



THE LAND USE BULLETIN

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1000 Friends, Citizens Enjoy 140-Mile Victory

The challenge to use our land responsibly comes in all shapes and sizes. Usually, the subject in question involves a distinct parcel of land, perhaps one city lot or several hundred acres of rural ground. Rarely does a land-use conflict involve an area as narrow as 100 feet . . . and as long as 140 miles.

On July 16 MidAmerican Energy announced that it was abandoning plans to condemn additional land and instead use the existing easement to construct a new power line across western Iowa. MidAmerican and 13 other utilities are building a 790-megawatt electric plant in Council Bluffs and plan for the 240,000 volt power line to ship more electricity to the Des Moines area.

The abandoned plan would have cut a swathe of land 100 feet wide between Council Bluffs and the western suburbs of Des Moines. In addition to the destruction of several homes and many rural residents' quality of life, hundreds of acres of prime farmland and scenic woodlands would have been condemned to accommodate the new power line.

Over the past six months, 1000 Friends of Iowa worked with individuals, a citizens group in Guthrie County, the Iowa Utility Board and Mid-American officials to encourage support for an alternative proposal. With the exception of Mid-American, there was near universal agreement that it was far preferable for the new power lines to follow the existing easement.

"I operate my business out of my home, and instead of spending my time producing business, I had to spend my time fighting MidAmerican," said Jo Lydon, one of the Guthrie County landowners who worked to stop the power line. "Many of us gave up

a lot to accomplish this. I have one neighbor who used her vacation time to help organize the effort to stop the power line."

MidAmerican cited technical and right-of-way problems involved in expanding use of the existing easement. Additionally, the utility was concerned that placing so much power on a single line could jeopardize reliability in the event of an ice storm or tornado. The cost of building a new line within the existing right of way could be higher than the \$80 million price of a new route, because crews would be working around active power lines and there would be added reliability costs.

The inside word is that MidAmerican was unaccustomed to coming up against such strong, well-organized opposition, and at some point they realized it would make more sense to simply try to work within the existing easement than to continue to push for condemnation of additional land. "It's a weight off our shoulders," said Jo Lydon. "It's good to know that we, the people, can do something about a threat such as this, if we take the time and effort to research, educate and organize."

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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

Madison County Farmers Face Lawsuit

by Ed Fallon



Since 1992, Glenna and Tim Camp have raised 300 hogs on their farm in rural Madison County. The Camps have always had an excellent rapport with their neighbors, both those who farm and those who live on acreages nearby.

In 1999, a Des Moines family bought ten acres next to the Camp farm and erected a modular home very near the Camp's hog operation. Despite the fact that the Camp's swine facility was there long before the new neighbors arrived, a lawsuit has been filed against the Camps, alleging that the use and enjoyment of property is compromised by odors and flies from the farm.

"It's interesting how they didn't notice anything about the livestock operation until they were here for awhile," noted Glenna Camp. Because of the lawsuit, the Camps now have to pay dearly to defend their farm and their way of life. Friends and neighbors have come together to support their cause. About 400 people attended a recent auction to raise money for the Camps' legal defense fund. "The auction did very well," said Glenna. "It was a big hit. Some items even sold repeatedly. There was a little remote car that brought \$850 after being sold six times. The people who bought it just kept donating it back to be auctioned off again and again."

The Des Moines couple that filed the lawsuit has requested a jury trial. Realizing that the entire Madison County community is against them, they have asked that the trial be moved to Polk County. It will be interesting to see what happens, because this case could set a precedent for similar actions against small family farmers elsewhere in Iowa confronted with new urban neighbors who simply don't understand what farming is all about.

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According to material published by USDA's National Ag Statistics, in 1995 Iowa produced 14 million hogs and had 25,000 hog farmers. In 2002, there were 15.5 million hogs and only 10,000 hog farmers.

In other words, there was an increase in Iowa hog production of 10% during a seven year period, even as there occurred a decline of 60% in the number of hog farmers—an average loss of 2,143 hog farmers per year. Assuming the continuation of this percentage rate of loss, there will be 6,000 hog farms by 2009, 3,600 by 2016 and 2,160 by 2023.

We've had a lot of help.....



Aaron Eads

"If Iowa wants to be more livable," says Aaron Eads, a graduate student in Urban Planning at the University of Illinois at Chicago, "it needs to control sprawl and preserve farmland to make Iowa an attractive place to live and work."

Aaron is writing newspaper columns and articles for the 1000 Friends website. He grew up in Marshalltown and did his undergraduate work at the University of Iowa.



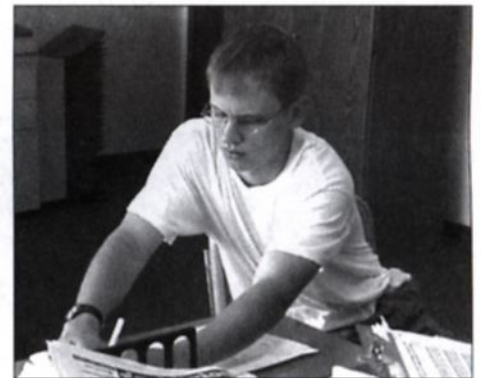
Kelli Moran

While interning, Kelli researched farmland protection issues and conservation easements, and worked on a land-use curriculum for middle school students and a Citizen Empowerment Tool Kit.

Her internship with 1000 Friends this summer added practical experience in many facets of non-profit management to Kelli Moran's graduate coursework in Urban and Regional Planning. She expects to receive her M.A. degree at the University of Iowa next May.

We're pleased to announce our new coordinator for preserving the Ames Land Use Policy Plan. Ben Quade has replaced Rose Winkeler, who is attending law school in Iowa City this fall.

You can help Ben educate people about the importance of preserving Ames' current land-use plan and growing the city's retail base responsibly. We need individuals to write letters to the editor, contact Ames city council members, and gather more signatures. If you haven't already signed the petition, we urge you to do so. We also urge you to encourage others to sign the petition, which is available in Ames at the North Grand Mall Farmers Market every Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon, Big Table Books on Main Street and at Ames Outdoor on West Lincoln Way.



Ben Quade



Our garden gets a white picket fence.

Paint Iowa Beautiful

1000 Friends of Iowa was one of 25 state-wide winners in this first year of the partnership between Diamond Vogel Paint company and Keep Iowa Beautiful. Diamond Vogel has long been a donor to various paint projects within the state. "This partnership allows focus on projects that improve the beauty of Iowa," says Drew Vogel, President and CEO. The partnership, called Paint Iowa Beautiful, is administered through Keep Iowa Beautiful, with the paint provided by Diamond Vogel Paint company.

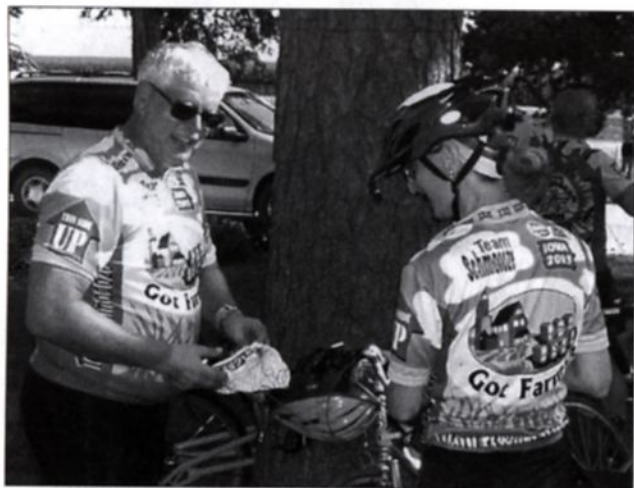
In August, Simpson College students applied some of the winning 70 gallons of white paint to the fence at the 7th Street community garden in Des Moines.

RAGBRAI: What an adventure!

by Jennifer Hyde

In between all the wind, hills and heat there was an underlying message to be heard from riders: RAGBRAI would not be the beautiful ride across Iowa that people journey from both coasts and overseas to enjoy if the rolling fields of Iowa were instead replaced with horizons of strip malls and big-box discount stores.

This year, the point was made more visible and clear with the generous support of Team Schmooze, who volunteered their efforts to spread the word about 1000 Friends and our work on responsible land use. The team sported colorful biking jerseys depicting our desire to preserve Iowa's agricultural lands by not giving in to sprawl. The jerseys drew much attention and discussion, which helped the team members disseminate information regarding 1000 Friends to fellow riders and local townspeople they met along the way.



Steve Bigelow and Mary Kay Stewart model the special jerseys.

Through my experience on RAGBRAI and my summer internship with 1000 Friends, it is clear to me that there is great need in our state for continued support of the family farmers who help Iowa feed the world. As I and others made the venture from the west side of Iowa to the east, we were in daily contact with farm families whose homesteads were in danger. There were multiple accounts of potential farmland flooding in order to build new lakes as a ploy for creating economic stimulus.

We stayed overnight at one such farm whose family feels torn from the community they once felt a part of because of their commitment to the land, which directs their way of life. On the final night of the ride, we camped on a farm that lost many acres to a recent highway expansion. This brought me to realize that the most poignant fact I learned during my RAGBRAI experience, while looking through the lens of agricultural preservation, is that the motives for project development on farmlands are vast, and the resources for protecting these lands are few. But I am convinced that a consolidated support system, such as that offered by 1000 Friends of Iowa, is up to the task.

Thank you Al Brody, Team Schmooze and all our generous hosts for your support during this wonderful experience!

Jennifer Hyde lives with her husband, Jason, and two young children in the Oak Park neighborhood of Des Moines. She is a law, politics and society major at Drake University and recently completed a summer internship with 1000 Friends of Iowa.

Farmland Losses Continue as Congress Cuts Conservation Funding

Congress prepares to pass fiscal year 2004 spending bills that scale back funding for programs intended to help farmers resist the temptation to sell their land to developers. At the same time, the Agriculture Department reported that the U.S. continues to lose about 1 million acres of farmland per year. "What the numbers alone can't convey," pointed out Ralph Gross, a rancher and president of American Farmland Trust, "is the strain that this trend places on communities through the disappearance of locally-grown foods, wildlife habitat, green spaces and increased taxes needed to support new development."

In July, Schmoozer Al Brody wrote the following letter to the editor of the Des Moines Register in response to a Register editorial:

Hi, I am Al Brody from Colorado Springs. I am the captain of Team Schmooze, a 19-member team comprised of folks from 10 different states. This will be my eighth consecutive RAGBRAI. After reading your article, I wanted you to know why I keep returning.

Iowa is the only state that I know of (and I've been to all 50) that is rural border to border. It is THE breadbasket of America. Rural, agricultural small town Iowans make the ride what it is. The fact that each and every one is aware of RAGBRAI is amazing. The fact that most are sincerely happy to share their community and lifestyle is magical. RAGBRAI doesn't work in the cities and it is a disaster in the sub-divisions of the suburbs. Camping out in ____Mart parking lots just doesn't cut it. Cycling in traffic with people that are too busy to know why there are so many bicycles invading their American dream destroys the experience.

Here is what I wish for Iowa and RAGBRAI: I wish Iowa towns would prosper through smart growth rather than selling out to the interstate highways and transient developers. I hope the trains continue to haul much of the commodities. I hope the cities grow from within rather than sprawling without concern for our precious, beautiful, rich farmland; the plethora of wetlands that dot the countryside; or the unobtainable funds for maintenance of ever-expanding infrastructure. I hope the independent stores can survive the onslaught of characterless chain stores. I want to look into the eyes of family members that put their heart into their businesses.

Please do what you can to strengthen the things that you wrote about. I believe much of the rest of the country is beyond hope of saving from the already devastating destruction of unmanaged growth. Long live the kind of Iowa that makes RAGBRAI happen.

Thanks for "listening."

■ ■ ■ ■ ■



Keith and Linda Forman greet Schmoozers from the front steps of their home in Glenwood.



Al Brody and LaVon Griffieon enjoy RAGBRAI.

And thanks for the hospitality

Thank you to other friends Don and Cheryl Lundgren, Brian and Betsy Terrell, Hugh and Betty Stone, Keith and Rose Kreiman, Rachel and Jeff Engwall, Donna and Loren Eischeid, Dorothy and Gayle Neeley, Mike and Anita Hampton, and the Church of the Nazarene in Oskaloosa for extending Iowa hospitality to the Schmoozers.

CALIFORNIA FARMERS UNITE TO WARD OFF SPRAWL

When developers came knocking with the promise of fat checks, eight farmers in Madera, California, banded together and refused the offer. They then permanently relinquished their right to convert the farmland to another use. They even sacrificed some of their land's value to help each other out.

The 440 acres chosen for preservation—which is being called the nation's first "farmland security perimeter"—will effectively block development on about 40,000 acres of nearby farmland coveted by home builders.

One of the farmers, Denis Prosperi, farms land bought by his grandparents a century ago. At age 48, Denis has known no other livelihood, and he enjoys farming. But when new homes began creeping close to his property, and builders began offering him \$22,000 an acre, he decided that he had no choice but to sell a few dozen acres before they were engulfed by development.

His neighbors were furious. Some of them had been resisting similar overtures from developers. "I ran every one of 'em off my property," said Dorothy Campbell, 73. She and other farmers stopped speaking to Prosperi for a while, and circulated a petition against him. He began having second thoughts about selling. Once he and Campbell were on better terms, they began looking into other options and found willing partners in both the American Farmland Trust and California conservation officials. Six other local farmers took an interest, as well.

What emerged from marathon talks was a pact in which each of the farmers sold their right to ever have their land used for housing or businesses. They kept their farms, even though they made less money than they would have if they had sold the land to developers. The restrictions that were put on the land will outlast the current owners' life spans. The deal initially was struck last fall but is being extended now to cover more acres. The farmers say they are not stifling growth, just redirecting it to less productive land in other parts of Madera. Their agreement won approval from the city.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE COWS GONE? A STUDY IN THOUGHTFUL AND RESPONSIBLE PLANNING

While livestock and crops are highly valued commodities in Iowa, the precious farmland that produces these commodities is being consumed for development at a dizzying rate. After having to cut nearly \$2 million from its budget because of decreased support from state government, Iowa State University's College of Agriculture recently entered the land liquidation business. While ISU's fiscal problems are real, ISU's sale of the Rhodes beef research farm appears to be an excessively drastic measure to compensate for the loss of revenue.

A Marshalltown-area development group has their eye on the Rhode's facility, which is ISU's largest research farm. They want to build a lake on Clear Creek, which runs through the property. The Heart of Iowa bicycle trail bisects the farm located near the Harvester Golf Course, making it a prime location for recreation. The Harvester website promotes itself as "a premier residential and resort golfing community....enjoy the charm of nature all around

you: rolling countryside, mature oak trees and majestic views". Yet it seems the rolling countryside, mature oak trees and majestic views may be short lived. According to an April 22 article in the Iowa State Daily, "Fifty landowners would also be directly affected by the lake project."

ISU also decided to close another facility, the 95-year old dairy farm on the Ames campus. One hundred fifty head of the 400 cow dairy herd will be moved to the ISU Ankeny dairy farm. The legislature passed a mandate in the 2002 session requiring ISU to sell the Ankeny dairy facility so Ankeny could develop the 1100 acre site and continue its growth. However, no time frame was established in the mandate. Meanwhile, nearly 1000 acres of prime farmland north and 1100 acres southeast of Ankeny, which are not included in the current comprehensive plan, are being annexed while a new comprehensive plan is under consideration.

The real kicker is this: despite these sales, the dean of the ISU College of Agriculture, Catherine Woteki, announced a new proposed dairy farm at a meeting in Waverly on June 26. The Iowa State

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Where Have All the Cows Gone?

Continued from page 6

Daily reports on July 1, "The farm is in the development stages," Woteki said. "It will be south of Ames, about 15 minutes." The Committee for Agricultural Development, a nonprofit corporation that operates on the ISU campus, presently rents most of the 900-acre plot from Des Moines businessman, Bill Knapp. Knapp bought the 900 acres within the past year for nearly \$3 million, Story County records show. According to an April edition of the Des Moines Register, "despite rumors of a land exchange, Knapp has not shown interest in the Ankeny land, said Jerry Nugent, president of Knapp Properties in West Des Moines."

If asked, each party involved - ISU, the City of Ankeny, the Marshalltown development group and the Committee for Agricultural Development - would claim that they are planning in a thoughtful and responsible way. Until land-use legislation is enacted to spell out uniform, statewide guidelines, poor planning will continue to result in the loss of world-class farmland, urban sprawl, the loss of natural areas and the abandonment of older infrastructure for new construction on farmland.

Decorah Scores a Victory and Wal-Mart Settles Dispute over Flood Plain

The Decorah Planning & Zoning Commission recommended the Decorah City Council make just a few changes to the city's floodplain zoning ordinance. As required by an Iowa Supreme Court ruling, the commission recommended that language giving the city council authority to issue fill permits be changed to give that authority to the Board of Adjustment.

At the urging of the Iowa DNR and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Planning & Zoning Commission will meet with their representatives to discuss floodplain zoning and mapping before making any changes in Decorah's floodplain ordinance.

A settlement was reached in August in the three-year-old lawsuit that has kept Wal-Mart from occupying a Super Center store it built in a flood plain. Wal-Mart agrees to lease its former building to the city for \$1 a year. Any income from the property will be used to purchase easements to link Decorah to the Prairie Farmer Bike Trail. Wal-Mart also will contribute \$75,000 to the Decorah Public Library and up to \$75,000 to help the city map the flood plain areas.

MEMBERSHIP

We are gearing up to make our name a reality. We now have 967 members and contributors in 72 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.
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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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

Individual ☐ \$35 Sustaining Friend ☐ \$1,000
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Family ☐ \$45 Other ☐ \$_____

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RAGBRAI:
What an adventure!
...details inside

Swaledale has an Iowa-grown idea

Swaledale, a town of 174 citizens, has a one-of-a-kind business proposal that has found the support of economic development leaders throughout north Iowa. The community envisions developing a complex within sight of I-35 that would feature products made in Iowa. The project has six components:

- A community store, visible *from* the interstate but not *on* the interstate.
- A bio-fuel station offering 85 percent ethanol blend E-85 and bio-diesel fuel products.
- A licensed certified food preparation kitchen with a working garden.
- A restaurant featuring home-grown foods plus other Iowa-made foods and goods.
- An Iowa products store, similar to the kitchen and restaurant, but offering more than just food products.
- A museum featuring items that reflect the history of north Iowa.

Store owner Julie Carlson calls it a "farm-to-table" concept. "Local agricultural and baked goods would be the focus. The combined store and restaurant will sell and serve the finished products," Carlson said. "Currently, there is no such facility in the state."

The Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center will help develop the feasibility study, determining the best way to finance the project. Cerro Gordo County Supervisor Chairman Bob Amosson called the plan "the right idea," saying it's what rural Iowa needs. "Small towns get stagnant by people thinking the big cities are taking everything over. This can make a difference."