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February 20, 2003

Karen Hagerty  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Rock Island Division  
P.O. Box 2004  
Clock Tower Place  
Rock Island, IL 61204-2004

**Re: Proposed Muslim Youth Camp, Hotel and Convention Center**

Dear Ms. Hagerty:

Enclosed please find copy of an article in today's Iowa City Press Citizen regarding yesterday's devastating fire at the Jolly Rogers Campground adjacent to Coralville Lake. As identified in the article, the incident confirms the validity of the health, safety, and environmental concerns opponents of this ill-conceived and ill-advised project have consistently raised.

Before you continue to either ignore or minimize such concerns, please note again the health and safety comments raised by the North Liberty Fire Department, North Liberty City Council, and Johnson County Board of Supervisors, not to mention the well over one hundred letters in opposition to this convention center that raise such health, safety and environmental concerns.

Had this proposed convention center been the facility that the numerous fire departments had to respond to, the difficulties posed by such a development would likely have resulted in far more tragic consequences, for which the Corps would have to shoulder the blame and the liability for permitting the project to proceed.

Sincerely,



Andrew P. Matthews

cc: William J. Bayless, Colonel, U.S. Army District Engineer  
Senator Charles Grassley (via e-mail @ [chuck\\_grassley@grassley.senate.gov](mailto:chuck_grassley@grassley.senate.gov))  
Senator Tom Harkin, (via e-mail @ [tom-harkin@harkin.senate.gov](mailto:tom-harkin@harkin.senate.gov))  
Representative Jim Leach (via e-mail @ [talk2jim@mail.house.gov/](mailto:talk2jim@mail.house.gov/))

# Fire guts Jolly Rogers lodge

By Tammara Meester  
Iowa City Press-Citizen

**NORTH LIBERTY** — Angel and Dave Harper watched helplessly Wednesday morning as fire destroyed the building they have been remodeling the past three months.

The Harpers own Jolly Rogers Campground north of North Liberty and live on the premises. Fire consumed most of the campground lodge — a metal pole building that housed an office, restaurant, bathrooms and a retail shop.

Angel Harper was at home when she was startled by a loud noise shortly after 8 a.m. Wednesday. Looking outside, she saw flames coming out of the bathroom window of the lodge, about 50 yards from her house.

The campground borders Coralville Lake at the northernmost end of Scales Bend Road.

Harper said she briefly considered not calling 911.

"I didn't think it was that bad because I just saw flames," she said later, watching smoke roll out of the charred lodge building.

North Liberty police officer Diane Vennenga was the first to arrive at the scene. By then, she said, "flames were coming out of the roof." North Liberty firefighters later were assisted by crews from Solon, Swisher, Coralville, Oxford and Tiffin.

"It was fully engulfed when we came on the scene," North Liberty Fire Chief Jon Harding said. "The roof had already collapsed."

No one was injured. However, a propane tank explosion sent a jagged metal piece through a lodge window and narrowly missed onlookers outside.

A frozen Coralville Lake initially hampered firefighting efforts, forcing crews to truck in more than 2,750 gallons of water.

"There's not a fire hydrant for three miles," Harding said. Firefighters later broke through the ice.

Harding said the cause of the blaze has not been determined. Harper speculated it might be the furnace because of the noise she heard and the fact the furnace is located above the lodge bathroom.

The fire points out con-



Press-Citizen / Matthew Holst

North Liberty firefighters work to put down the fire at the Jolly Rogers Campground Lodge early Wednesday morning. The cause has yet to be determined for the fire, which caused an estimated \$400,000 in damages.



consisting primarily of cosmetic changes. Firefighters said the building appears to be a complete loss.

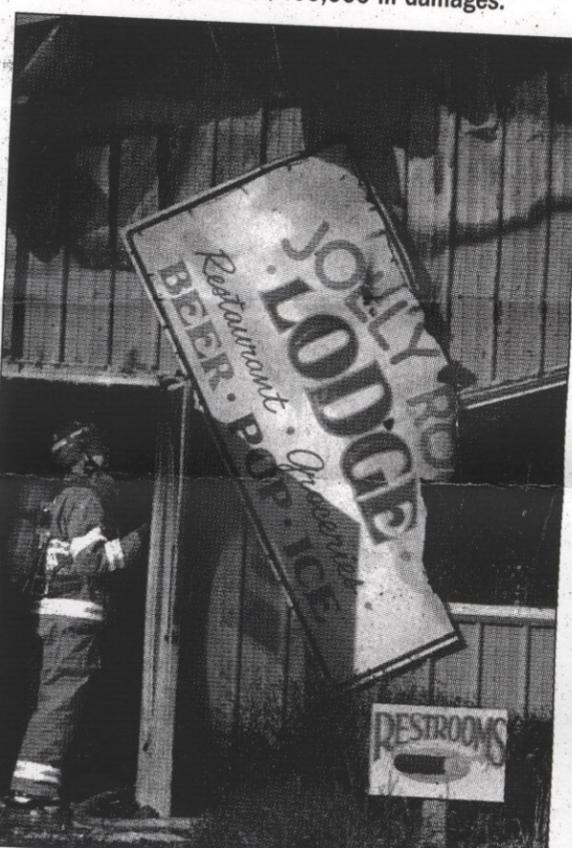
Although the Harpers had not talked with their insurance agent, Angel Harper estimated their loss, including contents, in the \$400,000 range. Fortunately, she took the computer out of the office a few days ago.

"All of my reservations for the year are on it," she said.

This is the second time the Harpers, who also own Harper's Marina nearby, have suffered a major loss since buying the campground 11 years ago. They didn't have flood insurance during the 1993 flood and remodeled the house as well as the lodge with their own funds and Small Business Administration loans.

As firefighters soaked the lodge Wednesday, Dave Harper periodically crossed the lawn, peered inside and returned with damage reports. The counter was gone. Retail items were mounds of ash, except for plastic buckets, shovels and other children's toys.

"The toys are just melted plastic piles on the floor," he said.



Press-Citizen / Matthew Holst

A firefighter looks on as others look for hot spots inside the Jolly Rogers lodge as they work to contain the fire that destroyed the building.

Kathleen Hession and Jeff Weinstock, duo interpretation; Priyanka Rao, original oratory; Kate Rice, United States extemporaneous speaking; Nick Lariviere, foreign extemporaneous speaking; Barry Vaxter, dramatic interpretation; Ryan Overton, dramatic interpretation; Nick Kanellis, humorous interpretation; Rob Keech, humorous interpretation; Kevin Dougherty, Lincoln-Douglas debate; and Delilah Jordahl, Lincoln-Douglas debate.

## Iowa City

### Council reduces water rates

The Iowa City Council unanimously approved a 5 percent water rate reduction for the budget year that begins July 1 at its formal meeting Tuesday night.

Mayor Ernie Lehman said it is the first time he can recall that the city has reduced water user fees.

The reduction comes after a rate increase in 2000 to generate revenue to fund the costs of operation, maintenance, and necessary expansion and debt service for the city's water supply and treatment system.

The low bid for construction of a new water supply and treatment facility came in below projections, and the rate increase produced more than enough revenue to fund the project.

Therefore, the city can lower the rates without threatening the financial state of the city's water division.

Tuesday night's approval was the first of three considerations for the rate reduction. The council will give it second consideration at its March 11 formal meeting, and the reduction can be formally adopted at its April 7 meeting.

## Coralville

### Library plans staff training

The Coralville Public Library will be closed for staff in-service training Thursday, Feb. 27.

### WARM program to continue

The reading program for adults, WARM, will continue through February.

Adults can sign up at the Coralville Public Library or via the Web site: [www.coralvillepubliclibrary.org](http://www.coralvillepubliclibrary.org).

Participants will read three books of their choosing and return the completed reading log to the library. Those who complete the program will be entered in a drawing for a gift certificate to Barnes & Noble or Prairie Lights Books. Other prizes will be awarded.

For information, call Georgia Heald, 248-1850.

## North Liberty

### Fiesta Night set for Friday

The North Liberty Family Resource Center, a non-profit organization, and the North Liberty Recreation Center will co-sponsor the 10th annual Family Fiesta night on Friday.

The event will be from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the North Liberty Community Center.

Proceeds will support the center's programs and services offered by the North Liberty Family Resource Center.

### Feasibility study fees

- Eighteen Iowa communities, including Iowa City (officially listed as Iowa City/University of Iowa) might participate in a joint feasibility study.
- The study would see if it would be a good idea to municipalize their energy utilities.
- In Iowa City's case, that would mean breaking away from Mid American Energy and running their own energy services.
- The fee for the joint study is \$4,000 per city, plus 50 cents per capita of population.
- Iowa City is the largest city of the 18, and would therefore pay the most.

City	Pop.	Base fee	Incremental fee per 1,000 pop.	Total
Dunlap	1,139	\$4,000	\$570	\$4,570
Elma	598	4,000	299	4,299
Fort Dodge	25,136	4,000	12,568	16,568
Guthrie Ctr.	1,668	4,000	834	4,834
Inwood	875	4,000	438	4,438
Iowa City/UI	63,027	4,000	31,514	35,514
Kalona	2,293	4,000	1,147	5,147
Keokuk	11,472	4,000	5,736	9,736
Osceola	4,659	4,000	2,330	6,330
Perry	7,633	4,000	3,817	7,817
Rolfe	675	4,000	338	4,338
Sheldon	4,914	4,000	2,457	6,457
Shell Rock	1,298	4,000	649	4,649
Titonka	584	4,000	292	4,292
Vedic City	175	4,000	88	4,088
Waukeo	5,126	4,000	2,563	6,563
Wellman	1,393	4,000	697	4,697
W. Des Moines	46,403	4,000	23,202	27,202
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>179,068</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>	<b>\$89,539</b>	<b>\$161,539</b>

Source: Feasibility Study Proposal, Latham Associates Inc. Press-Citizen

## Power study moves ahead

By Vanessa Miller  
Iowa City Press-Citizen

Iowa City will take part in a feasibility study to determine if city-owned utility systems are less expensive for area residents.

City councilors unanimously decided at their formal council meeting Tuesday night to participate in the study with up to 18 other Iowa cities, including West Des Moines, Kalona, Fort Dodge and Keokuk.

The cost of participation, which Iowa City will share with the University of Iowa, is \$35,514. That amount is based on a \$4,000 fee that all participating cities must pay, plus an additional 50 cents per capita of population.

Latham & Associates Inc. of Cedar Rapids was selected to conduct the study for \$161,539. Because of its size, Iowa City is paying the largest share of the total cost. City officials originally

earmarked \$50,000 for the study.

According to the public power feasibility study decision packet, "If the feasibility study shows the potential for sufficient savings, a city would likely schedule an election to authorize establishment of a municipal utility."

While city officials said they are confident the study will be informative regarding the potential savings of a city-owned utility system, officials with MidAmerican Energy Co. in Iowa City do not think it is necessary.

"I think it is a waste of money to do the study because it will come back with a broad range of numbers, and it will not determine any conclusive issues," said Terry Smith, operations manager with MidAmerican. "They will need to do further studies and spend more money to come up with any answers."

Smith was joined by many of his MidAmerican

colleagues at the City Council meeting Tuesday night to voice concerns about the study.

"But I was not surprised by the council's action, I expected them to do the study," Smith said. "We will be opposed to the effort as we go forward. We will point out the flaws and errors that are evident in the study."

The Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities states that residential rates of Iowa's private utilities are, on average, 36 percent more than rates for the state's 137 municipal electric utilities.

According to utility rate information from 1999, the average price residents paid for municipally-owned utility services was 6.37 cents per kilo-watt hour, and the average amount paid for privately owned utility services was 8.75 cents per kilo-watt hour.

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