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ENVIRONMENT

Plea for preservation

14,535	\$264 MILLION	\$220 MILLION	Shortfall in REAP funding from state, report says Source: Iowa Policy Project
Number of Iowa projects benefiting from REAP funds.	State money committed since program started in 1988		

Thistles and black-eyed Susans grow in a 35-acre native prairie planting at Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area near Palo. The prairie restoration was paid for in part by Iowa's Resource Enhancement and Protection program, which the Iowa Policy Project says has been underfunded for 25 years.

Report touts Linn County projects in making case for more funding

By **Orian Love**, The Gazette

Linn County has been greatly enriched by a multitude of projects paid for in part by more than \$6 million in state Resource Enhancement and Protection funds since 1989, according to the authors of a report released Monday by Iowa Policy Project.

"This program has done an awful lot for Linn County and the state, and it could do a lot more if it were ever fully funded," said report co-author David Osterberg, who as a state representative co-sponsored the legislation authorizing REAP in 1988.

While the report highlights Linn County projects, similar benefits have accrued to the state's 98 other counties, said Osterberg, the Iowa Policy Project's former director.

"Our hope is that Iowans around the state will see the impact of REAP more clearly in local projects that have been funded or supported this way," said co-author Katie Gandhi.

The report notes that the Legislature initially set REAP spending authority at \$30 million a year, but funding reached the \$20 million mark only once, causing a long-term shortfall of more than \$220 million.



Wildflowers are in bloom Monday in a 35-acre native prairie planting at Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area near Palo.

For the new fiscal year, lawmakers appropriated \$16 million, same as last year.

Despite the gap, the state has invested \$264 million in the program, helping to pay for 14,535 projects ranging from conservation education, soil and water enhancement and roadside plantings to parks, land acquisitions and historic resources.

In Linn County, much of the funding is channeled through the Conservation Department, which since 1989 has invested \$1.25 million in REAP funds for

► **REAP, PAGE 11A**

HIGHER EDUCATION

Iowa grad, loan default rates better than most

Poor results from for-profit colleges drag down state's overall rates, data shows

By **Vanessa Miller**, The Gazette

The nationwide average for students graduating with a higher education degree within six years is barely more than half, 55 percent, but Iowa is among a handful of states that do much better. Iowa's statewide rate for getting a four-year degree

within that time frame is 63 percent, federal data show. For the state's public universities alone, the rate is higher — at 68 percent, according to the 2013 completion rates.

At the same time, the percentage of those who defaulted on student loans within about three years at Iowa's public universities was 5 percent — less than half the U.S. rate of 11 percent.

But U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said Monday in a conference call

with reporters that officials can do better to improve both graduation rates and student debt levels — from university leaders to state and federal lawmakers.

"We all need to be a part of the solution," he said after speaking on the topic at the University of Maryland.

He encouraged college accreditors to focus on student outcomes and raise the bar for quality. He pushed states to spend more on higher education and promote reforms

for student success. And he urged Congress to protect students from "unscrupulous" career colleges that deceive students into taking on debt they will never be able to repay.

Iowa's private institutions did well in national rankings for graduation and default rates, at 62 percent and 6 percent respectively.

But Iowa's overall averages were brought down

► **RATES, PAGE 11A**

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police getting license scanners

ACLU raises cautions; Cedar Rapids chief says plate readers catch lawbreakers

By **Rick Smith**, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — Odds here are moving against you if you're behind the wheel of a stolen vehicle, driving without a license or being sought on a criminal warrant.

The City Council is slated today to approve a police request to purchase two automatic license-plate readers, which will be placed on squad cars, be able to scan every license plate they pass and alert officers of any potential criminal issues involving the car or its owner.

Police Chief Wayne Jerman said Monday he expected officers in cruisers with the readers to get "his frequently" — making it easier to arrest people living or moving through town who are wanted by the law.

"That's why we're acquiring them," he said. "If they are wanted for committing a

► **SCANNERS, PAGE 11A**

OBITUARY



CRST
Herald and Miriam Smith founded CRST International in 1955.

Founder of CRST dies at 91 after 'great life'

Herald Smith and his wife launched trucking company from used chicken coop

By **George C. Ford**, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — Herald Smith, who with his wife, Miriam, founded CRST International in Cedar Rapids in 1955, died Monday morning in Ellison Bay, Wis.

Smith, 91, launched Cedar Rapids Steel Transport with a \$125 used chicken coop as an office behind a service station in southwest Cedar Rapids. After getting a phone and electricity installed, Smith lined up drivers to backhaul steel to Cedar Rapids manufacturers from Chicago.

► **SMITH, PAGE 11A**



VOL. 133 NO. 200

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• BUSINESS 380..... 12A	• COMMUNITY..... 7A	• LOTTERY..... 8A	• SPORTS..... 1B
• CLASSIFIEDS..... 6B	• DEAR ABBY..... 12B	• PUZZLES..... 12B	• TV..... 11B
• COMICS..... 14A	• DEATHS..... 10A	• RIVER LEVELS..... 8A	• WEATHER..... 11B

JOSEPH VIKTOR
Mount Vernon

Joseph Viktor, 66, of Mount Vernon, died Sunday, July 26, 2015, at the Solon Care Center. Funeral service: 10 a.m. Thursday, July 30, at Stewart Baxter Funeral & Memorial Services, Mount Vernon, by Celebrant Mary Morgan. Visitation: 4 to 7 p.m. Wednesday at the funeral home. Burial: Campbell Cemetery, Bertram. Attendees are invited to a luncheon following the funeral service.

Joe was born, Feb. 17, 1949, in Cedar Rapids, to Joseph and Ruthann (Biderman) Viktor. He worked in maintenance at Rockwell Collins for many years. He enjoyed fishing, cooking and grilling, watching cooking shows, driving around in his beloved truck and giving people a hard time, especially at the Solon



Care Center where he kept the staff on their toes. He was always there to help friends whether they needed a ride or just a good laugh. Joe always spoke highly of his daughter, Marie, whom he loved very much. Survivors include his daughter, Marie (Mike Novak) Viktor of Mount Vernon; and former spouse and friend, Deloras Viktor of Mount Vernon.

Joe was preceded in death by his parents. Memorials may be made to the American Heart Association.

Please share your support and memories with Joe's family on his tribute wall at www.stewartbaxter.com under obituaries.

SHERRY SNYDER
Tipton

Sherry K. Snyder, 71, of Tipton, passed away Sunday, July 26, 2015, at Mercy Iowa City. Graveside memorial services will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday, July 30, at Tipton Masonic Cemetery with the Rev. Ronald Lashmit officiating. A light luncheon will be held at the funeral home following. A gathering of family and friends will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. Wednesday at Fry Funeral Home in Tipton.

To honor Sherry's memory, a memorial has been created for the Cedar County Historical Society, D.A.R., Soldiers Monument, Backpack Buddies and the Lutheran Vacation Bible School Program.

Online condolences may be shared at www.fryfuneralhome.com.

Sherry was born on May 18, 1944, in Mercy Iowa City, Iowa. She was raised by her mother and stepfather, Paul and Doris Osborn. Sherry graduated



from Tipton High School and was a member of the class of 1962. Sherry was the manager of Community Action (Iowa East Central T.R.A.I.N.), a member of the Trinity Lutheran Church, Cedar County Historical Society, D.A.R. and was a supporter of the Back Pack Buddy Program.

Sherry is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Paul and Julie Kenney; grandchildren, Jacob Kenney (fiancee Sadie Hay) and Kaitlyn Kenney of Round Lake Beach, Ill.; and her niece, Samantha (Dann) Zieglesky and their children, Brandon Smith and Ayla Zieglesky, all of Tipton.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Paul and Doris Osborn; sister, Randi Smith; and husband, George Snyder.

Rates/Education
secretary pushes for models based on performance

► FROM PAGE 1A

by worse-than-average results from for-profit higher education institutions.

Iowa's for-profit graduation rate was only 29 percent, while its default rate was 20 percent, according to the data.

In his comments, Duncan referred to the "performance-based funding" models dozens of states are using to make at least some allocation decisions, and he pushed for more to follow suit.

"We need to build on that momentum and progress," he said.

The issue of performance-based funding is a hot one in Iowa.

The Board of Regents last year proposed a performance-based model that would have tied a majority of state support to resident enrollment and smaller percentages to progress, attainment, access and research.

That proposal by the regents could have pulled almost \$13 million from the University of Iowa and redistributed it to Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa in the first year, although the board asked lawmakers to backfill that \$13 million.

But legislators rejected the funding model.

They cited concerns with how it prioritized graduate programs and seemed to pit the three universities against one another and against private and community colleges.

In Duncan's comments, he advocated performance metrics that focus on results — like time to graduation and reducing debt.

Duncan said college graduates with a bachelor's degree typically earn 66 percent more than those with only a high school diploma. And, he said, the average worker with a bachelor's degree earns about \$1 million more over the course of a lifetime.

By 2020, about two-thirds of job openings will require postsecondary education, according to Duncan. At the same time, he said, college never has been more expensive — tuition at four-year colleges has more than doubled during the past three decades.

For Iowa's regent universities, the portion of general education funding from state appropriations dropped from 77.4 percent in 1981 to 34.7 percent in the last budget year. Conversely, the percent coming from tuition increased from 20.8 to 50.7 percent.

REAP/Has helped fund many E. Iowa projects

► FROM PAGE 1A

capital improvements and \$1.12 million for acquisitions.

"For us, REAP has been incredibly important," said Linn County Conservation Deputy Director Dennis Goemaat.

"It has been the catalyst to get a lot of projects going — the seed money to leverage funds from other sources," he said.

One of the notable capital improvements was the 2012 installation of the Mary Lundy Memorial Trail Bridge, a \$1.6 million project honoring the late legislator that connects two sides of Pinicon Ridge Park separated by the Wapsipinicon River.

REAP funding also contributed to Linn



Prairie restoration at Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area near Palo was paid for, in part, by Iowa's Resource Enhancement and Protection program, known as REAP. Money through REAP also has helped pay for historic preservation projects.

County's acquisition of 1,250 acres, including parcels at Pinicon Ridge Park, Matsell Bridge Natural Area, Morgan Creek Park and Wickiup Hill Natural Area.

And REAP funds helped pay for expan-

sions at Palisades-Kepler State Park and Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area, as well as the acquisition of parcels by municipalities.

Marion, for example, leveraged REAP funds to acquire 110 wooded

acres that became the Faulkes Heritage Woods, and Cedar Rapids did likewise in acquiring the 28-acre Veeney Woods.

REAP funds have assisted several local historic preservation projects including textile restoration efforts at the National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library after the fire of 2008.

REAP funding has been instrumental in the successful completion of more than 150 Linn County projects, the report stated.

The value of such projects, though hard to quantify, is self-evident, according to Osberg.

With full funding, "we could do so much more, and so much better," he said.

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Scanners/Careful use urged

► FROM PAGE 1A

crime, then they need to be held accountable for the crime they are wanted for."

Linn County has about 2,600 active criminal warrants, said Sheriff Brian Gardner, and the readers would also tie into a national database.

Law enforcement in Des Moines and Sioux City already use them. Jerman said he intends to have a policy in place to dictate how the readers are used by the time they go into operation in late summer or early fall. He is reviewing policies from other departments and recommended policies from the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa.

Veronica Fowler, spokeswoman for the ACLU of Iowa, said her organization has advised that plate reading technology be used "in

a narrow and carefully regulated way."

Jerman was an advocate for readers when he became chief here in 2012 after having experienced them as chief of the Field Service Bureau at the Montgomery County, Md., Police Department.

"A number of the officers — I hate to use the term fight — but they would try to fight for vehicles equipped with license-plate readers because of the ease that it allowed them to identify and locate wanted people ...," the chief said.

He said that included drivers with suspended or revoked licenses, unregistered vehicles, stolen vehicles and people with arrest warrants. Jerman declined to compare the use of plate readers with the city's network of traffic enforcement cameras, which a group of local motorists sued the city over, claiming, in part, that the cameras took away their freedom to

drive on the highway.

Cedar Rapids also is embroiled in litigation it initiated, fighting the Iowa Department of Transportation over the city's use of the traffic enforcement cameras.

However, Jerman said he doesn't understand the argument plate readers endorse on a person's rights.

"It's not depriving anybody of the right to privacy," he said. "... There's nothing different from if I was to position an officer with a pad of paper and a pencil to write down every license plate that passed the officer and have the officer check all available law databases for that plate."

The only difference is that we are taking advantage of the technology that is available today and using the technology to increase our efficiency."

The ACLU's recommended policy calls for the readers to be used only on plates "exposed

to public view," including those on public streets, on private property visible from a street or in a place that the public can access, such as a parking lot.

Jerman said he plans to use the license-plate readers in parking lots and on the street.

City Council member Justin Shields, chairman of the Public Safety and Youth Services Committee, said the plate readers will provide police with another tool to "keep ahead of the criminals."

"We have so many people coming in and out of our city all the time, and if there is a way we can identify problems, that's all we're trying to do," Shields said.

The cost of the two readers is \$31,700, \$30,000 of which is being paid by the grant, the chief said. The rest, coming from the forfeiture of criminals' assets.

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Smith/Never imagined business success

► FROM PAGE 1A

"I had been fired from a trucking company, Western Transportation, and they kept my last paycheck for a month," Smith recalled in a March interview with The Gazette. "I had to go to my dad and borrow a thousand dollars, which I needed to pay back in 90 days because he really needed it."

"I asked my wife to hold off paying the bills for a month because I needed the money to start the business."

Smith was able to get drivers to haul livestock to Chicago because he offered to pay them when they delivered their loads and showed him their receipt. Other companies forced drivers to wait as much as two weeks to obtain a check.

The privately held CRST, which now employs more than 7,000 drivers, independent contractors and office personnel, is projecting annual revenues to grow from \$1.5 billion this year to \$2.15 billion in three years.

"Smithy was a great man," said Mayor Ron Corbett, who worked for



Herald Smith, founder of CRST International in Cedar Rapids, drives a yard truck between striking truckers' rigs at the Lee Bros. truck terminal in Chicago during a strike in August 1975. To get each trailer turned around within the depot meant moving back and-forth a foot or two at a time. Smith would end the day with a double hernia from cranking the wheel of the old truck.

CRST for a decade, starting as a vice president. "He had a big impact on Cedar Rapids."

"He and his wife have been very generous to the Cedar Rapids community, just as his whole family has been. My condolences to the Smith family. He lived a great life."

In that March interview, Smith said he never envisioned the company he cofounded would have annual revenue topping \$1 billion.

"I figured when we hit \$1 million in revenue, I would just sit on that

and relax," Smith said. "When we got to \$1 million, I wanted to get to \$2 million, and when we got to \$2 million, I wanted to get to \$5 million. That's just the way it went."

John Smith, Herald's son and current chairman of CRST International, said in March his father "believed that when you see an opportunity, you go for it. I think all of us who have led the company have done that over the years."

"I also learned persistence and hard work from my dad. When you

get into business, you have to be persistent because things aren't always going to go right."

Dave Rusch, CRST president and chief executive officer, on Monday called Herald Smith "the most entrepreneurial guy that I've ever met" and said he will be remembered as an industry visionary.

"He was an icon in the transportation business," Rusch said. "He dealt with adversity after the industry was deregulated in 1980. He was a very good man, and I'm going to miss him."

The company the Smiths started have come a long way.

In June 2014, CRST announced plans for a \$37 million, 11-story tower in downtown Cedar Rapids, the first new building of any size on the riverfront since the Great America Building opened in 1998.

Slated for completion next year, the building will house CRST International's corporate headquarters with about 80 employees and the Cedar Rapids offices of Bankers Trust.

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