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NEWSBRIEFS

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Lions Club To Host Easter Egg Hunt

The Okawville Lions Club will be holding their annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 28, 2009 at Noon, following the lunch with the Easter Bunny.

The event will take place at the Okawville Jr./Sr. High School. All children, from preschool through 3rd grade, are invited to attend.

There will be candy filled eggs and cash prizes.

Immanuel Lutheran To Host Breakfast Sunday

Immanuel Lutheran will host its annual benefit breakfast Sunday, March 29 at the school gym. Serving is from 7:30 to 12:30. Tickets are \$5.50 in advance and \$6 at the door.

Chamber Hosts "Celebrate Spring", Bunny Lunch

The Okawville Area Chamber of Commerce will host "Celebrate Spring", Saturday, March 28 with a Easter Bunny Lunch and other activities.

The lunch starts at 10 a.m. at The Original Springs Hotel. The Rainbow Ranch will have live bunnies and lambs for children to pet, and the Okawville High FCCLA will lead crafts.

Make lunch reservations at 243-5234 or 243-5694.

The Heritage House Museum will have a bake sale at the CBI, and participating businesses will have discounts.

Mr. Okawville Pageant To Be Held Friday

The Okawville High Student Council will host the Mr. Okawville Pageant Friday, March 27 at the Luechtefeld Gym.

The pageant will start about 7:30, after the faculty-student basketball game at 6:30.

Candidates are: Brian Martens, Cullan Barkau, Nick Frederick, Sam Lake, Tyler Isringhaus, and Matt Pille.

They will be judged in formal wear, swimwear, spirit wear, and talent.

Retiring king Jordan Kuhlengel will crown the new king.

Admission of \$6 in advance and \$8 at the door will benefit the Student Council American Cancer Society Relay For Life teams.

Space Remains For Trivia Teams

Teams are still needed for the Trivia Night Friday, March 27 to benefit Washington County Senior Services.

It will begin at 7 p.m. at the Roland Barkau Memorial Golf Course.

A prize will be given for the best decorated table.

Thrivent Financial For Lutherans is a co-sponsor, and will provide additional funding.

Contact sponsors Debby Stricker, Donna Crundwell, or Debbie Barkau to register a team.

Zoning Change To Be Discussed At Hearing

A hearing will be held Thursday, March 16 at 8 p.m. at the Washington County Court house to discuss the proposed zoning ordinance and map revision.

Change include stricter regulation of junked vehicles and trash.



Norbert Zinck, left, demonstrates how to plant watermelon seeds to Famous, Olifa, Catherine and Rosemond in Accra, Ghana, Africa.

Area Farmer Does Agriculture Mission Work In Africa

An area farmer's passion for helping farmers in underdeveloped countries took him to Ghana, Africa recently.

Norbert Zinck of rural Nashville went to the capital city of Accra in west Africa country to instruct at a vegetable production company.

His wife, Dona, accompanied him on the two week trip.

Zinck was a volunteer for the U.S. Agency for International Development Farmer-to-Farmer program managed by the non profit organization ACADI/VOCA.

The agency paid Zinck's expenses, and he donated his time. The Zincks also paid for Dona's plane ticket.

Both Norbert and Dona showed the Africans how to use plant seeds and use insecticide and fertilizer in producing high-yielding lettuce, tomatoes, and watermelons.

Dona Zinck also took notes for their detailed reports to the U.S. and Ghana governments.

Zinck donated a soil testing kit and instruction books on planting. He also brought

along a book about chemicals donated by Willie Harriss of TOP AG; an instruction book on vegetables from orchard owner Mike Henry; and garden seeds from Meyer's Greenhouse.

Zinck told the Ghanans how to use equipment to build a pond for irrigation.

Since labor is cheap and field work is done by hand, using equipment was not a factor, Zinck said.

The owner of a restaurant plans to plant vegetables on a 12 1/2 acre plot. She has 80 employees.

The ACADI/VOCA program relies on the experience of carefully selected mid-career professionals who volunteer from U.S. farms, land grant universities, cooperatives, private businesses, and non profits to respond to the local needs of farmers, businesses, and organizations in developing transitional countries.

On his days off Zinck and his wife went to the beach, a national park, and had a canopy tour in the rain forest. They also toured an old slave house on the Ivory Coast

where slaves were kept before they were shipped to the U.S.

The Zincks gave gifts of small toys and trucks, pens and paper, and stuffed animals to young children they met.

This was Zinck's twentieth volunteer assignment, and sixteenth with ACADI/VOCA. Since 1999, he has worked in Mexico, Guyana, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Macedonia, and Russia with local farmers. He has shown them technology to increase production.

Zinck, 74, explained why he donates his time and makes the long trips to foreign countries. "I like helping people. This makes good relations between countries. People tell me "America is a good country to send you here", he said.

Zinck has no plans for future mission trips, and this could have been the last. If this was the last one, it was mainly the long flights that led him to stop.

But his family is skeptical that this was the last mission trip. "We've heard this before," they told him.

Zinck still farms and operates a welding shop on his farm.

Metro East Recycling Opens in Nashville

Metro East Recycling has opened a business in Nashville at 610 East National Mine Road, near AgriPride.

The business pays for scrap metal and iron, aluminum, brass, copper, old appliances, and farm equipment.

Metro East is also applying for a license to buy old vehicles.

Owners Gary Mordis of Collinsville and Fred Parsons of Troy also have facilities in Vandalia, Collinsville, and Madison. They opened the first business in Collinsville three years ago.

Mordis said that they expanded to Nashville because there is not another recycling center within twenty miles.

The decline in the economy has driven down all metal prices, Mordis said. Iron has dropped from \$300 to \$50 a ton. The price paid for aluminum cans has dropped from 80 cents to 30 cents a pound.

When the recycling market recovers, the business will take paper/cardboard and plastics.

Metro East Recycling is open Mondays to Fridays from 8:30 to 5 and Saturday from 9 to noon.

Riechmann Farm Equipment Auction Draws Its Biggest Crowd Ever

The Riechmann Farm Consignment Auction Saturday drew the largest crowd and sold the most equipment in its 22 year history.

It issued 2,490 bid numbers, for an estimated crowd of 5,000 at the Community Club Park. Higher than ever food sales also indicate the largest crowd ever.

Good weather and a strong farm economy likely contributed to the record-breaking crowd.

Sellers brought their equipment to get the best price from a large pool of bidders. Bidders came to get a bargain out of the large amount of equipment sold.

"Sellers said it sold too cheap. Buyers said it sold for too much," said auctioneer Loyd Riechmann.

Bidders came from throughout the Midwest, Georgia, Pennsylvania, North and South Carolina, as well as regulars from Belize in Central America and mid Mexico. The Belize farmer who flew here went back to get a truck for the 7 day one-way trip to haul the equipment home.

Throughout the years the number of Amish attending has increased, said Loyd Riechmann. Amish come from the Ava, and Belle Rive area in Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, and Kentucky. Some hire drivers to bring them, while others come in tractors with a trailer.

It is the economics of consolidating many auctions that draw such a large crowd, said

people to call for and record bids, take bids sheets to the cashier, issue numbers, and cashier. Staff also worked days before and after the auction to move in and load equipment.

The Consignment Auction also brings exposure to Riechmann Bros. John Deere, owned by Loyd and his brother, Bill, and their families. "We get acquainted, and they do business at Riechmann," Loyd said.

Riechmann also conducts a farm auction in August.

It Takes A Village

The Community Club relies on volunteers from the community to help operate the food service for Riechmann's Farm Equipment Auction.

Over a hundred people worked Saturday at the food stands inside and outside, and preparing food.

That includes about fifty members and their spouses, and others who help the club for the day, said Club treasurer Leonard Hemminghaus.

"We couldn't do it without them," said Hemminghaus. "It takes a community working together on a project like this. Only small towns can do this."

Farmers may come to bid on the equipment, but food service is needed to keep them there.

The Community Club sold 19 roasters of chili, 480 pounds of bratwurst, 260 pounds of fish, plus hot dogs, ham and

School District Extends Bus Contract

The West Washington County Unit District extended a bus contract with Adrian Lehde Bus for three years. The rate increased from \$1.70 to \$1.80 a mile for bus routes, and \$1.36 to \$1.40 for sports events/field trips.

Based on the fluctuation of the price of gas, the district can be charged up to an extra \$10,000 a year for bus-ing.

Superintendent Scott Fuhrhop said that the music performance at the Fine Arts Festival for county schools held at Okawville was excellent, but there was low attendance of parents.

The board awarded a mowing contract to Randy Vasquez Mowing for the Grade School, at \$68 a mowing and the Junior/Senior High, at \$115 a mowing. Stan Dace, who formerly mowed at the JH/SH, did not submit a bid.

Junior/Senior High principal Leon Spinka reported that the \$13,500 received for the state textbook program will be used to replace high and junior high American History books, and some of the world history and world geography books. They will replace 5 to 10 year old books.

The board extended a contract with QNS for technology support at a decrease because of committing to a longer contract. The district's charge was reduced from

\$1.44 to \$1.28 per computer per month, for a total of \$25,000 a year.

Board member Toby Brown compiled a list of all the suggestions people made about what they want in a new K-12 school at a special meeting Tuesday. Superintendent Fuhrhop thanked him for conducting the meeting, and presenting the information.

The board extended the contract of Superintendent Fuhrhop for the 2009-2010 year. Tenure was given to teachers Christy Pannier and Kathy Holm. Tenure is given after four years teaching.

Third grade teacher Denise Dodd was released at the end of the school year. This is her third year in the district.

Superintendent Fuhrhop reported that he and Board President Ron Recker had a tour of the Prairie State Energy Campus under construction. "It is the most impressive thing I've seen in my life," he said.

Prairie State will be part of the community through the Junior Achievement program of speaking to classes, Fuhrhop said. The company also wants to work with Vocational Education classes for employment at Prairie State.

The board set the school calendar for the 2009-2010 school year, starting August 17 with a teachers' institute and August 18 first day for students. The school year will end May 26, or sooner, if all the

snow days are not used.

They read the new state policy on cell phone/Internet safety, preventing credit card rewards for personal use, and allowing Family and Medical Leave to take care of injured military.

Junior/Senior High Principal Leon Spinka reported that the Illinois State Police presented a program on cell phone and Internet safety. He said that the student reaction was that "it wasn't blunt enough." A "Project Safe" program about the subject was presented March 24-25.

Spinka also reported that the WYSE Team placed second in the Sectional, and will advance to state competition, and the math team won first at Math Field Day. Fifteen to twenty students are attending the ACT practice sessions, Spinka said.

Grade School Principal Dustin Nail reported that 36 will register for kindergarten next year. That is two more than in the fifth grade, which will transfer as sixth graders to the JH/SH. He also gave a schedule of spring events.

Superintendent Fuhrhop commended the girls' basketball team for winning the regional and boys' team for winning the sectional. Players conducted themselves with class, he said.

The district will review the three applications for construction manager of the new school.

Following discussion in closed session, the board upheld six suspensions.



Ray Barr and Ted Krauskopf of Highland load a cultivator they bought.

Riechmann. The service can spend more on advertising to reach a larger audience for a larger auction.

"We can draw more than 4,000 people to a sale, instead of 400," Riechmann said.

With the number of farmers dwindling, it is even more important to draw from a larger area, Riechmann said.

The condition of the equipment is also a big draw. "The machinery is well cared for. The 'Scrubby Dutch' keep it clean," Riechmann said.

The Auction Saturday had complete sales of 15 farmers, plus pieces of equipment from over a hundred other farmers.

While the auction brings buyers from several states, the sellers are mainly from Southern Illinois and Southeast Missouri, Riechmann said.

To sell hundreds of pieces of equipment grouped by type, as many as four auction rings operate in different areas at the same time. The auction started at 9 a.m., and the last piece of equipment was sold at 6:10 p.m.

Riechmann Auction Service had manpower of about 25

dance sandwiches, over a hundred cases of soda, and over 25 cases of water. Members and volunteers brought over a hundred pie/desserts, which lated to mid afternoon.

Roy and Betty Brammeier chair the food stand, working days before the sale to get the supplies and prepare food, with the help of others.

The food stand at Riechmann's Auctions is the largest fund-raiser of the club. While the Wheat Festival the club co-hosts with the Lions Club may have a higher gross, it also has higher operating costs of entertainment, parade, and advertising.

The income from the food stand has enabled the Community Club to pay off its building early, which had a loan of over \$200,000 when it was built 14 year ago, and cover rising operating costs.

The Community Club Park is privately owned, so it receives no tax money, and pays over \$2,000 in real estate taxes.

The club always welcomes new members, said Hemming-