

## "Community Pride is Ageless"

A small community in Iowa underwent a major highway reconstruction project on its main street. In this instance, the project was undertaken by fully closing the street and highway for the duration of the construction period. The impact on the business community was significant; however, the potential for improving the attractiveness of the community with a new street and landscaping was equally significant. The project represented a major impetus for main street renewal. For privacy purposes the community is not identified but this story is real and happened in the fall of 2001 here in Iowa.

Plans for the project (in addition to the street and highway work) included landscaping, new street lights of a special design, moving the electrical and telephone lines underground, new sidewalks and tree planting. Not all of the funding for the project was available from city and state funding. Local fundraising efforts through the local "Keep the Community Beautiful" Committee were necessary.

The local committee decided that the project was essential for the group and the community. With help from Keep Iowa Beautiful, Trees Forever, the local businesses, the Community Foundation, civic groups and private citizens the project received funding assistance. However, like all projects the need was still greater than the dollars available. Funding was needed for tree planting to develop a living canopy along the newly redeveloped street.

The local Keep the Community Beautiful committee put their heads together and explored creative ways to raise the dollars needed. The idea came to them to use the local newspaper to develop an article asking for additional local support. The article was completed and published resulting in additional funds for the project.

One of the responses was a letter to the chair of the local committee. It was from two sisters that had just moved into a new Senior Housing facility near the revamped street. The two had lived in their own home in the area for over 34 years. Starting a new life style in the new location they felt a need to be a part of the local community. The letter included a check for \$600 for trees to be planted to be a part of the living canopy planned for the street project. This was a significant donation from two individuals that had never lived in the immediate community. It was made because they wanted to support the local community efforts, they were proud to be a part of improving the beauty of the area.

The sense of pride that these two individuals felt can be contagious. It also proves that pride is one of those feelings that has high value. The support from these two ladies will serve as a model for others, young and old. When this spring moves across Iowa, the trees will be planted, the hanging flower planters will be blooming and residents and visitors alike will enjoy an evening stroll with a sense of community pride.

Reminder - any large pizza purchased on any Sunday in October from your local Casey's Corporate Store will result in a cash contribution to support the efforts of Keep Iowa Beautiful!!!

To obtain additional information on the organization please contact:

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See you in the next column featuring the "Measuring Success".

*Helping to Keep Iowa Beautiful*

Gerald F. Schnepf, Executive Director