

FYI



We Did It ! 5,000 Pounds !

FYI April 2009

Sac County's newest attraction was completed by a hardy group of volunteers and all the experts at Noble Popcorn on February 28th. The fun began at 6:55 a.m. and lasted all throughout the day—everyone packing, shaping, punching, and molding the World's Largest Popcorn Ball. The group, clad in their new popcorn ball T-shirts, grabbed 80# patches of the hot and sticky popcorn and worked for 12 hours and 40 minutes to create the mammoth structure, completing the task about 7:35 p.m.

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Bill Northey, joined the group to verify the recipe and stayed for hours to join in the fun. Ingredients for the giant ball included 900 pounds of popcorn, 2,700 pounds of sugar and 1,400 pounds of dry syrup. The syrup mix was mixed with water and boiled. The popcorn was popped in a commercial popper and traveled through a conveyor system to an 80 pound pot where the sugar, syrup and water were added to the popcorn and stirred. The

(Continued on page 3)

Check out our Redesigned Website at www.saccountyiowa.com

That's right—we have redesigned the website to make it more user friendly.



You'll notice some new features like the floating ear of popping corn pictured here. If you click on the

ear, you'll find a video, photos and press releases for the latest Popcorn Ball. There is additional information on the county foundation, updated links, economic development information and we are adding more visitor information weekly. If you haven't visited us for a while, click on the website then sign in on the message board and let us know what you think.



Tired Volunteers who stayed to the end

Inside this edition:	
WITR Meeting	2
Business Succession	2
US 20	2
Popcorn ball photos	3
How can we save our Roads	4

Business Succession Planning Workshops

The Iowa Small Business Development Centers have partnered to bring a series of succession workshops to small business owners throughout the state. Iowa has more than 100,000 small businesses. Over 25% are owned and operated by people 55 and older. Over 10% are operated by people 65 or older and almost 600 are owned by people 80 or older. Many have no established plan of succession. Barriers include confidentiality, family dynamics, no clear successor, not knowing where to start and who can help.

The Small Business Development Centers are holding meetings throughout the state. These are six hour workshops that address selling your business to family, employees or outside buyers; successful strategies and landmines; assembling a team and the succession process; buying/selling motivation and issues, and legal, tax & financial considerations.

For more information on the workshops, contact www.iowasbdc.org.

Western Iowa Tourism Region Meets in Odebolt

On Feb. 18th, almost seventy people from all over Western Iowa gathered at the Odebolt Community Center for the state tourism staff's Town Meeting and one of Western Iowa Tourism Region's (WITR) regular meetings. Those attending were offered a tour of the First State Bank, which was recently been renovated and also used as a setting for the movie "Peacock" to be released later this year. They also had the opportunity to visit the Odebolt Museum. Both sites were met with overwhelming approval of those who opted to tour.

Mayor Ron Rex provided the opening welcome. Business throughout the day included the annual grant training, as well as an update on the region's marketing efforts. The annual Western Iowa Tourism Region newspaper insert will be released in April, the website is undergoing some updates, a new activity guide is being produced and a new booth exhibit is in the planning stages.

Kathy Dirks, President of the Travel Federation of Iowa, updated the audience on key legislative issues facing the travel industry. The upcoming Board of Directors retreat

was announced and a new format for Welcome Center orientation was presented.

"It's important that regional meetings are held throughout the 36-county region to educate people as to what this part of Iowa has to offer. People were certainly impressed by the Community Center, the bank and the museum. It's always exciting to discover hidden treasures in our region," said Michele Walker, WITR's director.

The lunch was catered by Time Out of Odebolt and morning treats were sponsored by the Beer Bread Company of Sac City.

Following the meeting portion of the day, the State Tourism Staff, led by Manager Nancy Landess, discussed state programs available, their plans for marketing the state this year and answered questions from the crowd.

A special thanks to Howard & Marcia Hustedt, Joan Godbersen, the First State Bank and their employees, and Renae Babcock with the Odebolt Museum, for all their help in making the day a success.

New Funding for Highway 20

The Federal Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 carried new funding for US 20 — thanks to Congressmen Steve King & Tom Latham and Senator Charles Grassley. King secured \$570,000 for continued construction of the four lane highway from the county line of Sac And Calhoun Counties to Merville. Congressman Tom Latham, along with Sen. Grassley, secured \$855,000 to expand to four lanes a 20-mile segment of Highway 20 in Webster and Calhoun County. The funds will go to the Iowa Department of Transportation who will oversee the project.

Area land owners have been negotiating with the Iowa DOT on land purchases along the right of way in Calhoun and Sac Counties. Plans call for paving the stretch in Webster and Calhoun Counties this summer.

The next meeting of the US 20 Association will be Friday, May 15th at 10 a.m. in at the Schumann-Lohff Recreation Center in Holstein.



Making the giant Popcorn Ball

(Continued from page 1)

mixture then dumped on a conveyor belt that took the hot sticky popcorn down to a chute to be dumped into large plastic buckets. These were carried over to groups of rubber gloved clad volunteers who molded, punched, and packed the popcorn ball into shape.

The popcorn ball weighed 5,060 pounds on Saturday on scales designed by Engel Agri Sales of Sac City. The ball continued to steam over the weekend from the hot syrup and the Iowa Department of Transportation moved their scales in on Monday, March 2nd, to verify a 5,000 pounds weight. The ball is 28.8 feet in circumference and stands 8.4' high.

Over 230 volunteers came and went throughout the day as media arrived to take photos and write their stories about feat.



Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey not only came to verify the recipe, but worked with us for 3 or 4 hours constructing the ball. Also pictured are Kay Martin & Shirley Phillips. Photo by Don Poggensee, Ida Grove



TV Crews were on hand to interview even some of the smallest helpers.



Warren Campbell timed the loads as Katy Philips & others caught them to haul to the other workers.

The 5,000 pound monster was moved to the building at the Sac City Museum on Highway 20 the following Thursday. We did not wrap the ball but will be coating it in a substance that should protect it for all to enjoy.

If you'd like to see a video of the making of the ball, go to our website at and click on the floating ear of popping corn.

Thanks to Milo & Sally Lines, Dan Martin & the crew at Noble Popcorn for the use of their facilities.



Molding the popcorn into a ball was fun for kids, as well as the adults. Supervisor Jack Bensley & Sara Duncan (on the left) stayed for hours to work on the newest tourist attraction for Sac County.

Sac Economic & Tourism Development

615 West Main Street
Sac City, IA 50583
712-662-7383

info@sacountyiowa.com
www.sacountyiowa.com

"Things are always popping in Sac County!"



www.westerniowaadvantage.com

New marketing strategy:

If you're not talking to your customer by email at least once a month, you're going to lose a customer.

World's Largest Popcorn Ball T-shirts



Want a fun T-shirt depicting the latest popcorn ball? They are available at the Chamber Main Street office and the Oak Door in Sac City. Order forms are also available at www.saccity.org, click on the link on their home page to print the form or email saccitymainstreet@prairieinet.net. You can also find a form on www.sacountyiowa.com, click on the floating ear of corn, then T-shirt order form. The shirts come in children sizes as well as adults.

How We Can Save Our Roads

(by Earl Swift, taken from *Parade Mar. 8, 2009*)

President Obama and Congress have made public works central to their \$787 billion economic-stimulus plan. Over the next 18 months, the government is expected to spend nearly \$30 billion jump-starting an overhaul of the nation's highway infrastructure. The aim is to put Americans back to work rebuilding thousands of miles of aging and deficient roads and bridges.

How did things get so bad?

When President Eisenhower signed the 1956 act bankrolling the interstate system, road-building was a national strategic imperative. No expense was spared. But later generations failed to invest in kind.

According to American Association of State Highway and Transportation Official (AASHTO) "Highways and bridges wear out."

Today our 47,000 miles of interstate highways are a half-century old—and look it. Other vital highways are at or near retirement age. AASHTO ranks one in four of our nearly 600,000 bridges as structurally deficient or obsolete. Meanwhile, the number of vehicles on our roads has quadrupled since interstates debuted. And more of today's vehicles are heavy trucks, which pound the pavement far harder than vehicles of the past.

The result is a nationwide backlog of critical repairs and reconstructions. The price tag is astronomical. One federal study suggests that the U.S. should spend \$225 billion a year for the next 50 years to rehabilitate its surface transportation. We're currently spending just 40% of that—in a country that does 96% of its traveling on land by car and light truck.

Money isn't all that's needed, experts say. A solution also will require new ideas about how we design, build, finance, and maintain our transportation backbone.

As a result, highway planners are looking for new income to keep America rolling. One old-fashioned solution—toll roads—is making a comeback. Another possible solution: swapping the gas tax for one based on miles driven.

There are 3000 road projects that could begin in a matter of weeks if financing were available.

"We think we can employ a million people over the next year and build facilities that will last for the next 50 years. These are jobs that can't be shipped overseas, they're jobs for Americans, building American infrastructure, to make the country stronger," said John Horsley, executive director of AASHTO.