distorts things," council member Mark Huston said.

Although the grants inflate both the revenue and spending sides of the budget, officials previously had agreed the city's sewer and water funds were beginning to lose ground. During a meeting late last year, officials said it had been 12 years since water rates had been increased and suggested there needed to be an adjustment.

Although a final rate increase will need to be approved by the city council through a formal ordinance amendment, the proposed budget does anticipate higher fees for water. "(A) Water rate increase is put in the budget," council member Hal Prior reported.

In addition to the water fund grants, the city also was notified it had

received a \$75,000 Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grant. That funding will be used for park and other improvements. That spending will boost the park and recreation proposed budget, which is included in the city's general fund, to over \$86,000.

Total general fund spending in 2011-12 is project to be around \$651,000. That will include police department spending of \$292,207.

Officials said new vests; tasers and the first year of a two-year payment schedule for a new squad car will be included in the budget.

Officials said the two-year cycle for new cars was a good way to cover those costs. "It makes more sense," Mayor Dan Wilson said, explaining the budget shows more stability with that method.

According to budget figures, the proposed tax levy for 2011-12 will be just under \$11.66 per \$1000 valuation, which is about two cents below the current rate. However, be-

cause of an increase in valuation, the new rate is expected to generate \$366,769 in property taxes, which is about \$4000 above this year's taxes.

The proposed budget shows an ending balance of \$564,462. The estimated ending balance for this fiscal year is projected to be \$458,365. The council agreed to hold a public hearing on the FY 2011-12 budget proposal at its February 23 meeting.

In other action, Wilson announced he and other local city officials met earlier in the month with U.S. Representative Dave Loebsack to discuss several issues of interest. Wilson said he notified Loebsack of the continuing effort by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to update flood maps.

The latest version of the maps has been criticized by officials in several neighboring communities, who believe the maps are not accurate. Wilson said Loebsack told the group he was not aware of the controversy and will investigate.

Agriland FS partners with farmers for area organizations

AGRILAND FS, Inc developed a community support program this past fall to allow farmers the opportunity to earn money for local non profit organizations. AGRILAND FS is a farmer owned cooperative focusing on agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, seed, crop protection, fuel, and agricultural services in southern Iowa.

AGRILAND'S program, "Community Support 2010", gave growers the ability to purchase their seed corn and soybeans from Agriland and in return AGRILAND FS donated funding to an organization of the grower's choice. Dekalb, Asgrow, NK Brand Seed and FS Seed are all seed partners of AGRILAND FS that growers could purchase from. Growers se-

lected a local, non profit organization to receive the donation. Some favorite organizations include FFA chapters, county 4-H programs, schools, fire departments and rural church organizations. AGRILAND FS donated over \$8,500 to organizations in southeast Iowa through the "Community Support 2010" program.

Local organizations receiving

donations from the Columbus Junction AGRILAND FS location include Louisa County Fair, Winfield Mount Union Schools Ag Department, Spring Run Church and the Spring Run Church Cemetery Association. AGRILAND FS is pleased to recognize these organizations for their hard work and dedication to the community.

Nominations now being accepted for Columbus Community School District 2011 Distinguished Graduate Program

Columbus Community Schools believes that a Columbus education and diploma enables students to do great things. We believe that there are Columbus graduates who have done great things and they deserve recognition by Columbus for their achievements as adults.

This "Distinguished Graduates Program" enables our public to nominate worthy graduates for consideration and selection to a "Wall of Fame". Selected winners will be recognized at the Graduation of Seniors Ceremony in May. This year, 2011, will be the fourth year of the award. Past winners are: Hal Prior (Class of 1954) - inducted in 2008; Tom Huston (Class of 1947) - inducted in 2009; Dan Crawford (Class of 1960) - inducted in 2010.

The criteria for being considered and possibly chose is:

1. Must be a graduate of a High School in the Columbus Community School District. This would include Cotter High School, Conesville High School, and Columbus Junction High School, as well as Columbus Com-

munity High School.

2. The individual must have an accomplishment of significant achievement or contribution. (Example: Career, country, community, or mankind)

The Nomination Procedure is:

1. Nomination Papers can be found at the Columbus website: columbuscsd.net and also at the Superintendent's Office and the CJ Gazette.

2. An individual or groups may make the nomination of a person annually.

3. Nominations must be made in writing and must include name, graduation year and profile of accomplishments.

4. Nomination deadline is March 31, 2011.

5. Inductions will occur during the Columbus Community High School Graduation Ceremony.

6. Selection will be made by unanimous vote of the Selection Committee.

7. An individual may nominate more than one candidate.

8. Please submit additional information about the nominee on separate sheets of paper.

9. Individuals not chosen the first year will automatically be included with the group of nominees the second year.

Senator Grassley to speak in town next week

WASHINGTON - Senator Chuck Grassley will be in Clinton, Des Moines, Henry, Iowa, Jackson, Lee, Louisa, Muscatine, Scott and Van Buren counties next week to hold town meetings, visit an Iowa workplace, speak with service club members, and answer questions from students.

These meetings are part of Grassley's annual 99-county tour, which is one of the things he does to stay in touch with Iowans. Grassley has held a constituent meeting in all of Iowa's 99 counties every year since he was first elected to the United States Senate in 1980.

"These meetings give me a chance to talk with Iowans face-to-face. I answer their questions and listen to what they think about the issues. I work for the people of Iowa, so I want this feedback. Constituent meetings are very important when it comes to taking common-sense views to Washington," Grassley said.

Details of Grassley's schedule are below. Grassley will be available for media interviews for approximately 15 minutes following each event. Grassley is a guest at these events. Please contact the organizations for additional information.

Monday, February 21, 2011: 6-7 p.m. Speak to Columbus Junction Lions, Columbus Community Senior Center, 115 E. Walnut St., Columbus Junction.