

**City of West
Branch
Office of the
City
Administrator**

To: Mayor and Council

From: Matt Muckler, City Administrator

Date: February 24, 2012 Weekly Council Update

- **Mill Creek Bridge:** Staff has contacted the County Engineer's Office for more information concerning the Mill Creek Bridge, located on Plum Street over Mill Creek one mile north of Clarence in Cedar County. The bridge is listed on the Iowa Department of Transportation list of *Historic Bridges of Iowa*. Their website provides the following description of the bridge:

“In June 1888 the Cedar County Board of Supervisors received a petition from citizens in Dayton Township for a new bridge over Mill Creek near the township center. The structure would carry wagon traffic on the road that extended northward from the small town of Clarence, in the north part of the county. Supervisor William Hahn viewed the proposed site and recommended that the county erect a single 66-foot iron span on pile bents. What the county built instead was a 58-foot pony truss on concrete-filled iron cylinder piers, with timber stringer approach spans. The board contracted for the bridge's construction with Ward and Keepers, who held Cedar County's annual contract for bridge construction and repair in 1888 and 1889. The Clinton-based bridge builders completed the medium-span truss in 1889. The bridge displayed typical pin-connected design and detailing for its early date; two distinguishing features are the tapered "fishtail" riveted girder floor beams and the inclined lower chords at the outer panels. Over its hundred years of use, the Mill Creek Bridge has undergone several sub-structural alterations, including construction of concrete abutments on the south, encasement of the base of the northeast cylinder with concrete, and construction of new timber pile piers beneath the approach spans. The bridge no longer carries traffic and stands abandoned, with its superstructure intact but the deck in deteriorating condition.

Completed in January 1877, the Cedar Bluff Bridge over the Cedar River was the first all-iron span in Cedar County. It was followed by four other modest iron spans later that year. By the time the supervisors undertook the Mill Creek Bridge in 1888, Cedar County had contracted for several other iron spans, including major structures over the Cedar River at Rochester and Cedar Valley. This medium-span pony truss was thus neither the earliest nor the largest all-metal wagon bridge erected by the county. However, it is today distinguished as the last remaining bridge from this formative construction period. The structure is technologically

representative for its period of construction. Comprised of a wrought iron, pinned Pratt pony truss, the bridge exemplified wagon bridge construction in Iowa in the late 19th century. One of the state's oldest pony trusses, the Mill Creek Bridge is an important remnant of early Iowa transportation [adapted from Fraser 1990].”

- **Library Public Input Forums:** The West Branch Public Library will be holding two public-input forums on April 3rd at 7pm and April 4th at 1pm as part of the building planning process. The forums will be a chance for the community to provide input to the library board of trustees on what the community wishes to see in a future library building. Input from the forum will then assist in creation of architectural drawings, room associations, decisions on what types of facilities will be included, and possibly even how many of different items, like chairs and tables, might be found in the future building. All members of the community are invited to attend the forums.

- **Public Works Update:** The cleanup of the Wapsi View Trailer Park on Second Street is nearing completion. All of the homes have been removed, trash hauled and grading has begun. Barnhart’s will return on Monday February 27th to remove the concrete slab where the steel building stood and to complete their part of the grading. There are a few more trees and some brush that will be removed on the west bank of the creek by public works staff. Once that has been completed, we will do the finish grading and seed the park area. Cleanup of the east side of the creek will follow along with cleanup of the creek itself. We will be removing bricks, concrete, and any other obstructions that have been placed in the creek along this stretch over the years. Minor grading, mowing and seeding of the east side of the creek will also take place. As soon as the weather allows we will re-grade the north end of the park and install the new sidewalk.

Staff is also working on cleaning up the city brush pile. We are chipping trees and hauling off anything that we are not able to chip. Yard waste and small branches will be hauled to our leaf pile where we hope to compost the majority of it. When the cleanup is complete, we will be looking for ways to separate the incoming brush, trees and yard waste to make it more manageable.

- **Comp Plan Update:** Staff is making final arrangements for the distribution of the Comp Plan Public Input Survey that was provided in the February 6th Council Packet.

- **March 5th Council Work Session:** Herbert Hoover National Historic Site Superintendent Pete Swisher will present a National Park Service Update at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, March 5, 2012.

The information provided is one-way communication and should not be discussed among you as this would be a violation of the open meeting law.