



THE LAND USE BULLETIN

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Linn County Landfill Proposed Near Stone City

Sometimes, it takes a crisis to get people moving in the right direction. Cedar Rapids has developed one of the best recycling programs in the state, largely because Linn County's thirty-year-old landfill nearly has reached capacity.

Yet with this success comes a new challenge: what to do when the current landfill simply can take no more. Several years ago, new landfill sites were proposed on prime farmland. That effort was defeated by local farmers, who argued that high-quality farmland with a corn suitability rating over 60 should be protected from development.

Three years later, a new site was proposed in an attractive wooded area along the Cedar River just outside Cedar Rapids. That proposal, too, was defeated, though opinions vary as to why – either opposition by the federal aviation administration or back-room wheeling and dealing.

At any rate, the current proposal submitted by Bluestem Solid Waste Agency (the Linn County agency charged with managing waste disposal) is less than two miles from Stone City and sits on a combination of prime farmland and rolling woodland. The proposed site is a stone's throw from where Grant Wood painted one of his most famous works, "Fall Plowing."

A determined, vocal and well-organized citizens' group has formed to oppose Bluestem's insistence on building a new landfill in Linn County. The group, Mattsell Area Preservation and Protection (MAPP), has incorporated as a 501(c)(3), hired legal assistance, submitted paperwork for designation as an historic site and conducted research suggesting more reasonable alternatives.

MAPP makes a strong case that no new landfills are needed in Linn County. They have been meeting with representatives from other Iowa counties and contacted other private waste management agencies. If one of these entities decides to purchase Linn County's waste, it would provide an economic opportunity for them and would eliminate the need to condemn property, up-root families and disrupt the natural balance of the ecosystem in Linn County.

It may indeed be in the best interest of all Linn County residents to look at alternatives to continued landfill construction. At every turn of the road, Bluestem has run into staunch opposition from the residents most immediately affected by each proposal.

The bottom line is, there is a need for responsible waste management. This is a great opportunity for creative, cooperative approaches to a major land-use problem, and it is to be hoped that officials and citizens move forward toward a reasonable, environmentally sensitive and economically sound solution.

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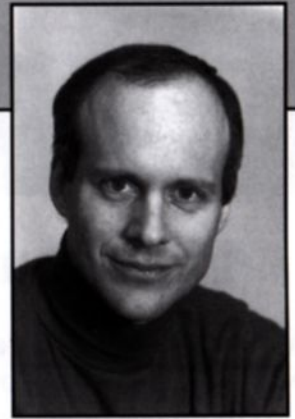
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The mission of 1000 Friends of Iowa is to educate the citizens of our state about the long-term benefits of halting urban sprawl, conserving and protecting our agricultural and natural resources, and revitalizing our cities and towns.

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Growin' Times

Century Farm Award Is Bitter-Sweet by Ed Fallon



Many of you have heard the story of how 1000 Friends of Iowa got started during a meeting in Craig and LaVon Griffieon's living room in July of 1996. LaVon, distressed at the steady creep of urban growth toward her farm, desperately sought help. She invited to her home urban planners, environmentalists, historic preservationists and city residents battling urban decay. In that meeting, the seeds of 1000 Friends of Iowa were sown.

Recently at the Iowa State Fair, the Griffieons were among 445 families receiving recognition as a century farm (that is, a farm of at least 40 acres held by the same family for 100 years). They joined a total of 14,336 farm families who have been honored since the program's inception in 1976. For LaVon, the designation was bitter-sweet. While the prestige of being a century farm is an honor, LaVon remains painfully aware that since 1996, the urban growth that once loomed on the horizon is now right at her fence line.

1000 Friends continues to make progress on building support for responsible land use. Yet, as more and more time passes without any significant policy changes, farmers such as the Griffieons continue to lose ground to urban encroachment. Many farms – including century farms – have lost the battle altogether. Each year in Iowa, 26,000 acres of farmland are converted to development despite a huge amount of available land in existing cities and towns.

Native Americans speak of the need to consider the impact of one's actions on the next seven generations. Recently, in a letter in *The Des Moines Register*, David Hurd (1000 Friends advisory council member and retired CEO of Principal Financial Group) echoed the same theme, calling for a 1,000-year vision for Iowa's air, water, land, farms and cities. Hurd wrote, "As Iowans, we must keep our long-range vision close at hand, so that even our short-range policies continue to build a sustainable future."

The century farm award is evidence that Iowans value longevity, continuity, history and sustainability. Yet public policy seems driven by a thirst for immediate gratification. We spring for any development at any cost, regardless of its impact on the people and places we prize and cherish.

As three generations of Griffieons stood on stage receiving the award, LaVon was approached by one of the event's organizers. He asked if she thought they'd be back here for an award in another 100 years. Since they obviously wouldn't, he stated that her land-use battles really weren't worthwhile.

LaVon chose not to acknowledge the quip on stage. But I asked her what her response would have been. She said, "The award is about ownership. I don't own the land. I believe, just as Craig's great-grandfather did, that it is on loan to me from my grandchildren. Grandpa didn't build buildings with a 25-year life span. He built them for my kid's grandchildren. I am a steward of the land. Iowa's soils and natural resources are global treasures worth fighting for. If we're serious about honoring the past, as with this century farm award, we'd better be serious about fighting to preserve what we still have for our great-great grandchildren."

Wal-Mart Goliath Meets Iowa Davids

While Americans' personal income and the U.S. economy as a whole continued to flounder in July, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. had a great month. The world's largest corporation saw earnings close to \$18 billion in July. Across the U.S., Wal-Mart opened 19 new stores last month, for a total of 2,150 stores nationwide. Add to that figure Wal-Mart's 1,199 international stores in nine foreign countries and it's clear that Goliath is having a pretty good summer.

But here in the heartland, Wal-Mart has met a couple of Davids.

In Decorah

The Iowa Court of Appeals recently ruled that the Decorah city council acted illegally when it gave Wal-Mart permission to build a 184,000-square-foot store in a flood plain along the Upper Iowa River. Under this ruling, it may be that Wal-Mart will have to tear down the building already under construction.

"That is the normal remedy, the usual remedy whether it's a garage or a big building," said Karl Knudson, as quoted in an August 1 article in *The Des Moines Register*. Knudson, an attorney representing a group of Decorah residents trying to block the store, went on to point out that "Sometimes big corporations make big mistakes."

Unfortunately, the matter is far from settled. Wal-Mart may file an appeal. The city council could appoint a new member to the board of adjustments who would be favorable to Wal-Mart. In short, it is too early to tell whether or not Decorah's David will come out on top.

In Cedar Falls

Meanwhile, in Black Hawk County, residents of Cedar Falls recently prevailed over Wal-Mart. The site chosen by Wal-Mart for a super center had been zoned for mixed-use residential and light commercial development in 1998. The city council wanted to change the zoning to allow Wal-Mart to build. However, the city planning and zoning commission went along with residents, voting unanimously in June against changing the zoning.

The final show-down came in a meeting on July 23. Residents packed the city council chambers, spilling over into the hallway and a nearby room. In order to overrule the planning and zoning commission, the proposed zoning change would require a 5 – 1 vote of the city council. After three hours of deliberation, the city council mustered only 4 votes in favor of the rezoning, thus marking a rare defeat for Wal-Mart.

After the vote, a Wal-Mart spokesman had the audacity to insist that if other locations were to be considered, taxpayer subsidies would be necessary. In a July 24 article, the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier noted, "Roy Covert of Wal-Mart's real estate division said other locations may require taxpayer assistance."

■ ■ ■

1000 Friends board member Mary Ellen Miller reports from **Mason City**, "We are having major traffic problems with the opening of our new Super Wal-Mart. The city council plans to discuss possible solutions, and the costs are likely to fall on local taxpayers, not the developer! Interesting, given the fact that developers promised this project would not cost the taxpayers anything."

A major resource for community organizers fighting against big-box stores like Wal-Mart is available at www.sprawl-busters.com. They've fought and won many battles—and can show you how. See their website News Flash page for the latest about battles underway around the country.

Kiwanis Riverview Nature Island & Parks Area Foundation

Great Riverview Ride

Saturday October 5

45-mile autumn tour starts 7-9 a.m. rain or shine

The ride finishes where it began at Kiwanis Riverview Nature Island, 800 Corning Ave., Des Moines, for an afternoon of food, fun and entertainment. Entry fees go to support further development of an urban park that neighbors have been working to revitalize.

To register or for more information, call Larry Arnold (515) 283-0300.



Doing RAGBRAI without a Bike

by Ed Fallon

Thanks to a bizarre medical combination of Achilles tendonitis and a bee sting, what was planned as a week of pedaling RAGBRAI turned into a week of land-use meetings across northern Iowa. So, serving as the occasional, unofficial sag-wagon for my fourteen-year-old daughter and her friend, I found ample time to visit with 1000 Friends' members and supporters. The trip brought me up to speed on a wide range of local land-use issues. Following is a travelogue, of sorts.



Fionna and Ed Fallon in downtown Stone City.

Saturday, July 20 – Des Moines to Sioux City

Meandering along state highways, county black tops and the occasional gravel road was a beautiful, scenic drive. It took six hours, but was worth it if for no other reason than I ran into my friend Jim Drees on the streets of Manning. Jim joined us for lunch, and amid the usual banter that makes Jim one of the most enjoyable people I know, we discussed the virtues of responsible land use. I left Jim with some "Buy Local" posters, with the certainty that their message of supporting independent businesses would be well received in Manning.

We joined board member Al Sturgeon for supper on Sioux City's historic 4th Street, and met with Rex and Maria Rundquist. Rex offered to have me back in the fall for a meeting with both Audubon Society and Sierra Club members.

Sunday, July 21 – Sioux City to Cherokee

We shared breakfast with retired city planner, Arlo Herbold. Given the breadth of his experience as a city planner, Arlo is a font of information and ideas. He feels Sioux City has made some planning mistakes in recent years, but is pleased with the progress on 4th Street.

We drove north to Hinton to visit Jean and David Mayes. As residents of southern Plymouth County, the growth and development decisions in and surrounding Sioux City are of great interest to Jean and David.

Our overnight host was Dan Huseman, who farms near Aurelia. We passed up the RAGBRAI festivities in Cherokee to share dinner with Dan and his wife Barb. The girls enjoyed Barb's vast doll collection, while Dan and I discussed issues on the porch until 1:00 in the morning as several impressive thunder storms rolled by to the south.

Monday, July 22 – Cherokee to Emmetsburg

First, a trip to Storm Lake to vent with Art Cullen, who publishes *The Progressive Populist*. Our conversation covered everything from immigration to urban sprawl to corporate welfare to factory farms. Art and I agree on 90% of the issues. But it was far more invigorating to spend our time arguing over the other 10%.

I lunched with the DePew family, who farm near Laurens. Brian DePew, a man in his twenties, had just announced he was running for Secretary of Agriculture. Brian has done some deep thinking about

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Doing RAGBRAI without a bike

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the problems afflicting the farm economy, and he understands the links between farm and land-use policy. He is sure to add a provocative, articulate voice to the campaign this fall.

Next, I met with Don Beneke who has a law office on **Pocahontas'** Main Street. We spoke about problems with confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs), and Don encouraged 1000 Friends to consider weighing in on the issue.

When I caught up with Linus Solberg in **Emmetsburg**, he was busy serving pork burgers for the RAGBRAI crowd. Linus concurred with comments I'd heard earlier that afternoon: CAFOs are the single most important land-use issue facing many parts of rural Iowa.

My host that evening was, Marcie Frevert, who farms just outside Emmetsburg. Marcie was hands-down "The Hostess with the Mostess." She provided lodging in one form or another to no less than 40 people that night! I felt like a schlep, being the only guest not to have biked that day. But I pointed to my swollen, bug-damaged foot, whined a little and garnered enough sympathy to feel better.

Tuesday, July 23 – Emmetsburg to Forest City

The girls decided to join attorney Mike Gabor and me for breakfast in downtown **Algona**. I asked Mike what land-use issues were most on the minds of Kossuth County residents. While there's some interest in 1000 Friends' "Buy Local" initiative, the issue most front and center is . . . you guessed it: CAFOs. At this point, I was ready to promise I would approach our board of directors about establishing a position on the issue.

The next meeting took me to the home of Chuck Sarazine. I had never met Chuck, but he impressed me as a broad-minded individual who sees the links between various issues. He became a member and suggested a neighbor who might also find value in our work.

That evening, Henry Rayhons gave us an instructive tour of **Forest City** and the farm country just south of town. A visit to the small town of **Hayfield** left a powerful impression. The town is literally en route to becoming a hayfield. It had lost its city hall, school, post office and general store. The residents felt sad about the changes but weren't sure there was much that could be done to stop it.

Wednesday, July 24 – Forest City to Charles City

Noon brought me to **Mason City** for lunch with Mary Ellen Miller and Denise Miller (no relation). Denise owns a downtown business that has struggled over the past year, both because of the poor condition of the U.S. economy and because of the opening of a new Wal-Mart super center. Sadly, Denise is in the process of closing up shop.



John Groninga in his prairie flower "lawn."

I next met with John Groninga. John is interested in land-use from a number of angles. Most impressive to me was his "lawn", which consisted of prairie flowers and grasses running the length of his driveway. The natural beauty and water management that John has succeeded in creating are two of the central features of 1000 Friends' revitalization project on 7th Street in Des Moines.

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Doing RAGBRAI without a bike

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Our **Charles City** hosts, Bill and Martha Cavanaugh, were very gracious. We joined them for supper at their church, the two girls got a massage, and we checked out the RAGBRAI celebration on Main Street. I took a night off from land use.

Thursday, July 25 – Charles City to Oelwein

First venue today: **Waverly**, where I had lunch with a group of Waverly and Cedar Falls residents. I heard about problems relating to fringe area growth outside Waverly and learned about yesterday's victory over Wal-Mart in **Cedar Falls** (see page 3).

We then stopped by to see Phil and Jackie Juhl. I left them with a handful of "Buy Local" posters and enough information to catch them up on the range of our work.

Our host in **Oelwein**, Jackie Reeder, was herself on RAGBRAI, so we found little time (or energy) to discuss land use, though I know she is sympathetic. One regret is that I didn't have time to visit the people we'd worked with years ago on placement of a 36-unit housing development on the edge of town.

Friday, July 26 – Oelwein to Anamosa

Today was our last day on the road. I had lunch with a friend, Gretchen Demkiewicz, who lives and teaches in **Manchester**. Next, I met with Laura Olsen and Gary and Karen Block, the folks organizing opposition to landfills in **Linn County** (see

our front page story). We took an extensive tour of the site of the proposed landfill and discussed organizing strategies.



Gary Block, Karen Block and Laura Olsen.

The final stop of the day was at the home of Andy McKean of **Anamosa**. Andy and I worked together on the planning bill in 1999 and 2000. He is retiring from the Iowa Senate this year, but is running for the Jones County board of supervisors, where there is no shortage of land-use issues to tackle.

What was my strongest impression coming home from this trip? I need to do this more often – but preferably without the assistance of bees! I picked up a lot of excellent information, which I am sharing with our staff and board. The kinds of interaction that I had on this trip are invaluable in linking concerned citizens across the state.

QUOTE THIS:

"Good soil is not just dirt...Good farmers don't just dig in the dirt. They are the stewards of healthy soil, many of them unrecognized or dismissed by those who can't comprehend why anyone would want to do such hard work so far away from a Starbucks."

*--George B. Pyle, Director
Prairie Writers Circle of the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas*

To learn more about this author, the Prairie Writers Circle and the Land Institute, go to the website at www.landinstitute.org.

BEST DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

NOMINATION FORM

1000 Friends of Iowa has established the *Best Development Awards* as a way to recognize quality development and redevelopment projects in Iowa. To qualify, a project must be in Iowa, must be completed by November 2, 2002, and must meet the following general guidelines:

The project must be compatible with the stated mission of 1000 Friends of Iowa: to educate the citizens of our state about the long-term benefits of halting urban sprawl, conserving and protecting our agricultural and natural resources, and revitalizing our cities and towns.

The project must be compatible with smart-growth principles. Smart growth uses existing infrastructure, creates infill development, invests in existing communities and encourages community involvement in development decisions. Smart growth encourages mixed-use development, a walkable scale, choices in housing and transportation, compact development and a sense of place.

1. Tell us in 200-300 words:
 - How does this project fit with the above definition of smart growth?
 - Why do you wish to nominate this project for a Best Development Award?
2. Include photos, news clips and any other relevant material.
3. Complete the information on this form.
4. Identify yourself in case we have questions (name, phone number, e-mail address).
5. Send this form and all the supporting material to us postmarked by November 2, 2002.

Developer's Name _____

Development Name _____

Address _____

Location _____

City _____

Address _____

Phone _____

City _____

E-mail _____

This project is: _____ A new development _____ Commercial
_____ A redevelopment project _____ Residential

Mail to: 1000 Friends of Iowa, 3524 6th Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50313

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED BY NOVEMBER 2.

Winners will be announced in December and will receive a plaque at our annual meeting in January.

Parks Area Local Business Directory

The Parks Area Local Business Directory hit the streets July 2 after a press conference gathering 1000 Friends staff and volunteers, business owners and Uncle Sam for a bit of celebration. Rose Winkeler, coordinator of the directory, explained its purpose along with some facts about local business. These businesses are crucial to small towns and neighborhoods, as 60% of all their profits stay in the community, circulating through local services and investments. Compare that with 20% from chain stores and a mere 5-8% from large discount stores.



Uncle Sam greets his people and delivers directories to Highland Park businesses.

Uncle Sam (aka Dan Jenners) reminded us of our patriotic duty to support our community and historic business districts, such as the Parks neighborhoods in Des Moines. He was definitely the show stopper with horns honking and people waving from their cars as he passed directories out to businesses along 6th Avenue.

Ed Fallon discussed the effects of losing local businesses and identity in our small towns and Main Streets. LaVon Griffee connected the necessity of shopping locally to saving farmland and minimizing urban sprawl. Big-box stores cover massive amounts of land and can rarely be filled when they are deserted for better locations. Wal-Mart alone has over 329 million square feet in retail space and another 80 million square feet of empty stores.

Dan Hughes, owner of Chimney Cricket Family Chimney Sweeps, attended the press conference and spoke about living in and owning a business in Highland Park.



The directory, an extension of the Buy Local Program, was designed to redirect people from the malls and chain stores to the locally-owned businesses in their community. It includes listings and advertisements for over 50 businesses in the area, as well as information on why it is important to support independent businesses and how to differentiate between local businesses and chain stores. Also included are stories and figures about how the proliferation of chain stores and their policies affect people everywhere, from demanding that a small gas station completely overhaul its exterior to lowering health standards in sweatshops in China.



Setting out to deliver the Parks Area Local Business Directory are (from left) Ed Fallon, Carol Kochheiser, Rose Winkeler, Michael Tunink, Jeff Donovan and Dan Hughes.

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Parks Area Local Business Directory

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Rose Winkeler explains the purpose of the directory to a Parks Area resident on her delivery route.

Over 7,000 directories have been delivered. We'd like to thank our volunteers who helped with the delivery: Michelle Arney, Brian Banse, Chris Brown, Jeff Donovan, Carol Hochheiser, John Morrissey, Carl Olsen, and Michael Tunink. Many more directories continue to be given out to residents in Des Moines and other communities who heard about the directory through a wide range of press coverage. 1000 Friends plans to assess the

effectiveness of the directories 6 months and a year after their distribution.

Residents have been telling our volunteers they'll definitely use the Directory and are happy to see something good for the community. Terrie Russell, owner of Russell's Carpet and Interiors, had been excited about the directory since 1000 Friends first approached her. "A lot of people don't know we exist, and this is a way to get the word out," Russell said.

We hope this directory will be a model for other communities to use in promoting their locally owned businesses. Already a group forming in the Sherman Hill neighborhood of Des Moines is planning to use our directory and our experience as a guide to creating their own.

If you are interested in implementing this in your own town, we'd be happy to provide you with any information we can. Call our office at (515) 288-5364 for a copy of the directory and speak with Rose for further details on how it was made.

MEMBERSHIP

We are gearing up to make our name a reality. We now have 827 members in 69 counties. We hope to have 1,000 \$100 Founding Friends, giving us an operating budget of \$100,000 — a solid position from which to move forward in our work.

If you would like to be a Founding Friend, but can't afford a lump sum contribution of \$100, we have a monthly pledge program for \$8.75 a month. Of course, we gratefully accept annual members at \$20 and up as well.

**Clip and mail with your tax deductible check, payable to 1000 Friends of Iowa.
Mail to 1000 Friends of Iowa, 3524 Sixth Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50313.**

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Student/Senior ☐ \$20 Founding Friend ☐ \$100

Individual ☐ \$35 Sustaining Friend ☐ \$1,000
(or more)

Family ☐ \$45 Other ☐ \$ _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible check for \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Day Phone _____

Evening Phone _____

E-mail _____



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*Doing RAGBRAI
without a bike.
...details inside*

2ND ANNUAL BEST DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

We started the Best Development Awards last year because, despite urban sprawl, a lot of attractive, good-quality development is happening across Iowa. We thought it was time to recognize these successes and the vision and effort behind them.

You might remember last year's winners:

- best commercial redevelopment: Albia downtown restoration
- best residential redevelopment: Arlington-Hallet Apartments, Des Moines
- best new commercial development: "green" office building of Golden Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Oakland
- best new commercial development: Pella's Molengracht development

We're going to do it again, and this is *your* chance to recognize quality development in your community. Inside this issue is a nomination form. If someone in your community deserves recognition for a quality development or redevelopment project, please take a few minutes to nominate them and their work. This is one positive way we can reinforce good development practices and move beyond a bleak landscape of cookie-cutter homes and big-box stores.