



THE LAND USE BULLETIN

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1000 Friends Announces New Executive Director and a New Office in Eastern Iowa

The past year has been fast and furious for our staff, board members, interns and volunteers. Efforts to educate Iowans about the interconnectedness of land-use and quality of life concerns continue to gather momentum. Our goals of protecting farmland and natural areas, revitalizing our small towns and urban neighborhoods, and promoting cooperative planning are moving forward across the state because of the dedication and hard work of you, our members and supporters.

While most Iowans confronted with land-use issues feel at an incredible disadvantage to have their concerns taken seriously by state and local policymakers, this is gradually changing. Many, many citizens across Iowa have benefited directly from your efforts and the work of our staff, board and volunteers. Of course, many others indirectly realize these benefits as well.

Iowans are equipping themselves with the tools needed to protect their lands and communities, and this knowledge is constantly being shared with others facing similar issues across the state. The

ripples are spreading. 1000 Friends has been a critical component of this progress. Just in the past two months, our staff has worked with people in Polk, Winneshiek, Johnson, Cherokee, Dallas, Story, Linn, Poweshiek and Clarke counties. Over the past six years, we have assisted 125 local citizens groups in 70 Iowa counties. Many of these initiatives have resulted in victories, and we continue to build a knowledge base that benefits others confronting similar challenges.

Yet organizations, like living organisms, go through life cycles. There are growing pains and breakthroughs, growth spurts and plateaus. We're primed for another growth spurt, and now appears to be the right time for a big change.

Ed Fallon, our part-time executive director since 1999, plans to step down at the end of this year to focus more on his legislative and political work. Ed believes strongly in 1000 Friends and the important work we do, and will continue to be available to help.

After much deliberation, our board of directors has decided to hire a full-time executive director. The first steps have been taken. Our Personnel Committee reviewed 25 applications and after interviewing three outstanding candidates, our board selected Jonna Higgins-Freese as our new executive director.

This fall, 1000 Friends launched its most ambitious fundraising drive ever. Our organization will expand with an office in Cedar Rapids to meet the growing statewide demand for our services. Our goal to raise \$100,000 by June 2005 has been enhanced through a matching grant from the Iowa Foundation for Education, Environment, and the Arts. We hope you will be as generous as possible, and assist our transition to a stronger, more effective organization. *Thank you!*

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1000 Friends of Iowa

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Jonna Higgins-Freese
Executive Director

PROGRAM CONSULTANT

Stephanie Weisenbach

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

Movin' On

by Ed Fallon



It was a hot, muggy day in the summer of 1996. The 17th of July, to be precise. That day, in a living room on a farm north of Ankeny, I was to meet three individuals who would have a profound impact on my life and work.

The meeting was an eclectic gathering of some twenty professionals, each with their own area of expertise. Most of us had never met. Our backgrounds and political affiliations were diverse. The one unifying theme was that we were all concerned about the growing problem of urban sprawl in Iowa.

We had been invited — some might say summoned — by LaVon Griffieon to her farm to discuss the problem. There was no formal agenda. The focus was to share our concerns about sprawl from the perspective of city folk, farmers, environmentalists, planners and historic preservationists. But it became clear as the meeting progressed that none of us — especially our hostess — would be content unless the group came up with an action plan.

That action plan led to the establishment of a speakers bureau, which we called the Rural-Urban Stewardship Project. By May of 1998, this had morphed into 1000 Friends of Iowa and a new organization was born.

Back to those three influential individuals. The late Del Stromer was, at that time, an aide with Senator Charles Grassley. Years earlier, Del served as Speaker of the Iowa House during the 1980–1981 General Assembly, and as a House member in the 1970s when Iowa came close to passing a visionary planning bill. In 1997, as legislation I had worked hard on was about to die on the last day of session, Del placed a personal call to one key Senator. The legislation was promptly brought up for consideration and passed on a voice vote. The commission to study land use was established!

Working with Del helped me understand that responsible land use was not a partisan issue. Indeed, today some of my strongest allies are Republicans. I have learned the importance of working across the political spectrum . . . and the importance of a strategically placed phone call!

On July 17, I also met Tom Dunbar, a local landscape architect. Before meeting Tom, I had never paid much attention to planning and design. Such matters always seemed to me somewhat elitist, peripheral to my primary concerns about sprawl's effects on farmland, the environment and my inner-city neighborhood in Des Moines. Working with Tom over the years has helped me develop a keen sense of appreciation for the importance of planning and design. I now bore my family to tears as I persistently comment on such matters when we drive around the Des Moines metro.

Finally, the third new friendship made on July 17 was with LaVon Griffieon. Interestingly, in putting together her invitation list for that meeting, I wasn't the one LaVon hoped would come to speak up for urban land-use concerns. As a stand-in for the original invitee, I got under LaVon's skin right

off the bat (something I would advise others against). First, I brought one of my kids to the meeting after LaVon had — with difficulty — arranged to clear her kids out of the house for the afternoon. That didn't go over real well. Then, LaVon returned a call several weeks after the meeting. Phone rings. I pick up the phone. "Hi, this is LaVon." "LaVon who? I know three LaVons." I can't recall the next line of that conversation. Some things are better repressed. But to this day I still hear about my "I know three LaVons" line.

Over the years, LaVon has been a true inspiration to work with. She continues to fight tirelessly not only for herself but for hundreds of other farm families across Iowa, families similarly confronted with aggressive development proposals often devoid of respect for land or people. All of LaVon's work is done as an unpaid volunteer.

These being "growin' times," 1000 Friends of Iowa's organizational evolution is about to take another step forward. Since May of 1999, I have served as the accidental executive director. I say "accidental" because I had never intended to work in this capacity. Our board, of which I was president at the time, conducted an extensive search for an executive director. Of the 26 candidates who applied, only one stood out. When our applicant of choice declined the job, board members asked if I'd be willing to squeeze it in on a part-time basis around my work as a state legislator. I've been at it ever since.

But 1000 Friends has matured to the point that it needs a full-time, politically unencumbered executive director. Now is the time to accomplish this transition, and I look forward to working with our board members (a great bunch, one and all), our members and our new executive director toward a smooth and productive transition.

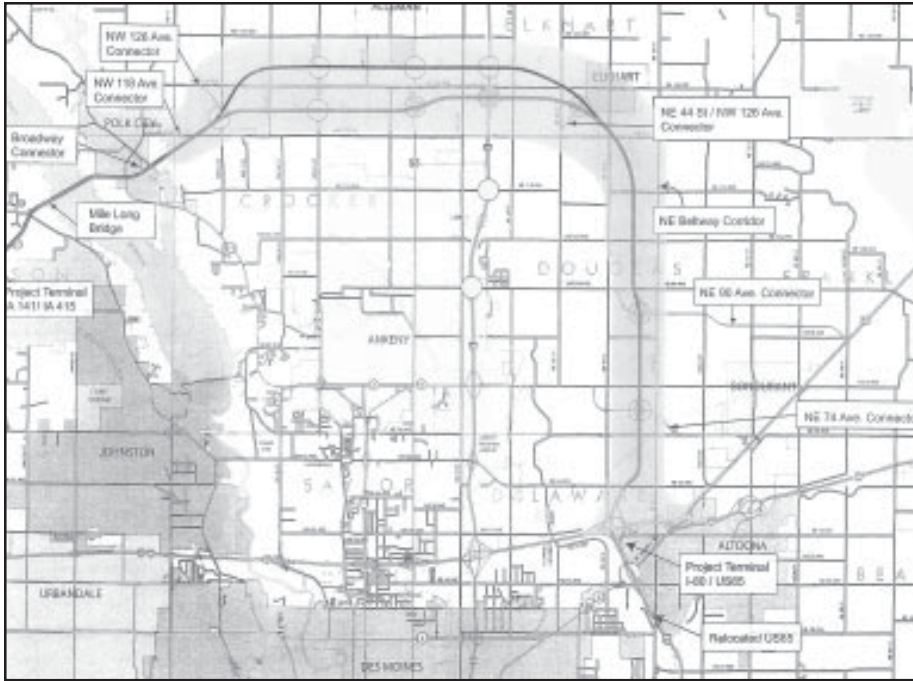


LaVon wins Central Iowa Citizen Activist Award

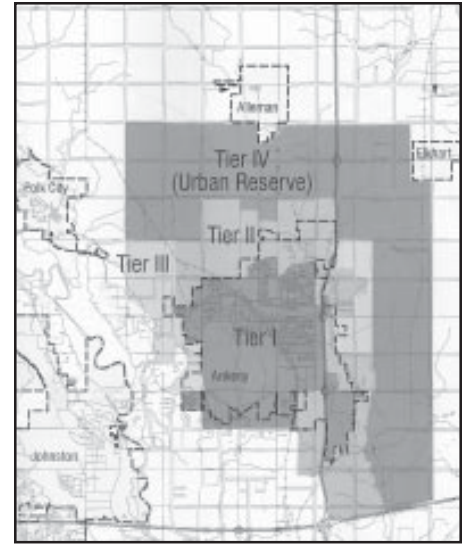
1000 Friends of Iowa board president, LaVon Griffieon, was one of six central Iowa activists recently honored by *Cityview* (a Des Moines metro weekly newspaper), Drake University and the Parrish Law Firm for their contributions to making our community a better place to live. LaVon was the winner of the Environmental Activist Award.

In LaVon's acceptance speech, she acknowledged, "Today's award winners are living examples that one person does make a difference." Congratulations to LaVon and the other winners (*clockwise from left*): Basil Mahayni, Ako Abdul-Samad, Sally Frank, Brian Terrell and Bob Mickle.





This map of the NE Polk County beltway shows the proposed routes. The MPO recently incorporated portions of this plan into its long-range plan.



This Tier map from Ankeny's Comprehensive Plan — adopted in December 2003 — shows the addition of nearly 32,000 acres to Ankeny. The proposed NE Polk County Beltway corridor is in Tier IV.

Making Headway in Northeast Polk County

Between public meetings, volunteer coordination, press interviews and community discussions, activities in northeast Polk County have kept Stephanie Weisenbach, our program consultant, volunteers and members hustling. Here are a few highlights from this fall's activity:

\$500,000 federal earmark for beltway put on hold

On October 5, we learned that Congressman Boswell's \$500,000 earmark for the Northeast Polk County Beltway was to come up soon for discussion. In one short afternoon, Stephanie got the word out to our members asking Boswell to redirect the earmark to other transportation purposes. We later heard back from twenty people who had

called the Congressman's Washington office — an impressive response for such short notice. Further discussion of the federal transportation budget bill and earmark has been put on hold until some time in 2005.

Ankeny annexation delayed

Annexation of 292 acres proposed by Ankeny south of NE 118th Avenue, known as the Jan-Rose Farms annexation, was recently dealt a setback when the issue came before the state City Development Board. Because of numerous concerns raised by residents along Four Mile Creek, City of Alleman officials and local farmers, the Board voted to delay consideration of the proposal until November 10th. At the November 10th meeting, the decision was again delayed, this time at Ankeny's request. The issue will be heard again on January 12, 2005.

At that time, we hope the board will vote to reject an annexation that is unnecessary, given the 3,933.5 acres of undeveloped land already within the city limits.

Petitioning for signatures

Over the past year, Stephanie and our members have collected signatures on petitions against the proposed beltway and in support of more responsible growth in Ankeny and throughout northeast Polk County. So far, we have gathered 500 signatures. In the spring, we again will begin petitioning door-to-door. We also will need volunteers to carry petitions to community meetings, public gatherings and neighborhood events. Please contact us if you would like to help.

Copies of the petition may be downloaded from our website at www.kfoi.org.

Bus Tour of Proposed Beltway Rolls out of Wal-Mart



More than 30 people have joined us on a 1½ hour bus tour of the proposed beltway route. Below, Stephanie Weisenbach explains the impact on the land, residents, wildlife and Polk County taxpayers.



On October 23, Mark Jamison headed his bus out of the Altoona Wal-mart parking lot with the probable route of the proposed Northeast Polk County Beltway in sight. Under clear skies, Stephanie, LaVon and Ed guided passengers through a 1½-hour tour, viewing unique prairies, farms and wetlands in northeast Polk County. We discussed the beltway's potential impact on the quality of life for rural residents and communities.

We are willing to offer this tour to any group of interested persons. If your club, church or school group would like a ground-level perspective on the proposed beltway, give us a call and we'll set it up.

Des Moines Area MPO's Long-range Transportation Plan

The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) recently adopted a new long-range transportation plan for the greater metro region. The plan provides the basis for federal funding for the next twenty years. Many of the new roads in the plan are proposed based on population growth estimates provided by the cities in the MPO area.

A long-range plan must reflect a balanced regional transportation system. Smart growth must be embraced through preservation of existing roads, public transit and pedestrian infrastructure.

The MPO is required to incorporate public input. Three public meetings were held in early December. Members of 1000 Friends of Iowa and other concerned citizens attended to express concerns and offer input. Each meeting concluded after two hours. The transcript from those meetings will be distributed to elected officials and government agencies. It is available to the public by request.

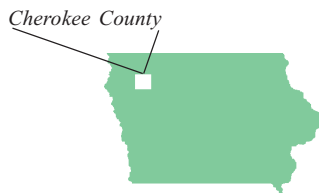
**FIND OUT
MORE!**

Go to their website at
www.dmampo.org

**CALL
THEM!**

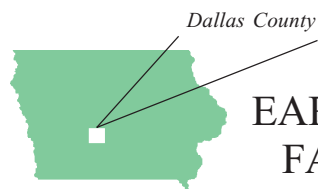
(515) 334-0075

Cherokee County: RESIDENTS OPPOSE RACETRACK



Recently, 1000 Friends staff visited rural Cherokee County residents who contacted us with concerns about a plan to build a racetrack immediately south of their homes. Some living near the proposed track have owned their homes for over thirty years. They are concerned that a track will involve heavy traffic, excessive noise, litter and an unsightly view — resulting in a significant decline in the value of their properties.

Proponents in county government feel the track would be a boon to the local economy. But opponents contend that the track will require a significant investment of tax dollars. Given the fact that a nearby track in Denison has closed, they feel projections of a rosy future for the project are simply unrealistic.

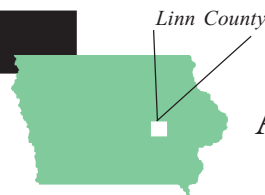


Dallas County: EARLHAM GETS NEW FARMA-SAVE SIGNS

Drivers heading east on Interstate 80, will see a new set of Farma-Save signs just west of Earlham. The signs read: *“Malls and roads sprout up like weeds, and your tax dollars are the seeds.”* These signs, like the previous set, encourage passersby to support local businesses while calling attention to the fact that many malls, including the nearby Jordan Creek Town Center, are heavily subsidized by Iowa taxpayers.

Our goal with these signs is to help Iowans realize that their tax money is being used to allow mega malls and big box stores to tap into taxpayer subsidies. Not only is this unfair to taxpayers, it causes other area retail businesses to suffer.

Also, thanks to new board member Jenn Bowen of Iowa City, another set of signs has a fresh paint job and is ready to be placed along a highway near you. The four 8 x 4 foot signs read *“These lovely hills, are unique beyond measure. Time is a ticking to save such a treasure.”* If you know a supportive landowner and a scenically appropriate location, let us know, and we’ll have them ready to go when the ground thaws.



Linn County: HIGHWAY 100 AGAIN THREATENS STATE PRESERVE

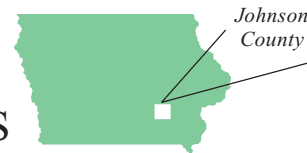
Over the years, concerned residents of Cedar Rapids have won several battles to stop construction of the Highway 100 extension. But the proposal is being revived, renewing the threat to the Rock Island State Preserve, a valued wildlife and recreation area northwest of Cedar Rapids.

Shearon Elderkin, a member of 1000 Friends also active in the Sierra Club, believes the sole justification for the new highway is to accommodate new home construction along the route, which would also increase the traffic count by 10,600 cars per day in an area that is already often gridlocked.

“The argument that this new highway will generate growth that creates lots of new money to save our schools is absurd,” said Shearon. “The developers and city officials who support this don’t seem to realize that residential growth inevitably costs existing taxpayers more to service than it generates in revenue.”

National studies consistently show that residential development is a net consumer of tax revenue. Some of these studies are published by American Farmland Trust, and information about them can be found on the organization’s website at http://www.farmland.org/texas/cocs_bandera.htm or http://www.farmland.org/cgl/mich_cocs.htm.

Johnson County: IOWA BICYCLE COALITION FORMS



The new Iowa Bicycle Coalition is a statewide, nonprofit, advocacy organization working to promote safe, enjoyable cycling for transportation and recreation. The Coalition works to improve cycling conditions by uniting the voices of road riders, mountain bikers, recreation riders, commuters and others.

The Coalition promotes bicycle tourism and is organizing a statewide conference to educate bicyclists, elected officials and traffic engineers about issues. The coalition also serves as an information clearinghouse on safety issues. The group is looking for new members.

For more information, check out their website at www.iowabicyclecoalition.org or contact Mark Wyatt at (319) 626-6017 or mark@north-liberty.com.

WEST METRO REGIONAL AIRPORT PROPOSED FOR DALLAS COUNTY

Economic stabilization and growth potential are the reasons given for the advancement of a proposed regional airport in Dallas County. The airport necessitates the conversion of 800 to 1200 acres of farmland between Adel and Waukee.

The Dallas County Board of Supervisors has completed a master plan for the Dallas County West Metro Regional Airport and is working to get the project added to the DOT's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). Airport proponents are hoping to receive broad support from small-town, suburban, and county elected officials.

The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), in its Draft 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan, lists the following cities and

counties directly benefiting from the new airport: Adel, Clive, Dallas Center, De Soto, Urbandale, Van Meter, Waukee, West Des Moines, Dallas County and western Polk County.

This is a glaring example of the lack of coordinated planning in the metro area. The Polk County Board of Supervisors claims it must stem the tide of business moving to Dallas County and proposes the NE Polk County Beltway. In the same long-range plan, Dallas County proposes a new regional airport to attract more development in Dallas County.

For more information on local efforts to oppose the airport, please contact us at 515-288-5364 or kfoi@kfoi.org.

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Clip and mail with your tax deductible check, payable to: 1000 Friends of Iowa / 3524 6th Avenue / Des Moines, IA 50313

MEMBERSHIP

*We are now over 1,000 members in 75 counties.
 Eventually, we hope to have 1,000 \$100 Founding Friends.
 Of course we gratefully accept annual members at \$20 and up as well.*

Enclosed is my tax deductible check for \$ _____

Name _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Address _____

Student/Senior \$20 Founding Friend \$ 100

City / State / Zip _____

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

Day Phone _____

Family \$45 Other \$ _____

E-mail _____



1000 Friends of Iowa
3524 6th Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50313

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

MANY THANKS

TO OUR MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS

MARK JAMISON

for providing and driving the bus on our recent beltway tour

ANDREA CHASE

fall intern from Drake, for the extensive help she gave Stephanie

THE DRAKE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

for providing bricks for our 7th Street Community Garden project

THE MANY, MANY VOLUNTEERS

who have helped with the community garden throughout the summer

GENE, JAN, CRYSTAL, CHRIS, LAURIE, MARY ANN & RAY

who helped with our recent mailing

JENN BOWEN

for refreshing a set of five Farma-Save signs

**NO
ANNUAL
MEETING
IN
JANUARY
2005**

1000 Friends of Iowa
will host
its annual meeting
later in the calendar year.

Look for more details
in our next
Land Use Bulletin.