



**New Courthouse News from Bob Schlaeger:** As most of you know Bob Schlaeger resigned from his position as Dickinson County's Owners Representative for the new Courthouse construction. Bob will be leaving for a new job in Indiana on July 25<sup>th</sup>. In the meantime, Bob gave the County his last report on the construction of the new courthouse. He reports that the heat has had an effect on the construction of the Courthouse. The construction workers have been working on the roof but it has been too hot for them to work a full day at a time. The flat (slightly pitched) portion of the roof is complete with rubber roof. The metal is up on all of the hip roof and the wood is being

placed over the metal. The brick color was approved by RDG on Thursday, July 14<sup>th</sup> and has been ordered. The sheet-rockers are applying sheetrock on the second floor and things seem to be on the December phase I completion schedule. In closing Bob wishes to thank everyone for their help and says he will miss everyone when he leaves.

Roger Gilbert was hired to take Bob Schlaeger's place as Dickinson County's Owners Representative. He started on July 14<sup>th</sup> and attended his first Construction meeting with McHan and RDG that same day. Roger graduated from Iowa State in Engineering and has been involved in construction most of his adult life. Pam Jordan also attended the July 14<sup>th</sup> construction meeting and reports the following. Mike McHan was very complimentary of Bob S. being of "the old school", who came up through the ranks and actually knew construction. The sub contractors were also complimentary of him and the board of supervisors for hiring someone who could make decisions in the field to keep the project from bogging down over small changes until "paperwork" is pushed. Pam also reported the 3 color brick was ok'd by Jack Topp of RDG. With that approval, the brickyard will blend the whole batch for Phases I & II and store Phase II in their yard. Staging area for brick will be around the Baptist Church. Directly after the meeting, Pam asked Mike McHan about the time schedule for completion of phase I. Judy, McHan's construction manager, estimated a schedule through Dec 22nd, and McHan said that was his best estimate also. McHan told Pam the millwork, jail electronics and some other items were behind. He said that in his opinion, the rest of the courthouse offices would be ready to move in before the jail could be ready and tested for occupancy.

**Planning and Zoning:** Start of the Biggest Development Ever! On March 15, 2005, the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors approved a recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission to change what's known as the Nielsen property which consists of 70 acres, from Agricultural to Resort Enterprise. The property is east of Trigg's Resort across the bridge on East Okoboji Lake. The project, now known as Bridges Bay, is planned to have over 500 condominium units and a state of the art indoor water park. The condominium buildings will be both the normal single units under one ownership and the new concept of hotel condos. The first permit for a 36 unit condominium building was just issued on July 7, 2005. The developers have said that there is a terrific amount of interest in the project.

**Veterans Administration:** A total of 15,716 contacts/actions (+29% over last FY) were recorded in the office logbook with or on behalf of county veterans during FY 2004/2005. A monthly average of 129 different county veterans/residents (+11% over last FY) contacted the commission for assistance. This compares with 46 veterans/residents a decade ago. The vast majority requested assistance with VA paperwork to qualify or continue to qualify for federal benefits.

The office assisted 12 veteran families with county benefits. This was a decrease from last year where 16 families received assistance. Total expenditures for FY04/05 were \$64,955.22. A budget residual of \$3,752.78 was returned to the general fund. Much of unused funds were for line items that are difficult or unknowable to predict such as emergency medical care, and the need for rent and utilities. New federal VA benefits processed through the commission and approved this FY totaled a \$656,006 (+30%). For comparison, in FY 94/95, new benefits totaled \$96,860 and last year \$464,300. This amazing positive increase is partly due to current military operations, partly to increased awareness among veterans that they may be eligible and an increased capability in the commission to handle the federal claims. The VA currently lists 1,896 (2000 Census) veterans as living in Dickinson County. VA expenditures on behalf of county veterans and their survivors are cited at \$3,571,000 annually

Ernie Cupp received recognition as an Accredited Representative of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc. This accreditation speaks well concerning his level of training and knowledge of VA benefits and procedures. Congratulations Ernie. Ernie coordinated efforts to raise \$12,000 to purchase a new DAV van. Emmet, Dickinson, Osceola and Lyon Counties provided money. Funds from Dickinson County were raised by the VFW, American Legion Posts in Lake Park, Milford, Spirit Lake and Terril and a pancake feed by the Immanuel Lutheran Church, Spirit Lake. The remainder of the \$20,865 purchase price was provided by a grant from the DAV Colorado Trust. The new van is scheduled for pickup by the VA in mid-July and should be on station in Spirit Lake about a month later.

**IT Department report by Alissa Julius:** In June Alissa attended the ICIT conference in Cedar Rapids. There were many good sessions and she was able to meet a lot of IT professionals from other counties. As many of you know, Alissa has been implementing the County's policies on security, which was required by HIPAA and written up by the State Auditor. Security policies are not always popular, but in order to keep the County safe from unwanted intrusion they are necessary. A big part of Alissa's time was also spent reviewing the bids for the phone system with the phone committee and meeting with the phone vendors. After a long hard process, the County decided on a vendor and the Supervisors awarded the bid to United Technologies of Sioux Falls and Heartland Technologies of Estherville and R&D Industries of Milford. United Technologies/Heartland Technologies will be supplying the phone and voicemail systems and R&D will install the Ethernet switches needed for the Voice Over IP phones. Not all departments will be using VOIP phones. The vendors and Alissa will soon be meeting with the Departments to determine which departments best suit VOIP. They will also be determining the savings by using t-1s instead of landlines and will be explaining the differences the Departments can expect when the County switches to t-1 lines. Alissa has also taken part in the analysis of the IMR and how it is working in relationship to the expenses incurred to install and maintain thus far. There is no conclusion to date.