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— M A Q U O K E T A —

SENTINEL-PRESS

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IN THIS ISSUE

Willey leaves legacy of contribution to Iowa



WYTHE WILLEY

Page 18

Local	Pages 2-3
Family	Pages 4-5
Classifieds	Pages 6-7
Agri/Business	Page 8
Sports	Pages 16-17
Obituaries	Page 18

SUPPLEMENTS

- Aldi
- Menards

Due to a varying number of supplements purchased by our advertising customers for insertion in *The Maquoketa Sentinel-Press*, subscribers in some areas may not receive all the supplements listed.

PUBLIC NOTICES

- Judy K. Hingtgen probate
- Maquoketa School Board - Dec. 13, 2010 meeting
- JC Sheriff Sale - MSB vs. J. Mortenson et al



OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

- Jackson County
- City of Maquoketa
- City of Andrew
- City of Baldwin
- City of Monmouth
- City of Delmar
- Delwood School District
- Maquoketa School District

Donated gifts given in abundance

By KELLY GERLACH

Volunteers distributed hundreds of beautifully wrapped Christmas presents last weekend to area children and seniors in need this holiday season.

Local individuals, groups, and businesses donated the gifts as part of the 24th annual Maquoketa Community Services Reach for a Star program.

The public's generosity provided presents for 185 families, or 408 children, this year. That number is up from 152 families in 2009, but a decrease in the number of children served, which was 426.

About 151 Jackson County seniors also received gifts this holiday, compared to 185 in 2009.

Chairpersons Barb Miller of Maquoketa State Bank and Dwain Trenkamp of US Bank proclaimed the Reach for a Star Program a success again this year. They said they continue to be amazed at the community's support for the charitable program, especially as people struggle to purchase presents for their own families at this time of year.

They are amazed at the response but not surprised, they said, because the community's support for those in need has never faltered.

Various 4-H clubs, school groups, and school grades selected stars from the tree as soon as they became available Nov. 26. Some businesses held fundraisers so they could purchase gifts for people in need. And yet others simply picked a star or two or donated cash as they went about their daily business, all with the intent to help someone less fortunate.

The wrapped gifts and attached stars were returned to the banks last week. Reach for a Star volunteers and committee members delivered gifts to seniors on Friday, Dec. 17. Families picked up children's gifts Saturday morning, Dec. 18.

The Maquoketa Community Services Reach for a Star Program delivered Christmas gifts to more than 13,500 seniors and children throughout Jackson County since it began in 1987.



MSP photo by Kelly Gerlach

Chairpersons Dwain Trenkamp and Barb Miller display only a fraction of the gifts donated to the Maquoketa Community Services Reach for a Star Program in 2010.

Two properties to be sold by county

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

The Jackson County Board of supervisors last week agreed to take the first steps to sell two parcels of land the county owns in Maquoketa.

The supervisors on Dec. 14 asked that county Attorney Chris Raker draw up a resolution stating the board's intention to sell the land.

Both properties came into the county's possession for nonpayment of taxes.

One parcel is the former Michel's Auto-Truck Stop along U.S. 61. The county was given possession of the former truck stop and restaurant in the 1980s.

After an 18-year effort to clean up the effects of leaking underground fuel storage tanks at the site, the supervisors earlier this year received a clean bill of health from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, clearing the way for the county to sell the parcel.

The supervisors have leased the property to Brad Deery Motors of Maquoketa for vehicle storage for many years.

The other parcel, which is vacant, is located at the southwest corner of Creslane and German Street. It is north of the O'Reilly Auto Parts property.

Martha Gantzer-Kueter, the board's administrative assistant, said that under the Iowa Code, to sell property, the supervisors need to pass a resolution stating their intent to sell the land.

They then would schedule a public hearing on the proposed sale. They would set a minimum price for the parcels and call for bids.

Supervisor Jack Willey asked that Raker have a resolution prepared for the board to act on at its Tuesday, Dec. 21, meeting.

Supervisors Chairman Steve Flynn agreed that the property should be sold. He noted that the sale will put the parcels back on the property

tax rolls.

In other business, the board took initial steps to abandon 463rd Avenue, a dead-end road of less than a mile that extends west from U.S. 52 about seven miles south of Bellevue.

Supervisors said Michael Swanson of Swanson Tree Farms LLC, the property owner making the request, would have to pay for a survey of the road and other costs associated with the abandonment.

Schloz said the only unfavorable aspect of the request is that it would decrease the county's road-use tax funding by an insignificant amount, as the formula for allocating road-use tax revenue is based partly on road miles.

The action also would put the right-of-way back on the county's property tax rolls, supervisors noted.

The supervisors would have to hold a public hearing on the proposal before taking action.

On another matter, the supervisors agreed to review the county's policy for reimbursing landowners for the cost of replacing fences that are required to be moved as part of a road construction project.

Supervisor Larry "Buck" Koos said he thought the policy was to pay farmers \$15 a rod, but would need to check that amount.

He said the policy is designed to defray the cost of moving the fence, but is not intended to purchase a new fence for landowners.

"People got to thinking that we were getting them a new fence, but that's not the policy," Koos said.

He said the board could check the amount other counties pay landowners for moving fences.

He recalled that in the 1960s, landowners weren't reimbursed at all for having to move a

fence.

"You were getting a new road and that's the way it was," he said.

Supervisor Steve Flynn also said he wanted to add a clause to the policy saying that landowners will not be reimbursed for the fence if they don't re-install it. Koos note that in many cases, landowners were paid for moving a fence, but they didn't put in a new one.

In other business, the supervisors scheduled a meeting with Jackson County's two new state legislators, state Sen.-elect Tod Bowman, D-Maquoketa, and state Rep.-elect Brian Moore, R-Zwingle, to discuss views on issues affecting county government that may arise in the upcoming session of the Iowa Legislature.

The supervisors in particular want the state to maintain the current formula for the distribution of road-use tax funds. The funds, derived mainly from the state gasoline tax, is apportioned to the state, counties and cities according to a formula.

Supervisors expressed concern about a proposal by the Iowa Chamber Alliance to change the formula to give more money to the cities.

Under the changes favored by the alliance, Jackson County would lose \$300,000 a year in farm-to-market funding and \$1.1 million in road-use tax revenue.

Under that scenario, the county would lack the funding to adequately maintain its roads and it would bring a virtual halt to any new road construction or paving.

"We don't have enough money to take care of the roads we have now," Willey aid. He noted that a \$1.1 million loss of revenue equates to about 17 secondary roads jobs.

■ COUNTY,
Please turn to page 3