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Akron, Iowa

Akron's skyline changes as wind turbine removed

By Julie Ann Madden

It was once a point of Akron-Westfield community pride but most recently was considered an eyesore on the Akron skyline.

Finally, it's a blip in Akron history.

On Thursday, Feb. 9, Akron-Westfield Community School's wind turbine came tumbling down in a matter of seconds. It was removed by Boyer Sand & Rock Inc. of Hawarden.

It was removed similar to felling a tree, said A-W Shared Superintendent Derek Briggs who photographed its final demise.

Having a school-owned wind turbine was billed as an educational plus for students as it was cutting-edge technology in 1999 and a great energy-saving joint venture between city and school officials.

However, almost immediately the wind turbine project was doomed for failure.

Original feasibility studies, conducted by the late Ron Wilmot who was the high school science teacher, were based on the original agreement between the City of Akron and the Akron-Westfield School District.

Per this agreement, the school district would

not have had any electricity bills from the City of Akron, and the City of Akron would have paid 2 cents per kilowatt hour on the excess electricity the turbine generated. The school district was not going to be charged an electrical demand fee.

The wind turbine was originally projected to provide an additional \$87,000 annually in revenue for the school district, according to a report then Business Manager Jodi Thompson gave to the school board in December 2008, reviewing its nearly 10 years of operation.

For the first 10 years of operation, the district had annual loan payments of approximately \$85,000. But after the loans were paid off, the wind turbine was to generate the equivalent of about two teachers' salaries per year.

The wind turbine came from Denmark through Vestas American Wind Technology company. The engineers were Prohaska & Associates of Omaha, Neb. In February 1999, the 600-kilowatt wind turbine became operational.

About a year into the venture it was discovered that the agreement between the city council and school board had never been ratified by the city council.



photos submitted

The Akron-Westfield Community School wind turbine was removed Feb. 9 from its site east of the school building. It was exactly 24 years from the time it started operation in 1999. However, it was only operational 10 of those years.

2001: City officials sued the school district for the electricity the district hadn't paid since the wind turbine began operation.

Feb. 20, 2001: In December 2000 a judge ruled in favor of the city but the school board appealed the decision.

June 11, 2003: The wind turbine lawsuit officially ended as both sides agreed on a settlement. The school district paid the city approximately \$163,000. In addition, the school district would have to pay electrical demand charges.

Therefore, instead of saving the district about \$87,000 annually, it only

saved the district about \$40,000.

However, that savings didn't take into account the wind turbine's service agreement and repair costs. The service agreement cost the school district between \$10,000 and \$12,000 annually.

Between July 2002 and Aug. 12, 2008, the school district spent \$83,739.95 on the wind turbine's service agreement payments and repairs. Of that amount, \$17,073.28 were for repairs.

By adding in the service agreement and repair costs, the wind turbine generated about one-fourth of what its original projected revenue

was.

The district received between \$24,000 and \$40,000 annually from Heartland Public Power District for the wind turbine's power generation.

From June 15, 2007 to July 15, 2008, the district's bill was \$93,177.61 and Heartland paid the district \$43,387.20, which is based on the amount of kilowatts

the wind turbine produced.

However, during the same time period, the district spent \$23,344.30 on wind turbine repairs, the maintenance agreement fee and other wind turbine maintenance fees.

For that period, the overall savings for the dis-

See TURBINE Con't on Page 4

Three A-W wrestlers advance to state

At the District wrestling meet held at Western Christian in Hull Feb. 11, three Akron-Westfield wrestlers placed first and have advanced to the state wrestling tournament.

Advancing are Cael Morrow at 113, Jady Friedrichs at 126, and Ian Blowe at 195.

The state tournament begins Feb. 15 at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. Class 1A First Round is Feb. 15 at

9 a.m. Quarterfinals consolation are Feb. 16 beginning at 9 a.m., Quarterfinals are Feb. 17 beginning at 9 a.m., Semifinals are Feb. 17 beginning at 9 a.m., and consolation semifinals and finals are Feb. 18 beginning at 9 a.m. with the finals for all classes beginning at 5:15 p.m.

The semifinal and final rounds will be streamlined for free at IHSSN.com Watch IHSSN app Feb. 17 and 18.

(See complete results from Districts on Page 9)



Cael Morrow



Jady Friedrichs



Ian Blowe



According to Akron-Westfield Shared Superintendent Derek Briggs, Boyer Sand & Rock Inc.'s crew cut around the base of the wind turbine, similar to what a wood cutter does in cutting down a tree. Then it was pulled over and came tumbling down without incident.



As soon as it was down, Boyer Sand & Rock Inc.'s crew began removing the pieces. Briggs told The Akron Home-towner, the wind turbine didn't crumble into small pieces as they had thought it might.



Obituaries

Betty Ann Meyer, Age 90



Betty Ann Meyer of Akron, Iowa, after a full and complete life, passed away surrounded by her family on Friday, January 6, 2023 at the Akron Care Center in Akron.

A Memorial Service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 18, 2023 at Rexwinkel Funeral Home in Akron. Visitation with the family present will begin at 10:00 a.m. and continue until the service time. Burial will be at Union Creek Lutheran Cemetery in rural Akron.

Betty Ann Weyen was born on August 17, 1932 in Sioux County, Iowa, to Herman and Lena (Vander Hamm) Weyen. She attended school in Chatsworth, Iowa. Betty was united in marriage to Lloyd Meyer in Luverne, Minn. on October 22, 1951 and they made their home in Akron. Betty worked for Otis Radio in Hawarden, Iowa, for 27 years. Betty was a member of Union Creek Lutheran Church in rural Akron, S.D. She was also an avid Bingo player with her partner in crime, Lori Wetrosky, for many years.

Betty is survived by her daughters: Brenda Nickels of Mt. Sterling, Ky., Deb (Rick) McPherson of Akron, and April (Shane) Wortman of McCook Lake, S.D.; five grandchildren: Cody (Keesha) Nickels, Kyle (Kayla) Nickels, Teresa [Jeff] DeWolf, Jeremy (Alison) McPherson, and Brianna (Chad) Sommervold; 10 great-grandchildren: Joel, Presley, Jackson, Kolby, Ava, Elly, Cade, Cole, Aubrie and Jayden; brother, Raymond Weyen of Sioux Center, Iowa; and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband of over 60 years, Lloyd Meyer; her parents Herman and Lena Weyen; brother, Darold "Dean" (Pat) Weyen; sister, Dorothy "Dolly" (Jack) De Vos; and sister-in-law, Helen Weyen.

Judith "Judy" Nicholson, Age 80

Judith "Judy" Nicholson of Le Mars, Iowa, passed away Saturday, February 11, 2023, at Floyd Valley Healthcare in Le Mars.

Funeral services will be 10:30 a.m. Thursday, February 16, 2023, at Rexwinkel Funeral Home in Le Mars, Iowa. Reverend Trish Underberg from St. John's Lutheran Church in Craig, Iowa, will officiate. Burial will be at St. John's Lutheran Cemetery in Craig, Iowa. Visitation will begin at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 15, 2023, at Rexwinkel Funeral Home in Le Mars. The family will be present at 5:00 p.m. There will be a Prayer Service at 6:00 p.m. Visitation will resume from 9:30 a.m. until service time on Thursday at the funeral home. Arrangements are with the Rexwinkel Funeral Home in Le Mars. Expressions of sympathy can be extended to the family through www.rexwinkelfh.com.



In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made in Judy's name to St. John's Lutheran Church in Craig, Iowa, or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, in care of her family.

Judith Florence Johnson, the daughter of George and Geraldine "Tiny" (Herzberg) Johnson, was born on October 16, 1942, in Le Mars, Iowa. She attended country school near her home in Preston Township, rural Plymouth County, Iowa. She attended high school in Le Mars and graduated from Le Mars Central High School in 1960.

Judy was baptized, confirmed, and married, all at St. John's Lutheran Church in Craig.

Judy was united in marriage to Edgar Nicholson on June 24, 1961, at St. John's Lutheran Church in Craig. They were blessed with two sons, Phil and Steve. After her children were grown, she went to work for 20 years for Harker's in Le Mars until her retirement.

She was lifelong member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Craig. Judy enjoyed being a wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother.

Survivors include her husband of over 61 years, Edgar of Le Mars; two sons: Phil (Susan) Nicholson of Akron, Iowa, and Steve Nicholson of Vero Beach, Fla.; three grandchildren: Jill (Eric) Gale of Ames, Iowa, Nick (Laura) Nicholson of Le Mars, Iowa, and Matthew (Kourtney) Nicholson of Akron, Iowa; 10 great-grandchildren; and a sister-in-law, Dorothy Nicholson of Omaha, Neb..

She was preceded in death by her parents, George and Tiny Johnson; her father- and mother-in-law, William and Ida Nicholson; and her niece, Julie Packett.

LOOKING BACK

From the files of the Akron Register-Tribune & The Akron Hometown

120 years – Feb. 12, 1903

The C. M. & St. P. railroad now makes direct connections from points on this division to Omaha, arriving there at 11 o'clock in the evening. Change of cars is made at Sioux City, Manila and Council Bluffs.

110 years – Feb. 13, 1913

Born: Feb. 6, a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. D. E. Mentzer, west of town; Feb. 11, a son to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Smith, south of town.

Died: Feb. 6, Mrs. George W. (Martha Austin) Burrill, formerly of Johnson township; Feb. 3, Mrs. Fred (Florence Mellen) Sloan of Oregon, formerly of Akron.

100 years – Feb. 15, 1923

Born: Feb. 10, a son to Mr. and Mrs. William Olson, northwest of town; Feb. 14, a son to Mr. and Mrs. George Lingle, near Richland.

Died: Feb. 9, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Lowell Taylor, southeast of town.

90 years – Feb. 9, 1933

Born: Feb. 2, a daughter to Rev. and Mrs. M. O. Ensborg of Beresford (pastor of Roseni Lutheran church).

Died: Feb. 3, Charles C. Weldon of Akron.

80 years – Feb. 11, 1943

All babies must be registered for War Ration Book by the time they are one month old.—Mrs. Harry B. Nelson, Chairman Food Rationing Board.

More than 1,200,000 volunteer members of the ground observer corps of the aircraft warning service are on the alert 24 hours a day throughout the coastal areas of the United States just to make sure it doesn't happen here! Approximately 750,000 of these serve under the I fighter command from Maine to Florida, scanning the skies night and day for hostile aircraft. These air-

plane "spotters" are under direct supervision of the army air forces.

Born: Feb. 9, a son to Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Swanson, west of town; Feb. 8, a son to Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Braun of Westfield; Feb. 7, a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Howard Nielsen, west of town.

Died: Feb. 5, Mrs. J. C. (Dagmar Nilsena Nilson) Bredall of Akron; Feb. 6, Ralph Petersen of Richland township, Union county.

70 years – Feb. 12, 1953

Born: Feb. 10, a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Willms, northwest of town; Feb. 11, a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Fickbohm of Beresford.

Died: Jan. 28, Herman Claassen, formerly of Akron.

60 years – Feb. 14, 1963

A weather balloon sailing over here toward the southwest at a high altitude attracted the attention of many people here last Thursday morning. The sun shining on its plicofilm surface made it plainly visible.

Died: Feb. 10, William H. Neary, formerly of Akron; Jan. 27, Gustave R. Jans, formerly of Plymouth county; Feb. 7, Clarence J. Aalfs of Akron; Feb. 11, Ernest F. Meske, west of town; Feb. 7, Albert M. Grant of Akron.

50 years – Feb. 15, 1973

Died: Feb. 12, William Kiewel of Akron; Feb. 6, Mrs. George W. (Nancy Allen) Pike of Akron.

40 years – Feb. 10, 1983

Winter is here to stay for another six weeks, even though "Mr. Groundhog" didn't get a chance to see his shadow, as another near blizzard hit the area on Feb. 2. Northerly winds and an accumulation of another three inches of

snow blocked highways and crippled traffic in the area for a couple of days last week. Schools "enjoyed" another two day snow vacation. Cold temperatures followed with a warming trend over the weekend and an additional accumulation of light fluffy snow. Temperatures dipped around the zero mark the beginning of the week before rising into the mid-teens and low twenties.

Born: Feb. 4, a daughter to Kevin and Pamela Netley of Akron; Feb. 5, a son to David and Susie Rozell of Akron; Feb. 2, a son to Mike and Pat (Hughes) Toben of Akron; Jan. 31, a son to Kerwyn and Pam (McKee) McInnis of Hawarden; Feb. 7, a daughter to Thomas and Kay Dunham of Westfield.

Died: Feb. 6, Mrs. Lloyd (Darlene Jammerthal) Lawrence of rural Ireton; Feb. 6, Hjalmer Abraham of Beresford; Feb. 2, Ralph Royalty, formerly of Hawarden.

30 years – Feb. 11, 1993

The Union county commissioners voted Feb. 2 to unanimously approve the collection of a 75-cent per month surcharge on each person's phone bill for the development of Basic 911 services for Union county, S.D.

Six-player girls basketball, as much a part of Iowa's fabric as its rich farmland, is being eliminated. In a surprise move, the board of directors of the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union voted to discontinue the six-player game after the 1994-95 season, all schools will play 5-on-5 girls basketball, which has grown steadily in popularity since its introduction eight years ago.

Born: Jan. 3, a son to Michelle Weaver and Tom Milbrodt.

Died: Feb. 7, Herman J. Moen of Inwood; Feb. 5, Mrs. George H. (Anna C. Shuren) Reichel, formerly of Preston township; Feb. 2, Mrs. Clarence (Velda

Benson) Muth of rural Ireton; Feb. 4, Mrs. Wallace (Ann Mae Lucken) Curry, South Sioux City, formerly of Le Mars; Feb. 1, William

John Leaf, formerly of Akron; Feb. 6, Azalene Skinner of Hawarden; Feb. 6, Eddie F. Raynor III, formerly of Elk Point; Feb. 4, Mrs. Bill (Marge Streff) Schroeder of Le Mars.

20 years – Feb. 13, 2003

Akron Fire Department helped 11 other departments fight a fire in downtown Hawarden last Thursday. The unit received a call for help about an hour after the blaze started, and continued working until at least 10:00 that night. The fire destroyed two businesses, including Bonderson's Auto Parts and LaTapita grocery on Central Avenue in Hawarden.

The name on the door may have changed, but the service will stay the same, says Jerry Barwick. It is now Barwick Ag Parts and Service, instead of being a John Deere dealership. Tom Huls, an Akron resident and wrestling official, was selected as this year's Official of the Year by Iowa's Wrestling Coaches and Officials.

Born: Dec. 13, a daughter to Craig and Tina Wilken of Akron; Jan. 20, a son to Ty and Tamara (Waddell) Schram of Dover, DE.

Died: Feb. 4, Mrs. Gilbert (Anna Maria Osterbuhr) Pefferman of Akron; Feb. 4, Mrs. J. D. (E. Ferne King Jones) Tindall of Le Mars, formerly of Adaville; Jan. 22, Clayton D. Howard, formerly of Akron.

10 years- Feb. 13, 2013

The Akron Hometown received eight awards in the Weekly Newspapers Class 2: Circulation between 1,301 - 2,200 in the Iowa Newspaper Association's 2013 Better Newspaper Contest.

● Turbine

Con't from Front page

tract with the wind turbine was \$20,043.12.

Without the wind turbine, another revenue source needed to be found to make up that annual savings or the school district's budget cut, said Thompson in her 2008 report to the school board.

June 2, 2008: The school board approved the wind turbine's final loan payment. It had been financed with two loans: Iowa Energy Center Alternative Energy Revolving Loan Program Series A and B. One was an interest-free loan of \$250,000 and the other was \$450,000.

It was just six months later when school officials learned the wind turbine needed a new gear box, an estimated cost of \$229,149. This was the second time the gear box had failed. The first gear box had failed early on and had been covered by the wind turbine's warranty.

In January 2009, the gear box was replaced and just 10 months later -- in October 2009 -- the gear box failed a third time.

It was determined the gear box would not work in this wind turbine with area winds. School officials decided to just let it operate

until it quit, which was in October or November 2010.

From 2012 to 2014, the school board worked with companies to find a solution for its wind turbine but then in February 2014, the wind turbine's brake system failed. This dried up the possibility of finding an educational solution or any buyer for the wind turbine.

In 2017, the school board pondered having removal of the wind turbine, which was an estimated cost of \$300,000, as part

Enjoy yoga at the Nature Center

The Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center is hosting yoga class on Feb. 22 at 5:30 p.m. Join us for an ALL Levels class! Unwind after a busy day with this yoga practice. Starting with a quick guided meditation and slowly moving our bodies, this class is for everyone to enjoy with the goal of leaving class relaxed and refreshed. This class is taught by certified yoga instructor, Chan Follen. Please pre-register by calling 712-258-0838 or emailing ksandage@woodburyparks.org. This is a free class. Bring Yoga mat.

of a third bond attempt but instead added it to the A-W Facilities Committee's Summer Projects list.

In 2020, the Purchase Power Agreement with Heartland Consumer Power District, fka Heartland Public Power District, expired and there was no need to renew it.

Earlier this year, the school district contracted with Boyer Sand & Rock Inc. to remove the turbine at a cost of \$65,000.