



THE LAND USE BULLETIN

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Preserving Ames' Land Use Policy Plan

1000 Friends of Iowa is stepping up its grassroots efforts to preserve the Ames' Land Use Policy Plan and stop the construction of a new 700,000 square foot mall at the intersection of I-35 and East 13th Street.

In mid-October, Tennessee-based developer James "Bucky" Wolford submitted paperwork to the Ames City Council to change the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) to allow commercial development on land presently designated for industrial and agricultural use. Wolford's plans include a 700,000 square foot mall, as well as a 470,000 square foot power center, which would include a Wal-Mart Supercenter and other big box stores. The Ames Planning and Zoning Commission held a series of public forums in December on the LUPP changes that would allow the new mall and power center to be constructed. A vote on the issue will likely come before the newly elected city council in late January.

The proposed mall site is located right next to Ketelsen Marsh, a unique wetland area that serves as a memorial to the late Jim Ketelsen, an avid outdoorsman and supporter of the Iowa Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever chapters. Ketelsen Marsh, a county hunting area, would likely be affected by the development and additional traffic. Steve Lekwa, executive director of the Story County Conservation Board, believes the mall could lead to closing the marsh to public hunting. Such a move would cost the board grant monies.

The new mall also would have a detrimental effect on existing businesses in Ames. ISU Economist Ken Stone estimates that Ames businesses could lose up to \$35 million per year in sales to the new mall. Many locally owned, long-established

businesses could shut down because of a new mall. Several hundred thousand square feet of empty building space in downtown alone could be re-developed into stores similar to those found in malls. North Grand Mall could be expanded as well. A mall on the outskirts of town would only increase residents' dependence on automobiles and consume more land than Ames' population growth requires.

**Information about
this issue is on
our website at
www.kfol.org.**

Over the past year, 1000 Friends has been organizing citizens and circulating a petition opposing amendments to the Land Use Policy Plan. At this point, over 2,500 people have signed the petition. Our green and yellow "Smart Growth: No New Mall" signs are displayed all over Ames, and we are supplying interested groups with buttons as well.

For more information, please contact Jonah Katz at (515) 779-6558 or jwcatz@earthlink.net.

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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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The Big Picture

Saving the Homeplace

by LaVon Griffieon



Most end-of-the-year pleas from nonprofits have dollar signs attached to them. You've already gotten a letter in the mail from me asking for a donation -- and Lord knows we need some healthy donations at 1000 Friends! But this column isn't about money. It's about you, my farm and your time.

Though I'm just a volunteer, my workload at 1000 Friends over the years has overwhelmed me. As the board's President, I could be little more than a figurehead. But with so many people and projects clamoring for my help, I've found it impossible to say "no."

I'm good at saying "no" to my kids, telemarketers and stupid ideas. But how do you say "no" to the twenty-one farm families near Essex, in Page County, who could lose their land and homes to an ill-conceived lake project? How do you tell the hundreds of Dubuque residents fighting a condominium that would ruin one of Iowa's most scenic places that you don't have time to help them? Do you tell the elderly couple south of Iowa City that you can't help save their farm, or do you drive two hours to meet with them and offer to do what you can? (I cried as I left that meeting. It felt too close to home.)

Just in the last two months I've not said "no" to people in Allamakee, Clayton, Dubuque, Scott, Johnson, Fayette, Polk, Story, Page, Clarke, Mahaska and Woodbury counties. Since 1000 Friends of Iowa was formed in 1998, I've not said "no" to 110 groups of citizens in 75 Iowa counties. I've even not said "no" to people in six other states needing help. Some still call or write.

Meanwhile, on the home front, Ankeny has annexed 2,565 additional acres since July. The City now borders us on three sides. To make matters worse, Ankeny is proposing a new land-use plan that consumes over 32,000 acres of farmland. That's nearly fifty square miles! Part of my farm becomes subdivisions, part strip malls and our pasture rises to its "highest and best use" (developer talk for "makes the most money") as the proposed Northeast Polk County Beltway.

This is quite possibly the single biggest land grab in Iowa history. It ought to be a major news item on a regular basis. Yet the local media refuse to investigate the proposal's effects on local schools, farms, farmland, taxes or quality of life throughout the metro area. Have you read anything about a 32,000 acre land use plan amendment?

I have spent hours notifying farmers, landowners and residents about the repercussions if this plan is adopted, trying to rouse them to action. Most are concerned, and many attended the last Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

Continued on page 7

Land Use and Sustainable Communities

1000 Friends of Iowa
Annual Meeting

10:00-3:00 Saturday, January 17, 2003

Royal Amsterdam Hotel
on the Molengracht Canal in historic downtown Pella

Winner of our Best Development Award for
best new commercial development in 2001



Featuring

Jerry DeWitt

Jerry's photographs illustrate the tie between land use and resource protection. They show people who have found a way to make a living while supporting their communities and protecting the environment.

and

an Iowa-grown meal (always delicious!)

*Yes, I will attend the annual meeting on
January 17.*

Name _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Day Phone _____

Evening Phone _____

E-mail _____

Cost—\$25

Registration fee includes the full day of events plus the Iowa-grown meal.

**Register
Today**

Questions?

Call us at
(515) 288-5364 or
email us at
kfoi@kfoi.org.

Please make your check payable to 1000 Friends of Iowa and mail it and this form to 3524 6th Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50313 by **January 12.** *See you in Pella!*

Radio Tower Proposed for Loess Hills

A survey team contracted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently staked out a Loess Hills bluff in Woodbury County in anticipation of building a surveillance radar tower to serve the Sioux City Airport. Opponents are concerned that the initial environmental analysis didn't take into consideration the fact that the land is protected by county zoning guidelines, nor the hill's significance as a unique landform along the Loess Hills National Scenic Byway.

Some 17 rural landowners and neighbors have already submitted protest letters to the survey company and the FAA. The closest neighbors – Sioux City business leader E.B. Baker and adjoining landowners of the Wendel family – have contacted U.S. Senator Grassley, Congressman Steven King, the Audubon Society, the Department of the Interior, the Woodbury County Supervisors, 1000 Friends of

Iowa and others to help encourage the FAA to choose a more appropriate site, if one is indeed needed at all.

The landowners see a certain irony in the fact that a representative of the federal government – Craig Manson, Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior – was in Council Bluffs earlier this year to announce a \$170,000 grant for Loess Hills restoration work. The FAA's goal of siting a new radio tower in the Hills appears contradictory to the goal of preserving Iowa's most unique landscape.

As concerned taxpayers, the opponents also point out that once the proposed tower and accompanying outbuildings are constructed, the FAA plans to tear down an existing tower already operational on the airport grounds.

For more information about this issue, contact Scott Wendel at (402) 334-2547 or publisher@tconl.com.

Come Celebrate Iowa's New Sustainable Economy

"...an economy where farmers, consumers, animals and nature thrive together!"

CARE4IOWA Congress

10 am-4 pm, Saturday, January 3, 2004

Temple for the Performing Arts at the corner of 10th and Locust Streets in Des Moines.

Free parking will be available across the street.

On Saturday, January 3, 2004, a coalition of Iowa farm, consumer, religious and environmental organizations will hold the First Care4Iowa Congress at the Temple for the Performing Arts in Des Moines to celebrate and promote Iowa's emerging sustainable economy. This event will feature food from markets, farmers and restaurants that raise and serve sustainably raised local meat, vegetables and fruit, inspirational speakers plus great local music and stories from Iowa farmers and entrepreneurs about Iowa's future built on a sustainable economy.

The Care4Iowa Congress is a project of the Care4Iowa Campaign of The Humane Society of the United States. For more information, contact Gabriel Wilk or Chris Bedford at the Care4Iowa Campaign, The Humane Society of the United States, Suite 220, 1515 Linden Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Call (515) 283-0777 or email Gabriel at gabrieljwilk79@hotmail.com or Chris at cbedford@hsus.org.

GIVE THE GIFT OF RESPONSIBLE LAND USE

If your gift-list includes someone who "has everything" but who cares about preservation of our land, our natural resources, or our historic places, you can give the gift of membership to 1000 Friends of Iowa. Simply complete the enclosed contribution envelope with information about your friend and mail it to us, along with your tax-

deductible check and your name. We will notify your friend of your gift.

Just in time for year-end gift giving, *Renewing the Countryside—Iowa* is available on the web at <http://store.rtcmarket.org>, at the Reflections of Iowa gift shop in the Iowa Historical Building, or at bookstores throughout Iowa. The book in hardcover retails for \$39.95, soft cover for \$24.95, or the calendar is \$8.95.

Proposed Airport Would Condemn 500 Acres

After they learned of plans for a new regional airport on 500 acres of farmland between Pella and Oskaloosa, local farmers and landowners in Mahaska County met this summer to decide what to do. Taxpayers Against the Regional Airport (TARA) was formed, and the group launched an extensive door-to-door canvass in Oskaloosa and rural Marion and Mahaska counties to collect signatures and tell people why the proposal was a bad idea. In less than one month, twenty canvassers collected over 2,400 signatures.

In addition to the loss of prime farmland, TARA feels the project is a poor idea because both Pella and Oskaloosa each already have an airport. Proponents claim that one larger, regional airport will save money. TARA counters by pointing out that the Oskaloosa airport is one of the few in the nation that doesn't require public subsidies for maintenance, and that is almost certain to change in time given the logistics of the plan for the new airport.

TARA also points out that each community can expand their existing airport for a fraction of the cost of a new airport. The FAA is not mandating regionalization, and recognizes that each existing airport can be expanded. TARA points out that there are three existing airports that can serve Pella and Oskaloosa commuters: Des Moines, Newton and Ottumwa.

For more information about this issue, contact Duane or Stephanie Vos at tara@dybb.com.

Des Moines-Area Growth Plan Is Recipe for Sprawl

The Greater Des Moines Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is proposing three "growth scenarios." The joke at the 1000 Friends of Iowa office is that the three scenarios are Sprawl 1, Sprawl 2 and Sprawl 3.

Yet the proposals are, regrettably, for real. All recommend massive outward growth -- one north and east, one south and west, and the third in all four directions. All are recipes for continued, even accelerated, sprawling development with little consideration given to sustaining existing urban areas and small towns.

Members of 1000 Friends of Iowa turned out in force at local MPO meetings in Ankeny, Pleasant Hill and West Des Moines. From many points of view, the argument was made that the MPO must do better if smart growth is to become the new vision for development in central Iowa.

Next, the MPO scenarios will be revised, presumably with consideration of the public comment received at the September hearings. Dates and locations of the next series of public input meetings will be announced after the 2003 holiday season. Please look for an e-mail on the subject, as the hearings may happen before the next publication of this newsletter.

If you're not yet on our e-mail list, please join. We promise not to inundate you, and we'll never share a member's e-mail address with anyone else.

Hiawatha Rejects Rezoning for Store

The Hiawatha City Council unanimously rejected a request that would have changed the city's land-use plan. Members of the Council said they'd welcome a new Fareway store, but not in an area that requires rezoning, which would essentially blow apart the comprehensive plan. Those in favor said Hiawatha needs a grocery store. The council was not against the store itself, just the rezoning. The Planning and Zoning commission had recommended that the council rezone the two-acre site, with conditions addressing traffic, but council members did not want to stray from the city's land-use plan.

Trying to think of the perfect gift? We have a few t-shirts left. These all-cotton shirts feature a large, full-color reproduction of the Grant Wood painting that we use as our logo. Short sleeve shirts are \$15 and come in sizes M through XXL. Long sleeve shirts are \$20 in sizes XL and XXL.

Wal-Mart News

In October, U.S. officials arrested about 300 workers at 61 Wal-Mart store locations in 21 states on immigration charges as part of an investigation into contractor cleaning crews. Known as "Operation Rollback," the investigation involved allegations the contractor had recruited illegal immigrants to work on cleaning crews. Federal grand jury subpoenas have been issued for Wal-Mart executives to testify.

Also in October, Oakland, California, banned retail outlets with full-service grocery stores that take up more than 100,000 square feet, or about 2.5 acres. The ordinance effectively prohibits any Wal-

Mart Supercenters, which average 187,000 square feet. Wal-Mart plans to open 40 Supercenters in California over the next four years.

Some giant companies, such as Wal-Mart, Citigroup, and General Electric, have been urging Congress to set up a new, parallel system of banking that would operate outside Federal Reserve Board oversight. Nicknamed the "National Bank of Wal-Mart" bill, the law would allow a company to buy little-known entities called industrial loan companies, expand these small outfits into full-fledged commercial banks, open up branches nationwide without state approval and escape federal rules. It's a way for Wal-Mart and others to by-pass the current prohibition against commercial firms owning banks.

Community Garden Award



1000 Friends of Iowa and the PACE Program were honored this fall, receiving the 2003 Outstanding Community Garden award for the 7th Street Community Garden in Des Moines (a component of 1000 Friends Urban Revitalization Project). Coordinated by Teva Dawson, the Des Moines Community Garden Project has flourished in recent years. There are now 106 community gardens in Des Moines, and interest continues to build.

Funding for the garden was made possible with grants from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, MidAmerican Energy and the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation. Many civic partners also have helped make the entire project a success.

This summer, the 7th Street Garden landed a beautiful new gazebo, and HOME, Inc. built a picket fence around the perimeter. Twenty neighborhood residents worked their own plots this year, and there is a waiting list for next year. Plans for an orchard, additional garden plots and a berry hedge continue to evolve, and we are now seeking a part-time coordinator to help manage and expand the garden next year.

Smart SRFs for Iowa Clean Water

Participants in a 2002 summit seeking clean water solutions reached consensus that a variety of approaches should be undertaken with Clean Water State Revolving Funds (SRF) resources to achieve water quality goals. The summit was sponsored by the Iowa Finance Authority, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. Consequently, Iowa passed a law that will help its communities pursue clean water and smart growth goals simultaneously.

The law establishes a "Smart SRF for Iowa Clean Water" program that will allow the use of SRFs not only for sewer infrastructure, but also for innovative smart growth practices such as waterfront brownfields cleanup, low-impact development practices, riparian land conservation, watershed management programs, and other best management practices. Already, local Iowa communities are considering how to put Smart SRFs to use on smart growth for clean water projects.

Saving the Homeplace

Continued from page 2

Yet when it was time to speak, most just sat there paralyzed. After the third call for public comments, I jumped up, fearing that the hearing would be closed. Off the top of my head, I ticked off seven arguments against the proposed plan. When I finished the entire room erupted in applause. But this “no-growth extremist” (as I’ve been labeled by the Greater Des Moines Partnership) who lives outside the Ankeny city limits was not half as effective as seven individual voices from within the City would have been.

People often ask what they can do to help me. Do this: Make a personal commitment to be vocal about land-use issues across the state each and every time you see an opportunity. And when the fight is in someone else’s backyard, don’t let that stop you from getting involved. Your backyard – your farm, home, business, or favorite park, forest or wetland – could be next.

I co-founded 1000 Friends to help others. Over the past seven years, the family van has logged tens of thousands of miles, and I’ve worked with people on land-use problems in every corner of the state. I’ve acquired a lot of knowledge, which will help in the battle to save my own farm. But it has come at great personal sacrifice. I’ve traded off part of my life as a wife and mother, and no longer have time for the day-to-day farm work that gives life on a farm its deepest meaning.

Now I make my own plea, as so many in the past have made their pleas to me. Make a personal sacrifice of time, money or talent. Share some of my burden. Help me to help others. Take a stand on the issues. Write a letter to the editor. Call a policymaker and let him or her know what you are thinking. Go the extra mile to bring sanity to Iowa’s land-use practices, so I can focus on saving my own farm. And for those of you that have called me for help in the past, don’t stop. It is through your willingness to allow 1000 Friends to help with your problems that I have learned how to methodically fight these land-use wars. Thanks for the help!

George “Lefty” Mills 1906-2003

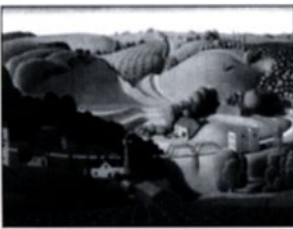
On October 20, George “Lefty” Mills, 1000 Friends of Iowa Advisory Board member, died peacefully at the age of 97. George was one of our more active advisors in the three years he served our organization. His extensive knowledge of Iowa’s history shed much light on many of today’s land-use issues. Beginning his career in 1928, Mills covered sixteen Iowa governors as a statehouse reporter for the Des Moines Register. His remarkable memory was a treasure trove of information, which he graciously shared with us. George’s knowledge of Iowans, Iowa politics and Iowa history will never be matched. We say “goodbye” to a good Friend of Iowa.

New Book Promotes Land Conservation

Land Conservation Financing, by Mike McQueen and Ed McMahon, Island Press, 2003. \$27.00 paper, ISBN 1-55963-481-2.

This new book provides a comprehensive overview of successful land conservation programs. Written by two of the nation’s leading experts on land conservation, *Land Conservation Financing* describes how the programs were created, how they are funded, and what they’ve accomplished, along with detailed case studies from across the United States.

The publisher, Island Press, is a nonprofit organization and environmental publisher. Its projects stimulate, shape, and communicate the ideas that are essential for solving today’s environmental problems. Visit it at www.islandpress.org.



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*Land Use and Sustainable
Communities
...registration inside*

Jerry DeWitt to Speak at Annual Meeting

Jerry DeWitt coordinates agricultural programs for ISU Extension, working with farmers across Iowa. While this scientist has worked at ISU for 31 years, he is an artist at heart. He has traveled widely, using his camera to photograph people who are making a difference on the landscape. His images illustrate the projects and opportunities that are available to people who want to prosper while supporting their communities and protecting the environment.

Jerry was senior photographer for the recently published book *Renewing the Countryside—Iowa*, a collection of stories about 21st-century pioneers who are bringing new life to rural Iowa. For the book, he crisscrossed the state, meeting with families and businesses, to produce the book's stunning photographs.

