

Lennox

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every ounce of energy into recovery and rebuilding," she said.

She spoke briefly about the history of the company founding in Marshalltown and 1899 and highlighted the fact that Lennox did not leave, despite the damage.

"You chose to stay because of your loyalty to this community and state," she said.

Reynolds thanked Lennox for keeping the production facility operational in Marshalltown and making such a major investment in rebuilding where the company began. She also spoke about Marshalltown Strong, and the evidence of that following the tornado and then the 2020 derecho.

Attendees wandered through the museum dis-

plays before and after the speeches, taking in the history of the company. Marty Hardon of Tama, owner of Hardon's Plumbing, Electrical, Heating and Air Conditioning and Lennox dealer, said he was thrilled to see the finished product.

"It speaks a lot to the resolve of the community," he said.

Mayor Joel Greer described the event as "phenomenal" and said it is like a rebirth for one of the biggest employers in town, with over \$200 million spent in all to rebuild the Marshalltown facility, upgrade the office space and add the new museum.

"This is newer, better and bigger than anybody could have expected," he said. "It's a testament to the workforce and the people who make these critical pieces of equipment that

are sold around the country and around the world."

Marshalltown Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO John Hall had already toured the museum prior to the opening and said the legacy of Lennox is obviously deeply rooted locally.

"This museum is going to be truly spectacular for the community," he said. "I think there's going to be a lot of folks who spend a lot of time in here."

Hall pointed out that the attention to detail in the museum is his favorite part, such as the "heater" turning on when someone walks by.

"It really makes it fun," he said. "It's kind of cool, kind of cute."

Rep. Sue Cahill (D-Marshalltown) said the museum was lovely, and Lennox had done such a wonderful job.

Cahill said her favorite

aspects of the museum were the little marketing materials — the toys and cars. She also liked the display with Dave Lennox, the iconic overall-wearing character who starred in commercials and traveled to various Lennox events.

Cahill recalled going through town after the tornado, especially the damage done to Lennox and nearby employee residences. Then they had to deal with derecho damage.

"It was like, 'Oh my gosh, how can they go through this again,'" she said. "What resilience. I have never been to the museum, so there is true joy in looking at these pieces. We are just so proud to have them in town."

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Safety

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"We've had accidents at 2 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. It's not a time of day issue. It's not really even a weather related issue, and the accidents we have, we haven't been able to attribute to impairment or even electronic devices," Thomas said. "This is really, I think, an issue where one of two things is going on. People aren't taking that pause for the yield sign to really see if cars are coming, or two, they're in the second car and they see the first car go and they're making a quick look and they're missing that 4,000 pound object coming down the road."

Because of the speeds the vehicles are traveling (it's a 65 mile per hour zone all the way through State Center), Thomas said collisions usually lead to "a lot" of property damage, but injuries have mostly been minor due to airbags and seatbelts. With all of this information in hand, he recently spoke to Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) officials about potential remedies to the problem, and a few ideas have been thrown out — orange flashing signals that read "turning traffic ahead" or reducing the speed limit to 55 through town like they did in nearby Nevada. Another suggestion was a four-way stop similar to the one in Boone, but Thomas said he didn't think it would be a good idea.

"Ultimately, it comes down to driver behavior and driver responsibility. People need to slow down. In today's society, our brains are always going. We're always thinking about something else, and I think people are just not focusing on clearing that intersection," he said.

No final determinations have been made, but Thomas expects to have another meeting with the DOT within the next few weeks to further discuss the matter. In the meantime, he plans to continue public education outreach efforts in hopes of raising awareness about the intersection and encouraging safer driving practices.

"With college kids going back to school, the amount of cars going through there is going to increase, and again, that raises our own concerns," he said.

While he said the flashing yellow lights would serve as "a good warning" and dropping the speed limit "isn't his preference," Thomas is also interested in technology that would trigger a sensor, and a light would flash that says "traffic oncoming." A stop sign at the median at each end of the intersection is also out of the question because it requires 60 feet of median to allow room for semis and other large vehicles, and Durham/Highway 30 only has 50 feet.

"We'll see what the DOT can do, but they've been very responsive and good partners on it," Thomas said. "My goal is to try and get something done in the next six to eight weeks. As we get ready for football season, we have a large number of vehicles. There's six home games this year at Iowa State, and that generates a lot of traffic on that Highway 30 corridor. And then kids are going back to school, and we have plenty of kids that come from the Rhodes area and the rural country, and we want to make sure that they get into school safely also."

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T-R PHOTOS BY LANA BRADSTREAM
At top left, Attendees visit after viewing the displays of the Lennox Museum, which hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday. The museum is a result of the rebuilding efforts of the 2018 tornado which caused severe damage to the company's facility here. At bottom left, Gov. Kim Reynolds and Lennox CEO Alok Maskara cut the ribbon to the Lennox Museum. Roughly 50 people attended the event. At right, a display about the founders of Lennox greets people as they walk through the doors of the Lennox Museum, which was opened to the public on Thursday.

Ride

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Velma never forgot her dream about flying. She initially wanted to become a stewardess for airline work. She was not tall enough. She wanted to be an airline pilot but other things and circumstances changed that goal. However, a love of flying remained deeply ingrained in her soul.

When this birthday girl turned 100 on Wednesday, the Iowa weather was stormy and rainy on that morning. The planned flight was canceled, but an alternate date for Thursday was set and all arrangements made. A WHO TV crew arrived to conduct interviews and, for posterity, record this special day for a special lady.

When Velma was seated in the right front of the Cessna Skyhawk, she im-

mediately felt at home and comfortable with some of the instruments and controls. Brandenburg told her to place her hands on the control yoke, and to follow along as they taxied away from the terminal, to the taxiway and proceeded to take off.

The 20 minute flight was exciting for everyone as they cruised at 110 mph over Marshalltown, circling the Village Coop building complex she calls home, and then doing a bit more touring over Marshalltown. All along the journey, the view of the beautiful landscape was everywhere. Velma could not get enough of it.

She made a few shallow bank turns with instruction from Garry. Velma knew what to do as she had control of the aircraft. She was flying and she loved it.

As Garry lined up the

aircraft for its final approach to Runway 31 at Marshalltown, Velma was still in awe over how pretty the landscape was, but she concentrated on the view of the runway growing bigger as the plane gently settled onto the surface. When the plane taxied back to the terminal building, the entire entourage of Village Coop folks were smiling and waving as the plane's engine was shut down.

WHO TV crews conducted more interviews and asked Velma how the flight went. She of course said it was "great, wonderful and just like riding a bike. Once you learn, you never forget." And she emphasized the theme that "when you have a dream to do something, do not let anyone tell you you can't do it."

Happy birthday Velma. Your dreams have come true.



TOP PHOTO BY ROBERT MAHARRY/BOTTOM PHOTOS BY GARRY BRANDENBURG
At top, a group of Velma's friends from the Village Cooperative came out to support her and cheer her on as she prepared to take flight. At bottom left, Velma and pilot Garry Brandenburg enjoy a warm moment up in the air, and at bottom right, she shares her thoughts on the experience with a TV news crew from WHO Channel 13 out of Des Moines.



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