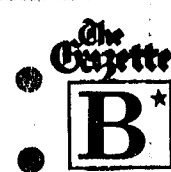
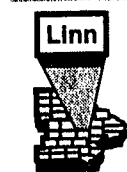


IOWA TODAY

CEDAR RAPIDS



EAST IOWA JOURNAL NEWS ROUNDUP

CEDAR RAPIDS

FmHA gets \$3 million

U.S. Attorney Charles Larson handed Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) officials a check for \$3 million Thursday.

The check was FmHA's cut of a \$4.2 million settlement in a civil fraud case against Production Credit Association of the Midlands (PCAM), a farmer-owned lending cooperative based in Omaha. When the settlement was announced earlier this year, Larson said it was the largest cash recovery ever made in Iowa's Northern District.

The settlement related to government allegations that beginning in 1985 the Eastern Iowa Production Credit Association (EIPCA), which later merged into PCAM, defrauded the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 20 FmHA guaranteed loans in Iowa.

The FmHA program provides government guarantees on loans to farmers made by commercial lenders. The civil fraud settlement resolved the government's claim that EIPCA submitted false information to the FmHA on 20 loans in order to recover at least \$2.2 million under the USDA guaranteed loan program.

PCAM agreed to forfeit the \$2.2 million plus \$800,000 in interest.

The settlement also provides that an additional 30 loans from across Iowa be audited to determine if fraud was involved.

Small but smoky

Firefighters quickly extinguished a small, smoky fire in a small attic space Thursday afternoon at 63 17th Ave. SW.

The home is being remodeled, and its owner, Fran Sherwood, said a "trouble light" being used to illuminate the attic space burned through its plastic cover and the area started to smolder. She called firefighters when the smoke spread.

"I'm trying to fix it up. I didn't mean to burn it down," she said kiddingly.

CLERMONT

Is water sickening?

The municipal water supply in Clermont may be making people sick.

And it smells bad and tastes awful, residents complain.

The Department of Natural Resources has found nothing wrong with the water, but many residents here say they have quit drinking it.

The water seemed to turn bad about two weeks ago. Residents interviewed by The Gazette say the water smells and tastes moldy, musty, like burned rubber or rotten eggs.

Some residents of this northeast Fayette County community along the Turkey River have complained of diarrhea, kidney and bladder infections and sore throats after drinking the water. But there is no hard evidence the water is causing those problems, Mayor Rodney Wagner said.

All the routine tests for nitrates and bacteria have come back negative, he said.

Wagner said the dry weather may be the culprit.

"I just suspect we've changed to a different water vein under the ground where we draw from."

WEST BRANCH

Girl, 9, struck by car

A rural West Branch girl was hospitalized with a head injury after being struck by a car Thursday.

Jamie Lynn Graves, 9, the daughter of Carl Fobian, was running across the street in front of Hoover Elementary School in West Branch when she was hit by a car. The accident happened about 9 a.m., according to West Branch police reports.

Driving the car was a 14-year-old girl with a learner's permit who was accompanied by her mother. They were not identified last night.

Assistant Police Chief Randall Wellington said the victim was not using a crosswalk at the time.

Jamie was taken to Mercy Hospital in Iowa City by Johnson County Ambulance and later transferred to University of Iowa Hospitals. She was in guarded but stable condition last night, Wellington said.

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Marion school chief is resigning

Hulleman to accept post of school superintendent for Indianola district

By Kevin Kane
Gazette correspondent

Marion Independent Superintendent Harold Hulleman is resigning to accept a position as superintendent of the Indianola Community School District.

Marion school board members, who have agreed informally to release Hulleman from his contract, have scheduled a work session at 5 p.m. Monday to discuss a search for a new superintendent.

Formal action on Hulleman's resignation, which would be effective July 31, is scheduled for Monday night's regular meeting.

The Indianola school board approved his appointment earlier this week. The Indianola district, located about 20 miles southeast of Des Moines, has an enrollment of just over 3,000 students, almost twice that of Marion Independent's 1,600.

Hulleman said Thursday that the offer from Indianola came at an opportune time. His younger son has just graduated from high school, making a move easier. And at a crossroads in his own career, it gives him a chance to "take a new look at things."

It also takes him closer to his hometown of Monroe.

"That was not part of the decision," Hulleman said. "But it's not a detraction either."

Hulleman, 53, and his family have lived in the Cedar Rapids-Marion area for 16 years. He served 10 years as assistant superintendent at Linn-Mar before taking the Marion superintendent post six years ago.



Harold Hulleman

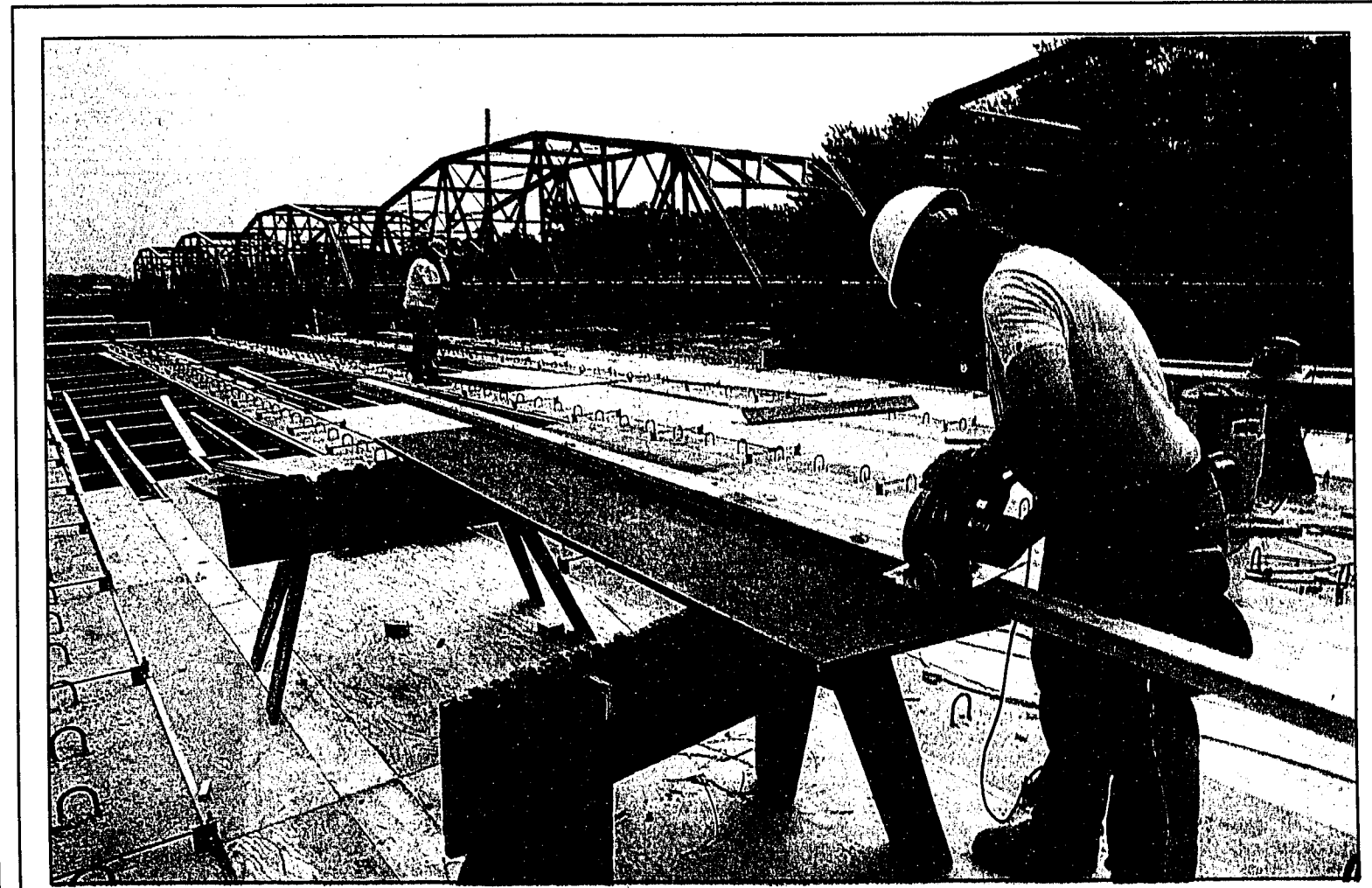
Before moving to this area, Hulleman taught school in Bettendorf and Littleton, Colo., and worked for the Iowa Department of Education in Des Moines.

He said he hopes the Marion Independent district will continue to maintain momentum for improving schools through its work with shared decision-making and that Marion and Linn-Mar will continue to move ahead with cooperative projects.

"Resources are only going to get smaller," he said. "There are some efficiencies to be gained by sharing, cooperating and even merger."

Although Hulleman will be leaving some problems behind, such as dealing with shrinking revenues and older facilities, he said he expects to find challenges both familiar and new in the Indianola district.

"The community is suffering growing pains and struggling to find its identity," he said. "They even have a building similar to Vernon Middle School which they are having trouble deciding whether to renovate or to build a new building."



Gazette photo by Todd McInturf

Building bridge

Lois Bradley of Iowa City cuts wood for decking material this week on the new Ivanhoe Bridge over the Cedar River on Highway 1 about four miles south of Mount Vernon. The bridge replacement project started late last fall and should be completed this fall. The old bridge will then be torn down, said Kent Ellis of Cedar Rapids, assistant resident construction engineer for the Iowa Department of Transportation. Bradley works for Godbersen-Smith Construction of Ida Grove, which is building the \$1.8 million bridge. An additional \$959,448 is being spent on grading and paving of approaches to the new structure, under a contract with Manatts Inc. of Brooklyn.

Murdock leads in fund raising

He has 28 times more cash than any C.R. mayoral foe

By Lonnie Zingula
Gazette City Hall reporter

Cedar Rapids Streets Commissioner Wayne Murdock has both experience and cash on his side heading into Tuesday's mayoral primary.

Meanwhile, Square D Marketing Manager Larry Serbousek intends to buy his own ticket to the final round of the mayoral sweepstakes.

Murdock, in his seventh term on the City Council, has trumpeted his leadership experience during the abbreviated campaign to choose a successor to Don Canney. He can also rely on a bankroll that is easily the largest among 11 candidates.

Murdock, 60, of 3301 Waveland Dr. NW, has raised \$11,505 — on top of \$363 left over from previous campaigns — to finance his bid for the mayor's office, according to disclosure forms filed Thursday with the Linn County Auditor's Office. He also received an in-kind contribution valued at \$150 from Steven Oeder of Cedar

Rapids for printing yard signs.

After spending \$55 to repay a loan and just over \$61 to buy lunch for his campaign committee and purchase yard sign materials, Murdock's cash balance remains at \$11,752 — more than 28 times any other candidate. By contrast, Murdock raised \$2,793 and spent \$3,431 during his campaign for re-election last fall.

Serbousek, 41, of 7007 Chelsea Dr. NE, led the field in spending, all of which came from his own pocket.

"That's a commitment that I've made, at least as far as the primary is concerned," he said. "I have had people offer."

Serbousek spent \$2,390 of the \$2,800 he contributed to his own cause, leaving a balance of \$410. The money went for yard signs, flyers, buttons and postage. He also received a \$200 in-kind contribution from his campaign treasurer, Pat Freilinger, for advertising on a race car.

Serbousek said he'll reassess his campaign finance strategy after the primary. "I'd certainly like to do it on my own if I could," he said.

Retired Teamsters official Bob Schorg had the next most active finance report, which showed \$1,020 in contributions and \$1,125 in spending. Schorg, 62, of 383 St. Olaf St. SW, also loaned \$500 to his campaign and reported unpaid bills totaling \$826.

Telemarketer P.T. Larson, in his fourth City Council campaign, reported contributions of \$16, bringing his balance to nearly \$22. Larson, 35, of 3220 Kenrich Dr. SW, Apt. 11, did not spend any money during the reporting period, which extended from mid-January through June 13.

Candidates are not required to disclose their campaign finances until they have raised or spent more than \$500. Because he had not closed the books on his previous campaign committee, Larson had to file a report even though he has not crossed the threshold.

The remaining candidates whose names will appear on the primary ballot are Everett Fulmer, 64, of 3020 Eastern Ave. NE; Dan Greene, 41, of 2715 Seely Ave. SE; Bruce Junttila, 29, of 724 19th St. SE; Cathy Mayor, 42, 415 24th St. NW; Donald Novick, 46, of 1743 D Ave. NE; Bruce Obiedzinski, 45, of 5217 E Ave. NW; and Don Pospishil, 61, of 1117 Eighth St. SE.

The election was made necessary earlier this month when Canney resigned five months into his 12th term to take an executive position with PMX Industries. The top two vote-getters in the primary will square off July 21 to complete the term.

Here is a list of those who contributed

■ Please turn to 3B: Campaign

Grill ordinance could make apartment fires rare

Fire Department emphasizes law in Cedar Rapids

By John Kenyon
Gazette news intern

A few apartment complex residents might be burned up over a ban on balcony propane grills, but others are eager to avoid a repeat of a recent fire.

The Cedar Rapids Fire Department recently sent a letter to major apartment complexes to alert them to a city fire ordinance that bans propane grills from most balconies on apartment complexes. The word is now being passed on to tenants.

Residents of apartments owned by

Professional Management Associates Co. have been notified of the ban, said manager Joyce Steffen.

"We have already sent people flyers telling them to get rid of them," Steffen said.

Steffen said she had encountered no opposition.

"That fire is still fresh in peoples' minds. They don't want that to happen here," she added.

Enforcement of the ban comes in the wake of a devastating fire on May 28 at Windsor Park Apartments, 1220 Sierra Dr. NE. The blaze started when a tenant was cleaning a propane gas grill on a balcony and the grill erupted in flames.

The ordinance banning propane grills was on the books the whole time, but only recently was discovered and

was enforced. The ban is part of the National Fire Protection Association code.

Sy Hinz, manager of St. Andrews Apartments, said he had passed along the information to his tenants. But with more than 150 units, Hinz said it was too early to tell what the overall response would be. "I am sure that I will get a response."

Hinz said he talked with Fire Department officials to learn about the ramifications of the code.

"I wanted to have something ready to tell my residents when they do respond," Hinz said.

One St. Andrews resident is unhappy with the ordinance. "Grilling out is an American pastime," Steve Hutchinson said. "I have a great balcony, and I like to grill on it."

But Hutchinson said he was not angry with anyone.

"I certainly can't blame my manager or the fire marshal," he said. "It's just unfortunate that all this has happened."

One of the keys to enforcing the ban is awareness, according to Natalie Kleis, a fire education specialist with the Fire Department.

"Citizens will be watching citizens, letting them know they shouldn't have them out," she said.

The response to the ban has been positive at the fire department.

"We have received a lot of calls, and people aren't throwing out their grills. They are just opening their eyes," Kleis said. "After every tragedy, we look back and learn from it."

Robber caught on videotape

In convenience store holdup

By Rick Smith
Gazette staff writer

A short, black man in an Army-green T-shirt and shorts may become the first Cedar Rapids convenience store robber nabbed by videotape.

Police detectives are studying the tape from a camera that was operating about 5 a.m. Thursday when a robber told the clerk at the QuikTrip at 1430 First Ave. NE to hand over money.

Police said the robber held one hand in his pocket, giving the impression he was armed, and used the other to scoop money from the cash drawer. He then fled on foot.

Police described him as 5 feet 5 inches tall, 140 pounds, between 18 and 25 years old.

Detectives questioned a suspect last night, but he was released when a witness said he was not the robber, according to Lt. Jeff Mellgren.

IT WAS the September 1989 robbery-murder of convenience store clerk Brian Schappert in Cedar Rapids that prompted a strong push for video cameras in businesses tended by lone employees late at night.

The city of Marion led the way and, earlier this year, police arrested and charged a robber with the help of what they saw on a store's videotape.

AFTER 17 robberies of convenience stores, gas stations and hotels in 15 months in Cedar Rapids, the City Council enacted an ordinance in May requiring cameras to be in place by Jan. 1.

Assistant Police Chief Bruce Kern said if Thursday's robber is arrested it will represent a first. Video cameras in Cedar Rapids have helped nab forgers and gasoline thieves, but never a robber, he said.

Kern predicted that the video cameras will become an accepted way of doing business in Cedar Rapids in the months ahead.

HE EXPECTS a period of experimentation before the stores find the camera locations that produce the best pictures.

His review of Thursday's robbery images: "It can be used to arrest someone," he said.