

JAC Bay 4-13-17

INSIDE IOWA

TODAY

News of
Interest

Friday,
March 24,
2017

Growing Tama County



By Heath Kellogg
Executive Director
Tama County
Economic Development

A guy's car breaks down on a rural road on the way to a job interview. He curses his luck, gets out, pops the hood and peers into the smoking engine. After a few moments with no success, he hears someone say

"Reckon it's your spark-plugs, mate."

The man looks up and around, wondering who is speaking - nobody there. He goes back to poking around under the hood when, once again

"Buddy. It's your spark plugs."

The man looks up again and sees nobody, just a brown horse and a black horse peering over the nearby fence at him. He looks back under his hood when he hears again

"Are you an idiot? It's your spark-plugs!"

He looks up once more and sees the black horse rearing up on its hind-legs and shouting at him "It's your spark-plugs! Your spark-plugs!"

The guy, in a fit of panic, seizes his briefcase from his back seat just as the horse leaps the fence and starts walking toward the car. The man sprints away down the road in the opposite direction until he comes to a nearby small village. Shaking, feeling sick, he tells the local mechanic where he left the vehicle and arranges for him to pick it up and fix it for twice the usual rate. He briefly considers going to the police, but decides no one will believe him. He instead ducks into the nearest pub and sits down in the corner. Eventually, he plucks up the courage to get himself a drink

"You okay buddy, you look like you've seen a ghost. What's the matter?" asks the bartender. The man considers telling his story and decides to go ahead with it. The bartender listens intently, and finally, as the man's story comes to its conclusion he says "That's amazing! That's incredible. Two horses up the road, you say?"

"Yeah," replies the man. "Scared me half to death."

"Two horses. A black one and a brown one?"

"Yeah."

"And it was the black one who mentioned your spark plugs?"

"Yeah," replies the man, wondering where the bartender is going with this.

"No, that's good!" exclaims the bartender, relieved. "The brown one doesn't know anything about cars."

I realize that the solutions to many of our problems in Tama County today will not likely come from yelling horses. It seems strange to even have to ask this most basic of questions - "What's the problem?" In our fast paced day-to-day often we are so busy finding solutions to problems that haven't been defined. It was Wayne Cordeiro that said "You cannot rectify problems if you deny that they exist".

Spend the next week, and take the time to notice all that is good and all that isn't in and around our county. Be honest and really look. I think you'll start to see that the solutions are right there in front of us.

Don't be alarmed if you hear a black horse yelling about spark plugs - he knows what he's talking about. :)



TAMA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

Tama SWCD observes 75th Anniversary



Tama Soil & Water Conservation District (Tama SWCD) celebrated its 75th anniversary on January 21, 2017, and the District has witnessed many changes through the years.

Tama SWCD was established on

January 21, 1942 for the purpose of preserving the natural resources of this county. Its first goals were to educate farmers of the need for contoured row patterns and commercial fertilizer. Bromegrass and birdsfoot trefoil were introduced in order to improve pastures.

During WWII, District Commissioners worked with the Agricultural Adjustment Act Committee (now USDA-Farm Service Agency) in establishing production goals. The 1950s found Tama SWCD beginning to help the Committee administer federal conservation programs. Farming practices started making major changes in the 1960s—graded terraces began to be installed, and farmers experimented with minimum tillage practices.

In the 1970s, new statewide soil loss laws

were first tested in Tama County, state cost-share programs began, tile outlet terraces were introduced, and increased state and federal interest in water quality and soil conservation expanded the duties of District Commissioners. The District established an education committee, beginning its commitment to provide outdoor education to future generations. This committee initiated an annual fifth grade outdoor classroom in 1974 and the annual distribution of tree seedlings to sixth graders in 1981, both activities continued to this day.

Watershed Projects

The first of Tama SWCD's many watershed projects began in the 1980s, finding the District establishing partnerships with numerous state and federal agencies. Iowa State University watershed research studies were conducted. The District cooperated with local implement dealers to make interseeders and no-till planters available for producers, and the first District-owned machinery was purchased for public use in order to encourage conservation practices.

More recent changes in the agricultural industry include a shift to fewer but larger farming and livestock operations. Both appear to have locally increased pressure on row crop production, sometimes to the detriment of our county's soil conservation and water quality efforts. However, increased focus on soil

health, water quality, and the importance of wetlands and crop diversification finds us rediscovering lessons learned by generations long past and holding new hope for the future.

None of the District's efforts of the past 75 years could have been possible without the fortitude, curiosity, and dedication of countless men and women throughout Tama County. Its immeasurable gratitude goes to them—the innovators, the role models, the protectors of our county's soil and water resources.

Commissioners, Assistants

Special thanks go to those who have served as Tama Soil & Water District Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners: E.P. Skrable, Robert Lyon, Fred Bruene, William Kremenak, Clifford Ryan, George Kos, Forrest Hill, John Norton, Robert Smith, George Hauser, Howard Lyon, Harold Higgins, Robert Smith, Harold Stump, Melvin Kupka, Lester Lenhart, J. Harry Scurr, Robert Wiese, Joe Lyon, Welby Dixon, Ken Bruene, Robert Fontinel, Dan Bruene, Larry Lorenzen, Dave McMillan, Frank Bro, Rich Havran, Russell Lyon, Patricia Kadmas, Ferd Kvidera, Dennis Emke, Yvette Berner, Melody Bro, Dennis Wieben, Stanley Dostal, Cathy Wiecek, Andy Chyma, Rollie Haynes, David Beane, Dean McKenna, Chris Behrens, Jody Kasal, Jeff Bruene, Mike Snider, Chad Mussig, and John Kopriwa.



Iowa's 100 SWCDs are each governed by five commissioners who are publicly elected on a non-partisan basis for staggered four-year terms. Only one commissioner may serve from any one township. Tama SWCD's 2016 commissioners were (left to right) John Kopriwa (Perry Township), Lou Ellen Brown (Indian Village Township), Jack Boyer (Grant Township), Jan Wobeter (Otter Creek Township) and Dean McKenna (Clark Township). Many thanks to Dean and John for their many years of service! Their replacements were elected in the November 2016 General Election and began service in January 2017: Jennifer Vazquez-Koster (Richland Township) and Al Schafbuch (Clark Township).

RIGHT- Cole Moody of Dysart received Tama SWCD's 2016 scholarship for graduating high school seniors furthering their education in agriculture or natural resources. He was presented with two scholarships on his senior awards night last spring, \$300 from the District and \$600 from Conservation Districts of Iowa as its Region 7 winner. Cole is currently majoring in Agriculture and Society at Iowa State University.



RIGHT- Tama SWCD hosts several outreach events throughout the year. Here Todd Hinegardner of Montour's North Star Fish Hatchery discusses fish biology with 237 fifth graders from five Tama County school districts at Tama SWCD's 5th Grade Outdoor Classroom at Otter Creek Park last May.





-Larry Stone photo

Whannel Farms/David and Pam McKinley, Landowner/Tenant Award; Tama SWCD's 2016 Landowner/Tenant Award was presented to Larry and Margaret Stone of Elkader and their operators, David and Pam McKinley of rural Traer. The Whannel family farm, owned by Margaret and her brothers, features numerous conservation practices. Highlights include native grass strips on the farm's crop ground, wildlife habitat and CRP wetland practices in the Wolf Creek floodplain.



ABOVE AND BELOW: J. Harry and Janet Scurr, Established Windbreak Award: Tama SWCD's 2016 Established Windbreak Award was presented to J. Harry and Janet Scurr of rural Gilman. Their heavily-wooded farmstead features an evergreen windbreak to protect their home and several acres of trees which remain from a Christmas tree plantation. Harry is a former Tama SWCD Commissioner and is a Past President of the Iowa Association of Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners.

2016 Tama County Soil And Conservation Award Winners



Marshall and Diane Mussig, New Windbreak Award: Marshall and Diane Mussig of rural Gladbrook received Tama SWCD's 2016 New Windbreak Award for the CRP shelterbelt on the north side of their farmstead. Windward shrubs begin the process of slowing winter winds, followed by a snow catch of native grasses and flowers and finally rows of evergreens closest to their home.



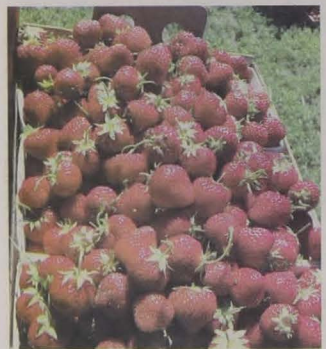
ADDITIONAL WINNERS- PAGE 3



LEFT: David and Julie Hinegardner, Local Production Award: David and Julie Hinegardner, rural Montour, received Tama SWCD's Local Production Award in the award's inaugural year. Their orchard has been family-operated since 1960 and has grown to about 3,000 apple trees in 22 varieties. In addition to the orchard, the Hinegardners' other fresh produce ventures include pears, strawberries, raspberries, melons, squash, and pumpkins.



LEFT, ABOVE: Matt and Ann Jackson, Soil Health Award: The recipients of Tama SWCD's 2016 Soil Health Award were Matt and Ann Jackson of rural Garvin. Matt was an Early Adopter of cover crops during the recent revival of this conservation practice and partners cover crops with other management strategies such as no-till. He has also served as a cover crop mentor for many other area farmers and has taken great strides to educate others about this practice.



Retriever Haven Hunting Club LC, Wildlife Award: Retriever Haven Hunting Club, located south of Tama, is truly a wildlife mecca. The LC, comprised of four owners primarily from the Cedar Rapids area, has improved the property's wildlife habitat with practices such as food plots and wetland development. Here Jeff Dunham is shown after a successful fall pheasant hunt.

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AWARD WINNERS

LEFT: Mark Pokorny, Friend of Conservation: As a farmer and former employee of Tama SWCD, Mark Pokorny of rural Clutier is very familiar with conservation practices. Among other conservation management tools, Mark has seeded cover crops for several years and has been a long-term cover crop research partner with Practical Farmers of Iowa. He is also a contractor for the SWCD and operates the District's no-till native drill to seed and interseed CRP plantings, small grains, grassed waterways and cover crops for area farmers. With his extensive cover crop experience, Mark has served as a cover crop mentor and conservation ambassador for many years.



Scott Shadden, Owner/Operator Award: Scott Shadden of rural Tama received Tama SWCD's 2016 Owner/Operator Award. Scott's farming operation includes dedicating his home farm to organic certification. He utilizes many conservation practices in this farm's management plan, including cover crops, field borders, terraces, grassed waterways and more.

RIGHT: Each spring, Tama SWCD joins the nation in celebrating Soil & Water Stewardship Week by sponsoring a grocery sack decorating contest. The contest's 2016 theme was "We All Need Trees," and the contest drew 288 entries from third, fourth and fifth graders from throughout the county. Here county-wide winner Shantell Berth of Dysart-Geneseo Elementary displays her winning artwork. The decorated paper grocery sacks shared the year's theme at Terry's Food Center in Dysart, Home-town Foods in Traer, Trunk's in Reinbeck and Fareway in Toledo.



Since 1981, Tama SWCD has donated tree seedlings to the county's sixth graders each spring. 348 sixth graders received seedlings last year. Tama SWCD also donated 75 seedlings to Green Mountain-Garwin's elementary campus and 58 seedlings to the Tama County Conservation Board for use in its public areas throughout the county.

Benton/Tama Nutrient Reduction Project

By Shelby Williams

The Benton/Tama Project is located within the watersheds of Rock, Pratt, and lower Wolf creeks within Benton, Black Hawk, and Tama Counties. The primary objective is to demonstrate and implement nutrient reduction practices, as identified in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, on cropland acres. Phase II of the project will focus on implementing the Watershed Improvement Plan developed in 2015 by the Iowa Soybean Association. The Benton/Tama Project is working with partnerships within the Middle Cedar Watershed to improve water quality through nutrient management, best management practice implementation, and increased soil health. The goal of the Benton/Tama Project is to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus from nonpoint sources. This includes implementing best management practices in the project area, and continuing outreach, education, and monitoring. Increasing cropland cover, soil health, and edge of field practices are key components to accomplishing the goals of the project.

Financial assistance will be provided for fall Nitropryrin application, conservation tillage practices, prairie strips, structural edge of field practices, and cover crops. Administrative and financial assistance will be provided by the Benton County SWCD. Additional technical assistance will be provided by NRCS and IDALS. Other opportunities in the project area include EQIP, RCPP, IFIP, state WOI.

In Phase I the project accomplished 2 saturated buffers, 7000 acres of cover crops, 2800 acres of no till, 930 acres of strip till, 580 acres of mulch/minimum till, 2200 acres of moving fall-applied nitrogen to spring-applied nitrogen, 80 acres of nitrogen side-dress, 1800 acres of nitrification inhibitor, 850 acres of phosphorus applied based on soil test and 280 acres of phosphorus band applied.

Tama SWCD hosted four Women, Land & Legacy (WLL) events in 2016, including this June 2 tour of the Meskwaki Nation's Red Earth Gardens. This local WLL project has hosted 29 events since it began in 2007, serving 248 women and men from in and around Tama County. Its next event will be "What's the Buzz? Bees 101" in Gladbrook on April 6.



ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT Tama Soil & Water Conservation District State Fiscal Year 2015-2016

Revolving Fund	
Balance on hand July 1, 2015	\$54,569.18
Receipts	\$186,612.91
Expenditures	-\$99,343.71
Balance on hand June 30, 2016	\$141,838.38
District Employee Fund	
Balance on hand July 1, 2015	\$17,729.61
Receipts	\$9,667.98
Expenditures	-\$11,743.66
Balance on hand June 30, 2016	\$15,653.93
Certificates of Deposit	
Balance on hand July 1, 2015	\$18,347.45
Interest Accrued	\$39.94
Expenditures	-\$0.00
Value June 30, 2016	\$18,387.39

Iowa Financial Incentives Program: Cost Share	
SFY 15 Obligated Carryover	\$60,275.30
SFY16 Allocation	\$44,416.25
Transferred/Recalled	-\$9,948.64
Spent/Obligated	-\$94,742.91
Balance as of June 30, 2016	\$ 0.00

Iowa Financial Incentives Program: Management Practices	
SFY 15 Obligated Carryover	\$1,000.00
SFY16 Allocation	\$0.00
Transferred/Recalled	-\$1,000.00
Spent/Obligated	-\$0.00
Balance as of June 30, 2016	\$ 0.00

Resource Enhancement and Protection Program: Forestry/Native Grasses	
SFY 15 Obligated Carryover	\$4,493.87
SFY16 Allocation	\$3,357.41
Transferred/Recalled	-\$2,222.67
Spent/Obligated	-\$5,628.61
Balance as of June 30, 2016	\$ 0.00

Resource Enhancement and Protection Program: Practices	
SFY 15 Obligated Carryover	\$9,612.00
SFY16 Allocation	\$10,061.47
Transferred/Recalled	-\$2,859.96
Spent/Obligated	-\$16,813.51
Balance as of June 30, 2016	\$ 0.00

Cost-share expended also included state-controlled funding: \$17,608.60 of Water Quality Initiative-Statewide and \$44,515.42 of Water Quality Initiative-Demonstration Projects.

Practices Applied to the Land- All Cost-share Sources

Cover Crop	1,881.64	ac
Grade Stabilization Structure	1	no
Grassed Waterway	8.04	ac
Nitrogen Spring Pre-Plant	518.82	ac
Nitrogen Split Application	46	ac
Nitrogen Inhibitor	381.5	ac
No-till/Strip Till	1,680.17	ac
Phosphorus Band Applied	76	ac
Phosphorus Rate at Crop Removal	46	ac
Water & Sediment Control Basin	1	no
Windbreak	9	ac

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