

# Andrew & Maquoketa Graduating Class of 2010

Photos & Future Plans

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# MAQUOKETA SENTINEL-PRESS

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**EDWARD SEEBERGER,**  
U.S. Army Corporal T/5  
Nov. 1942 - June 1946

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# Teams respond to chemical call

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

Maquoketa volunteer firefighters and law enforcement officers experienced some tense moments this week when a chemical reaction caused a barrel to explode and give off smoke in a Maquoketa industrial building.

Authorities were called to the building occupied by Melling Cylinder Sleeve Co. at 140 Jacobsen Drive at 8:35 a.m. Thursday, May 27.

No one was injured in the incident and emergency response crews remained on the scene for 4 1/2 hours.

The initial report was that the lid had blown off a stored 55-gallon drum of an unknown product and that the barrel was smoking, said Maquoketa Fire Chief Mark Beck.

On arrival, firefighters noticed a strong chemical odor. People and businesses in the industrial park area were notified and were advised to stay indoors.

Because the substance was unknown, the Davenport hazardous materials response team was contacted to assist.

A staging area was set up on East Maple Street east of Jacobsen Drive. All streets in the industrial park were open to traffic except for the block of East Maple that included the staging area.

The barrel was owned by Plastics Unlimited of Preston, which was leasing a portion of the rear of the building.

Officials from Plastics Unlimited were called and moved the smoking barrel outdoors with a fork truck, Beck said.

They said the material was residue from a fire at their plant, according to Beck.

Lyn Medinger, Jackson County emergency management coordinator, said the substance was a mild irritant to skin and lungs.

Plastics Unlimited officials said the material had been in the

Maquoketa industrial building for about three to four months and was being stored until an insurance settlement could be reached.

They said they thought the product was a catalyst used in their process at their factory in Preston, Beck said.

The Davenport hazardous materials response unit arrived with seven hazardous materials technicians, who investigated the incident further, according to Beck.

They sent team members in full protective gear to the barrel to obtain samples of the contents if needed and gather more information.

They observed that another barrel still inside the building appeared to be smoking, Beck said.

A full decontamination area was set up to wash down response crews and equipment if necessary.

Crews were able to minimize the hazard with absorbent material and the area was cleared by about 1 p.m., 4 1/2 hours after the incident occurred.

Until then, employees of Pacific Coast Feather Co. and DAC Inc.'s recycling center were confined to their workplaces because East Maple Street, the only access to those facilities, was closed to traffic.

Nineteen Maquoketa firefighters responded to the call.

The Jackson County Regional Health Center ambulance and crew stood by in case it was needed and assisted in monitoring the responding crews.

Maquoketa police and Jackson County sheriff's deputies assisted with traffic control.

Plastics Unlimited will be responsible for the clean-up by a certified hazardous clean-up contractor of all involved material and the storage area, Beck said.



MSP photos by Rick Sheehan

**Two Maquoketa firefighters** carry a gasoline-powered exhaust fan to the Maquoketa industrial building where a barrel filled with a chemical exploded Thursday morning, May 27. Firefighters, a hazardous materials crew and other emergency response workers remained at the scene for 4 1/2 hours doing initial clean-up until the area was declared safe.

# JCRHC continues search for surgeon

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

Jackson County Regional Health Center may be close to finding the new general surgeon it has been seeking.

Hospital board members disclosed this week that a prospective surgeon for the hospital and his wife recently visited Maquoketa and discussed the upcoming job opening with the board and hospital staff.

"The feedback that I got was that he was very positive about it, very interested in coming to Maquoketa," Curt Coleman, hospital executive director, told the hospital's Board of Trustees during its monthly meeting Tuesday afternoon, May 25.

Coleman declined to identify the candidate other than to say he is from Pennsylvania.

Coleman said the hospital expects to learn in the next few weeks whether or not an employment agreement will be reached.

He said after the meeting that the doctor has been given a sample agreement, but no job offer has been made.

"We're not at that stage yet. But there's interest on both parties," Coleman said of the hospital and the candidate. "We're discussing the possibilities."

He said the hospital would pay a sign-on bonus and provide other incentives, such as paying moving expenses.

He said one issue being discussed is whether the surgeon would be an employee of the hospital or would work as an independent contractor.

The hospital has been seeking a candidate for the past couple of years to

replace Dr. Pedro Atienza, who plans to retire.

Coleman also disclosed that Medical Associates of Maquoketa is considering a family practice physician who may join the clinic. The candidate is from Iowa and currently is practicing in Missouri, Coleman said.

The hospital is hoping that a family practice doctor who practices obstetrics can be recruited to join the hospital staff.

The hospital recently closed its obstetrics unit after the retirement last month of Dr. Paul Koob of Maquoketa, who at the time was the only physician who delivered babies at the hospital.

"They're just starting discussions with him," Coleman said of the status of that candidate.

He said the hospital's involvement with the family practice candidate is to provide financial incentives to recruit a candidate.

"It's extremely difficult to do that, if not impossible, without the support of the hospital," Coleman said.

He told the board last month that the hospital may have to pay an incentive that could include repaying the physician's student loans from medical school.

He said the hospital needs to be prepared to pay incentives of that amount to be competitive with other rural hospitals.

In other business, Coleman said the hospital is continuing to work with the executive team of Genesis Health Sys-

■ HOSPITAL,  
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**Maquoketa firefighters** and Davenport hazardous material response crew congregate in the shade of a canopy on a warm Thursday morning, May 27, as they probed the explosion of a barrel of an unknown product being stored by Plastics Unlimited of Preston. No one was hurt in the incident.