

# dubuque & tri-state

Got a tip? Please contact us  
**Dustin Kass, Local Content Editor**  
 dustin.kass@thmedia.com  
 563-588-5663 or 800-553-4801

## news in brief

### City of Dubuque names new economic development director

The City of Dubuque's economic development director will leave the position next month, but officials announced Friday that they have found his successor in house.

Jill Connors will move to the top spot when Maurice Jones leaves on Jan. 11. Connors has served as the city's economic development project coordinator since 2014.

Jones recently accepted a deputy city manager position with the City of Springfield, Mo., according to a press release. He had served in his role with the City of Dubuque since October 2013.

In her tenure with the city, Connors "coordinated multiple departments and private sector partners to facilitate local, multi-million dollar business-expansion projects, managed state and federal grants and related reporting requirements, synthesized stakeholder input for area-wide development plans, drafted and implemented urban renewal (tax district) plans, and developed and presented policy requests to legislators," the release states.

It also notes that she led "strategy development and implementation" of an \$8.5 million redevelopment of the Flexsteel Industries Inc. site on Jackson Street. The company is building a new facility off of Seippel Road.

Before joining the city in 2014, she worked as special projects coordinator for two years for Gronen Restoration and the Smart Growth Development Coalition in Dubuque.

A farewell reception will be held for Jones from 10 a.m. to noon Jan. 10 at the Multicultural Family Center, 1157 Central Ave.

### Madison woman arrested near Dickeyville on felony meth charge

DICKEYVILLE, Wis. — Authorities said a traffic stop earlier this week near Dickeyville led to the seizure of 6 pounds of meth with an estimated value of \$100,000.

Natasha A. Karp, 28, of Madison, was arrested and taken to the Grant County Jail, according to a press release issued Friday by the Richland-Iowa-Grant Drug Task Force.

It states that a Grant County Sheriff's Department deputy pulled over Karp at about 1 a.m. Tuesday on U.S. 151 near Dickeyville. The drug task force and the Wisconsin State Patrol also responded to the scene, with the state patrol bringing a K-9.

That led to a search of the vehicle, at which time the methamphetamine was found, the release states.

Karp is charged in Grant County Circuit Court with possession of meth with intent to distribute, a felony. Her next court hearing is set for Jan. 2.

## police

### Dubuque police reported:

- Steven K. Alcorn, 47, 1160 Seippel Road, was arrested at 5:09 p.m. Thursday at Mercy Medical Center-Dubuque on a charge of assault on a police officer. Police said Alcorn assaulted Officer Riley Fairchild at that time at the hospital.

- April T. McAuliffe, 32, of Hazel Green, Wis., was arrested at 3:05 p.m. Thursday in the 2200 block of Washington Street on charges of possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia.

# Library board votes for fine-free option

Dubuque City Council will make a final determination on the proposal.

BY ALLIE HINGA  
 allie.hinga@thmedia.com

Carnegie-Stout Public Library leaders seek to make permanent a policy of forgiving fines for overdue materials.

The decision will require a stamp of approval from the Dubuque City Council before it is official. And fines almost certainly will return for the first six months of 2019 as the city wraps its fiscal year.

Members of the library's board of trustees voted this week to continue the fine-free policy they instituted July 1. The next six months will

be spent gathering further data and reviewing the policy.

"We're creating access for everyone in this town because libraries are important," said Patty Poggemiller, president of the trustees.

Data collected over the past six months showed the absence of fines had little impact on timely returns. Library staffers did see a small increase in items that were overdue for a short period of time, but a decline in the amount of items that were significantly overdue.

Library Director Susan Henricks said the numbers show that people are not taking advantage of the fine-free policy.

"It's about access," she said. "And the way I see it, it was a win-win."

Before the policy can become permanent, the proposal must go before the City Council. The council must allow the library to reduce the amount of revenue it takes in by assessing and collecting fines.

Henricks has made a request to reduce library revenue while maintaining the library's budget. Revenue collected from fines goes into the city's general fund to offset library operations.

Library leaders estimate that based on prior fiscal years, they averaged more than \$18,000 in fine revenue per six-month period.

Over the course of the fine-free experiment, the library brought in about \$1,500 from donations and a \$2,000 grant.

Henricks and trustees also said that the library likely realized savings through reduced credit card fees and money spent on a collections agency to recover fines.

Henricks said removing fines permanently would free staff to work on providing other services.

"I'd much rather spend that time trying to get people to come into the library," she said.

If the council approves the revenue reduction and fine-free policy, Henricks will continue to evaluate overdue materials trends over the next six months to better understand the impact of removing fines.

Library leaders said they also would like to gather more information from patrons about what they think of the policy.



Jill Connors



Maurice Jones



DAVE KETTERING • Telegraph Herald

Methane gas harvested from organic material decaying in the landfill is burned off Friday at the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency.

## Landfill finds gas buyer

Love's truck stop chain plans to sell the methane to users of compressed natural gas vehicles.

BY BENJAMIN FISHER  
 benjamin.fisher@thmedia.com

Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency officials have chosen a company to compress methane collected at the landfill for use as biofuel for vehicles.

Currently, methane from deep inside the landfill is pulled to the surface through a system of 50 wells covering 60 acres. The methane is collected into one pipe with a flare, which burns the gas away. The system came online in 2012.

"This all kicked off with the city looking at its greenhouse gas impacts," said agency administrator John Foster. "The landfill is one of the biggest contributors of greenhouse gas in the area. The agency voluntarily installed a landfill gas collection system."

The methane coming out of the landfill "is very dangerous," Foster said.

"We ended up destroying it," he said. "When you destroy methane, it turns into CO<sub>2</sub>. At that point, you're still emitting. ... What we wanted was a beneficial project."

But the green power industry always is changing. The agency looked at using methane to produce electricity, but was outpaced by wind power.

"Now, transportation fuels is really the place where you're going to make the most

money off of this to finance a project like this," Foster said.

DMASWA board members approved a contract with Trillium, which is owned by truck stop chain Love's, on Wednesday night. Per the agreement, Trillium will pay the agency \$300,000 per year in royalties to take and clean up the gas for later sale.

Trillium will keep the sales revenue, but agreed to pay about \$68,000 of the \$100,000 it will cost the agency to operate the gas collection system each year.

"This is an investment you can only make one time," said David Lyons, of Greater Dubuque Development Corp. and a member of the selection committee. "Making it with a partner that can do value adding along the way and has the financial capacity to be a financial partner — you supply the gas, they supply the financing — makes the most sense."

Another thing Trillium brings to the table is connections and a knowledge of the market nationwide.

On Wednesday, Trillium representative Ryan Erickson said one of the biggest opportunities for the gas will be marketing it in California, where compressed natural gas trucks are used most.

City of Dubuque and Dubuque County elected officials on the agency board were pleased with the pick.

"It hits all the marks," said Dubuque City Council Member Ric Jones. "It took a while to get here, but it's no railroad deal. I like what we got here."

## Businessman remembered for faith, zest for life

Founder of the Oky Doky chain knew life was about much more than business.

BY BEN JACOBSON  
 ben.jacobson@thmedia.com

John "Jack" Thompson wasn't foolish enough to ignore advice from on high.

As God spoke, Thompson undoubtedly would listen, according to his children. But nothing short of divine intervention would keep the strong-willed Dubuque businessman from testing his limits.

He stayed active as he aged, making annual leaps off a pool high dive just to prove he still could. And his kids, to whom the founder of the Oky Doky chain was a cherished role model, always stood behind him.

"I think (jumping off the high dive) was just kind of an annual tradition, I guess you could say," said son Terry Thompson, noting that his father was more nervous about the climb up the ladder than the jump itself. "I told him one year, 'I'll go with you.' When I was a kid, my first time off the high dive, he was behind me. I missed the top rung and I fell. And he caught me."

"I told him I would do the same for him."

Jack Thompson, of Dubuque, died Wednesday after a sudden illness. He was 90 years old.

Left to remember him are his siblings, four children, 11 grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and thousands of Dubuque-area residents who patronized his many businesses.

"He was just a real pioneer and a pleasure to be around," said longtime friend Steve "Gomer" Smith. "It was fun engaging in conversation with him. You always left him with a smile on your face. It's going to be a real loss to the community that he's gone."

Jack Thompson took over the Thompson Food Market in 1944 and went on to create Oky Doky Foods, 6/12 Discount Mart, Dubuque Distributing and many other businesses. He married Winnie in 1950, finding in her a partner in life, business, faith and community service.

The couple had four children, including Tom, who, as of Wednesday, took charge of his father's local business empire.

"From a businessman point of view, (Jack) was sharp. He was responsive to what the neighborhood needed," Tom said. "But more importantly, he cared about his customers."

It wasn't unusual for Jack Thompson to extend his regulars credit, knowing that they would be good for it once payday rolled around. Tom said his father always was fair in his business transactions and would even hand-deliver groceries if the situation called for it.

"He grew up at a time with a value system that is more important today than it was in 1928," Tom said.

Jack's business acumen was legendary, but he refused to take himself or life too seriously, according to his daughter Jean Daoud.

April Fools' Day, in particular, was a highlight of his year. She recalled the time he delivered Oky Doky doughnuts to his excited grandchildren.

"He had (Oky Doky workers) make some, where they put pickle relish and mustard on the inside," said Daoud. "The kids, they still remember that one."

Ever the consummate Dubuquer, Thompson was proud of his community, according to Terry.

"He'd always speak so highly of Dubuque," Terry said. "He just enjoyed life. He really did."

### Funeral service

A funeral Mass for John "Jack" Thompson will be held at 10 a.m. today at St. Joseph the Worker Church in Dubuque, with visitation from 9 to 10 a.m. Burial will take place in Mount Calvary Cemetery at a later date.



# RUNDE

AutoGroup.com

Businesses, Take Advantage of

GREAT PRICING PLUS

TAX INCENTIVES

Before Year End!



GMC  
BUSINESS  
ELITE








