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AREA NEWS

Coilcraft lays off 50 workers

HAWARDEN—Coilcraft, a manufacturer of parts used in cell phones and beepers, has laid off 56 women workers. The company employs 250-300 workers. All of the jobs cut were from the night shift. Hawarden's city administrator said that it was a situation where production needed to be cut. Most of those who lost their jobs live in or near Hawarden.

Council pursues wind generation

ORANGE CITY—After a June 11 Orange City Council meeting, the council authorized Missouri River Energy Services to study the cost involved in constructing a wind generator after hearing the proposal from an eight-person wind study task force. The task force recommended the construction of a 750KW wind turbine. The turbine would generate less than 2.5 percent of the city's annual power consumption. Several sites were discussed for the possibility of the wind turbine. A site just north of Landsmeer Ridge was identified as a good wind resource and is close to the city's electrical system. An estimated \$13,000 a year over 25 years would be saved if the wind turbine were used.

Rock Rapids has new entrance signs

ROCK RAPIDS—After a couple years of deliberation, Rock Rapids finally has three new entrance signs that greet visitors as they enter the city. Rock Rapids' 22-year-old cedar signs have been replaced with signs that rest on broken-face concrete block. The signs are 24 x 12 feet, ensuring visibility. The area around each of the signs will be landscaped and lit at night. They were placed along Highways 9 and 75 at the east, west and south ends of town. Members of the visioning committee formed to consider ways to enhance landscaping are Roger Oliver, Lisa Vande Stouwe, Deb Jones, Matt Boer, Rhoda Lange and Yvette Waagmeester.

Safety complex in Hull completed

HULL—After raising more than \$100,000 to build the new safety complex in Hull, approximately 600 residents toured the facility at the two-hour open house last Thursday night. The safety complex houses both the volunteer fire department and ambulance team. All of the money raised for the project came from private donations and through the city's general fund. No bond issue was used to pay for the project. Also built on the property was a new bus barn for the Boyden-Hull school district.

City sues Akron-Westfield school district

AKRON—The Akron-Westfield Community School District has been sued by the city of Akron for \$131,094.34 for electrical service charges from February, 1999, through May 15, 2001. Last Friday, attorneys representing the city of Akron filed suit in Plymouth County District Court against the school district. Documents that were provided by the city claim that electrical service had been supplied since February of 1999 without the school district paying demand charges. Also submitted were charts regarding charges for the school bus barn, radio station and lights at the bus parking area. Under ordinance, electricity for security lights is charged at a lower rate by the municipal utility service. The school district is arguing that there was an agreement with the city of Akron which allowed the district to provide excess electrical power generated by the school's wind turbine to offset electrical charges but no mention of an agreement is on file with the Clerk of Courts. The city of Akron maintains that the school district should pay for the demand level of electricity as residents and other entities do, so that sufficient electrical power is in supply. School officials maintain that such payments were not part of the original agreement.

Wind damages Plymouth County buildings

LE MARS—Last Wednesday evening, storms traveling through the Plymouth County area left two buildings damaged at the Joe Schroeder farm. A metal machine shed and the family's garage sustained the damages. The roof of the shed was torn off and sheets of metal were scattered around the farm place as well as wrapped around a light pole. The garage had 2 x 4s, which were from the shed, driven into its side and roof. The Schroeder family was not at home during the incident but returned later in the evening to find two trees blocking their driveway along with the mess.

Leaders consider nine potential sites for joint airport

By Heather Kuipers
Leaders from Sioux Center, Orange City and Le Mars are one step closer to identifying a location for a potential joint airport. The Joint Airport Feasibility Study Committee—which includes representatives from all three communities—met last Wednesday to consider nine possible sites in Sioux and Plymouth counties. Pinpointing the potential airport locations is just one in a number of steps that are being taken to perform a feasibility study on the idea of creating a joint airport. Sioux Center, Orange City and Le Mars began the study in May and expect it will take about one year to complete.

Four of the nine locations that are now under consideration are located in Sioux County, while the other five are in Plymouth County. All nine sites lie within six miles east or west of Highway 75. Eight sites are located between Maurice and Le Mars, while the other one is slightly northeast of Maurice.

The nine candidate sites were selected by a consultant from Snyder & Associates of Ankeny, which has been hired by the cities to conduct the feasibility study. In May, the consultant identified a centroid, or central point, of airport service for the proposed joint airport. The centroid is located about one mile southwest of Maurice. The nine candidate sites that have just been selected are situated within a five-mile radius extending out from the centroid.

Sioux Center City Manager Harold Schiebout said that although the ideal airport location would be situated at the centroid, that is not among the list of options.

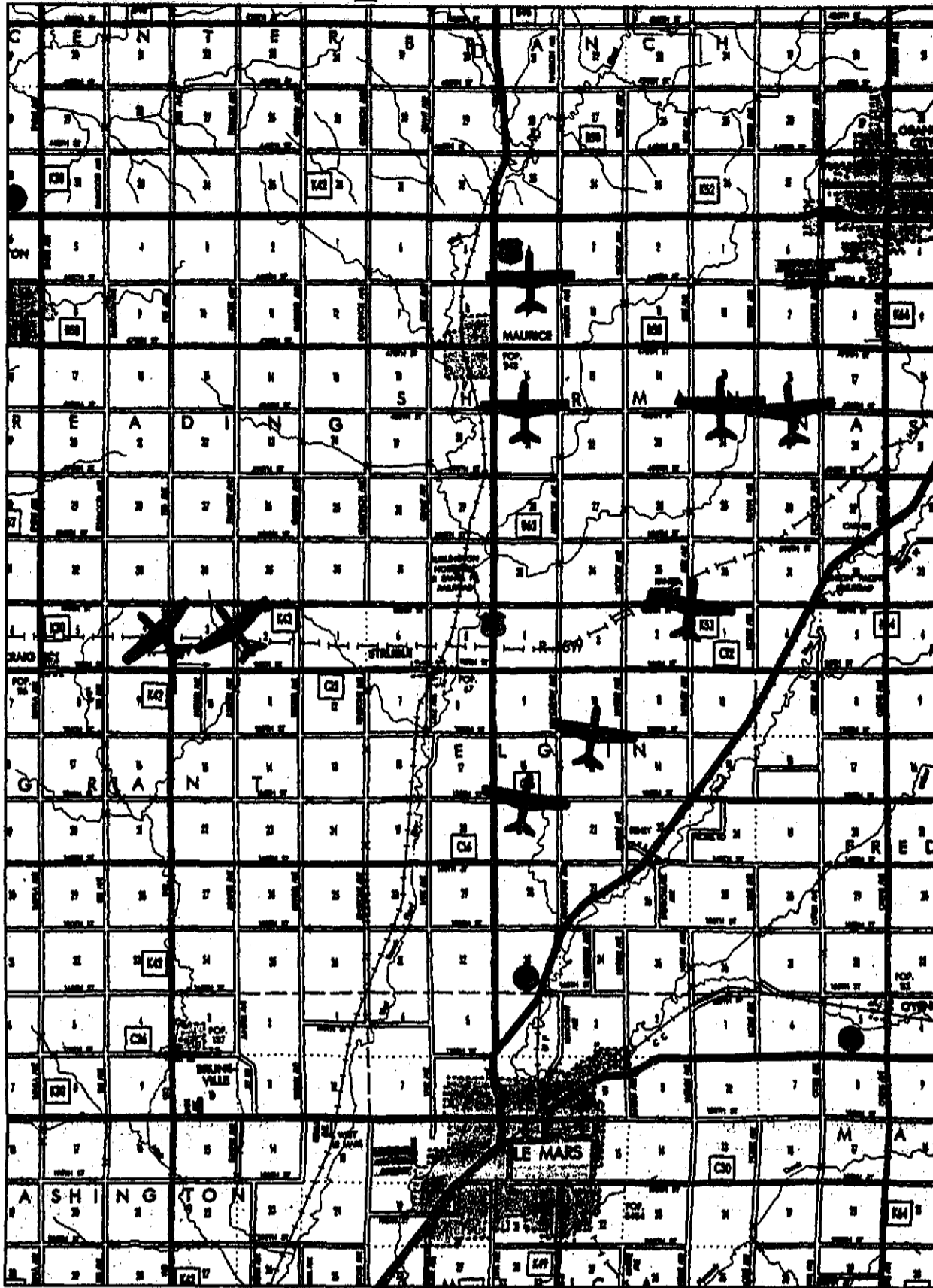
"On the other end of the spectrum," he said, "we're pleased that there are sites at least within the five-mile radius."

All nine candidate sites were chosen because they fulfilled several criteria, according to a joint news statement released by the committee last Thursday.

The sites have enough space to accommodate a 5,500-foot-long primary runway with a north/northwest orientation and a crosswind runway 4,100 feet in length. In addition, the locations have enough room for land-side buildings, such as hangars. The sites also are relatively level, according to the news release.

Schiebout said he thinks it will take another one or two months for the committee to narrow the nine sites down to three finalists. Snyder & Associates will then perform an in-depth evaluation of those final sites, looking at factors such as total acres required for acquisition, impact on farmsteads, prime farmland, wetlands, floodplains, existing utilities, airport access, known historic/archaeological sites, landfill location, obstruction and construction impact.

Once the three final sites have been selected, the joint committee also will ask the Federal Aviation Administration to conduct an airspace study for each location.



Leaders from Sioux Center, Orange City and Le Mars are considering the nine sites indicated above as potential locations for a joint airport. The three communities currently are undertaking a feasibility study to examine whether or not constructing a shared airport is a good idea.

In addition, the sites will be presented to the public at an open house.

After scrutinizing the three sites, Snyder & Associates will recommend a preferred site for airport development.

Pending the overall results of the feasibility study—which looks at many more factors than just location—city leaders will decide whether or not to move forward with developing plans for a joint airport.

Schiebout said if the project actually gets off the ground, the airport would likely be constructed in stages.

"We'd probably start with the

basics and build toward the 'ultimate' (level of service) as the need would dictate," said Schiebout. "But certainly having the provisions in place in terms of property ownership and other features that bear on the project is a good idea."

As leaders continue to move ahead with the feasibility study, they are leaving open the possibility of inviting other communities to join in. Schiebout said some other communities, including Hawarden, have expressed varying levels of interest in being part of the project.

Although Hawarden's existing airport serves the community's recreational flying needs, "they

have indicated they might be interested in this airport in order to be able to serve expanding needs," said Schiebout.

Sioux Center and Orange City have been discussing the idea of a joint airport for more than one year. Le Mars entered the planning process in March.

The Iowa Department of Transportation's Aviation Office is funding 90 percent, or \$54,000, of the \$60,000 study.

If a joint airport is built, it is projected that at least 53 airplanes would be based at the facility within the first five years of operation. By the year 2020, the airport could be home base to 71 aircraft.

Judge denies Vander Esch motion to dismiss felony charges

By Heather Kuipers
Lawrence Vander Esch is scheduled to stand trial in less than one week on four counts of felony sexual abuse, despite his attempt to persuade a judge to drop the charges. In a ruling filed last Wednesday in Sioux County District Court, District Court Judge James D. Scott denied Vander Esch's motion to dismiss four third-degree sexual abuse charges.

Because the charges have been upheld, Vander Esch will face a trial which is slated to begin next week Monday, June 25, in Sioux County District Court.

Vander Esch, a former Sioux County political leader, is accused of sexually abusing two teenage boys from Sioux County who worked at Pizza Ranch. Vander Esch is the co-founder of the restaurant chain.

In his eight-page ruling, Scott said he denied Vander Esch's motion to dismiss because a jury could find that the 54-year-old businessman touched both teenagers in a manner that went beyond what they will testify he consented to.

"Sexual touching that exceeds consent would clearly support a jury's conviction of sexual abuse and [Vander Esch's] motion must be

overruled on this basis alone," Scott said in the ruling.

Sexual contact which goes beyond consent is enough to qualify under the Iowa Code's requirements for third-degree sexual abuse, said Scott. Iowa Code defines sexual abuse as occurring under several circumstances, including sexual contact that "is done by force or against the will of another."

Arguing for the state, Sioux County Attorney Mark Schouten and Assistant Iowa Attorney General Chuck Thoman have agreed that the alleged sexual contact was not done by force.

"Rather, the State contends the sex acts were against the will of the other person," Scott said. According to Scott, Vander Esch's attorney, Francis Lee Goodwin of Sioux City, has contended that "even if consent was obtained through fraud or misrepresentation, the court could not rule that the acts were done 'against the will of the other person' as required by the statute."

Scott did not offer a ruling on another issue that has been raised in the case—whether a sex act is classified as "against one's will" if consent is secured through fraud or

deception.

Scott's ruling also included the details of Vander Esch's alleged contact with two young men known to the public only as "John Doe No. 1" and "John Doe No. 2."

Scott said that the two John Does will testify in court that Vander Esch claimed he was assisting the University of Iowa by securing sperm donors for a research project.

The alleged victims also are expected to testify that Vander Esch touched them while they collected their own samples. Vander Esch also allegedly told them he would have to witness the entire procedure.

According to Scott, John Doe No. 1 is expected to testify that he participated in the process two times and that Vander Esch had sexual contact with him in a manner that went beyond what he had consented to.

Scott said John Doe No. 2 will testify that he consented to the process two times.

"Unlike John Doe No. 1, John Doe No. 2 will testify that he did not consent to any of [Vander Esch's] touching," according to Scott.

The four incidents allegedly occurred in June of 1998 and December of 2000.

In his summary of the pre-trial testimony, Scott said, "There's no dispute the defendant (Vander Esch) was never authorized to obtain human semen samples as part of any research project or medical study."

Vander Esch was arrested April 12 after family members of the alleged victims came forward to talk with authorities. Vander Esch was released on a \$52,000 signature bond and has been free since then.

Two counts of third-degree sexual abuse also are pending against Vander Esch in Linn and Marion counties. The expected charges involve two young men from Sioux County who traveled with Vander Esch to business and political events.

More than 20 anonymous witnesses, including John Doe No. 1 and John Doe No. 2, are set to testify against Vander Esch during the upcoming trial. Other witnesses include alleged victims, their family members and other Pizza Ranch employees.

Each conviction of third-degree sexual assault carries with it a prison sentence of up to 10 years or a fine between \$1,000 and \$10,000.

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Publisher: Scott Beernink
Editor: Steve Hoogland
Reporters: Heather Kuipers, Brenna Walsh
Composition: Kay Disch, Denise Vander Broek, Sarah Koolma
USPS—497-220 Volume 109 Number 25
Address: P.O. Box 198, 67 3rd St. N.E.
Sioux Center, Iowa 51250
Phone: (712) 722-0741 Fax (712) 722-0507
e-mail: editor@siouxcenternews.com

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