

## Golden Fleece Award Revived

Written by Joe Collins  
Monday, 24 July 2000 18:00

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Every month for 13 years, Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wisconsin) gave his renowned "Golden Fleece Awards" for "wasteful, ridiculous or ironic use of the taxpayers' money." Sadly, the awards ended when Proxmire retired in 1989. But to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the award, Proxmire has asked the Taxpayers for Common Sense to revive it. The first of the new Golden Fleece Awards, given on July 5th, went to the FAA for fleecing taxpayers out of a half billion dollars in lost revenue at the Tampa International Airport. You can learn more about the Golden Fleece Award, its history and more at <http://www.taxpayer.net/goldenfleece/index.htm>.

Interested in making a difference in the future of your local schools? Consider a position on the school board. North Scott, Davenport and Bettendorf will all have two seats open in the upcoming school-board elections on September 12th. Pleasant Valley will have three seats open. Nomination papers are available at school-district administrative offices. Candidates must obtain the signatures of at least 1 percent of the qualified voters in the district or at least 100 voters. School board members serve three-year terms and receive no pay. Applications must be turned in by August 3rd.

The Federal Trade Commission has issued a Consumer Alert – "More than Once Upon a Mattress: Used Bedding Labeling Requirements" – in Spanish and English to help consumers distinguish between new and used mattresses when they are shopping for bedding. The bottom line is to look for a tag indicating whether the mattress is new or used and consider shopping elsewhere if the mattress does not carry one. (Used mattresses can be resold as new as long as they meet certain labeling and processing requirements.) Copies of the Consumer Alert are available free from the FTC by calling (877)382-4357 or visiting its web site at <http://www.ftc.gov>

As a result of legislation approved by the 2000 session of the Iowa General Assembly, the Iowa Commission of Veteran's Affairs is accepting applications for the World War II Merchant Marine bonus for veterans who served in the oceangoing Merchant Marine between 1941 and 1946. Anyone who was an Iowa resident for at least six months immediately before entering the Merchant Marine and served on active duty for at least 120 days between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, may apply. Honorably discharged and qualified veterans are entitled to receive \$12.50 for each month on active duty, with benefits not to exceed \$500. Additionally, beneficiary applications are available for survivors and descendents of deceased veterans. To request an application or for more information, call (800)838-4692 or email [info@icva.state.ia.us](mailto:info@icva.state.ia.us)

By the time you read this, there will be a new area code in central Iowa. The new 641 area code will affect 388 prefixes in 223 towns including Charles City, Iowa Falls, Newton, Osceola and Ottumwa, all of which were previously in the 515 area code. For more information on area-code splits, including the upcoming 319 split, see the Iowa Utility Board web site at <http://www.state.ia.us/iub>. You can also leave comments on the proposed split via the web site. The plan is projected to be completed by October 2000.

Want to help guide the soil and water conservation program in Scott County? Candidates are

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being sought to run for three Scott County Soil and Water Conservation District commissioner seats that will be filled in the November 7th general election. Any qualified elector residing in Scott County is eligible. However, no more than one commissioner may be a resident of any one township. Nomination petitions are available from the county auditor and must be signed by 25 eligible voters and filed with the auditor's office no later than 5 p.m., August 30th. For more information on the commission, contact its office at 8370 Hillandale Road, Davenport, or call (319)391-1403, extension 3.

In an intriguing turn of events, Hal Bayne, who lost in the Republican primary to determine who would run against U.S. Representative Lane Evans (D-Illinois), has endorsed Evans over Mark Baker, the incumbent's current GOP opponent. Bayne, a retired oral surgeon from Rock Island County, has said Evans has integrity and concern for his constituents and praised Evans' record on the environment, workers' rights and health care for the uninsured. Rock Island County Republican officials are peeved and blame Bayne's defection on his receiving only 28 percent of the vote during the primary election.

Governor Tom Vilsack has appointed Riverboat Development Authority President Mary Ellen Chamberlain to the Vision Iowa Board. The board will be charged with deciding how to spend the \$300 million Vision Iowa Major Attraction Fund, which will give money to large-scale community projects costing at least \$20 million dollars. The projects must have local or private support for at least 50 percent of the total cost and are limited to receiving \$75 million. Davenport is hoping to win funding to renovate John O'Donnell Stadium, build an IMAX theater at the Putnam Museum and build the new Davenport Museum of Art. Bettendorf is looking to build a marina near the Isle of Capri Casino and Hotel.

Want to see how your Illinois school compares to others in the state? Illinois is in the process of completing a web site that will show the Illinois Standards Achievement Test scores from the 9,000 schools in the state. Users will then be able to compare schools – with others in the district or anywhere in the state. The site took seven months to build and cost \$100,000. It can be found at <http://ilsa.isbe.state.il.us/>. Currently, the site appears to have no live data comparing schools but does provide an interesting glimpse into what could be a powerful tool for parents and educators.