

## Republicans Meet While Gore Floats

Written by Joe Collins

Tuesday, 29 August 2000 18:00

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Coincidentally, Scott County Republicans had a meeting on the eve of Vice President Al Gore's campaign trip floating down the Mississippi River. The keynote speaker was former Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, and U. S. Representative Jim Leech (R-IA) also spoke a few words. Republican candidates running for state, county, and local offices were all introduced to the mostly older crowd. The high note for many was a speech given by a former Marine Bill Salier, who has formed an exploratory committee to look at challenging U.S. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA). His speech had Libertarian overtones, mainly a no-compromise stand against passing laws that would cost taxpayers money or those outside the scope outlined in the 10th Amendment. His speech earned him a standing ovation.

The East Davenport Development Corporation has begun the process of creating a redevelopment plan for an area of Davenport called the East Davenport Neighborhoods. To address the issues involved in the revitalization of the neighborhoods, a Community Developers Workshop will be held on Wednesday, August 30, at 10 a.m. at the Davenport River Center at 136 East 3rd Street, Davenport. The idea is to bring together all facets of the Quad Cities development community – citizens, developers, property owners, lending institutions, civic not-for-profits, businesses, and government agencies. Leading this discussion will be a representative from McCormack Baron & Associates of St. Louis, a nationally recognized leader in urban redevelopment. The representative will share success stories as well as some project pitfalls experienced over the past 20 years. To make a reservation or for more information, call (319)344-6768.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is beginning an "Expedited Enforcement Program" to improve compliance with Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure regulations in Region 7, which includes Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas. Region 5, which includes Illinois, is considering similar initiatives. One of the features will be targeted inspection and enforcement in Davenport, Iowa, and St. Louis, Missouri. Affected industries and business are those storing oil of any kind – petroleum, mineral, synthetic, animal, or vegetable – in quantities exceeding 660 gallons. "Stored" oil can include things such as transformers and oil-filled equipment.

Soldiers for the Truth (SFTT) is a grassroots educational organization started by a small group of concerned veterans and citizens to inform the public, Congress, and the media about the decline in readiness of our armed forces. SFTT is inspired by the outspoken idealism of retired Colonel David Hackworth. To find out more, including how to receive the group's weekly newsletter, look at its Web site at (<http://www.sftt.org>).

Former Iowa Governor Branstad has been named a financial advisor at the Des Moines office of Robert W. Baird & Co. Baird – an international wealth-management, investment-banking, and asset-management firm – which also has offices in Cedar Rapids and Davenport. Branstad will be working closely with individual, corporate, and institutional investors to plan and execute financial strategies based on the clients' needs and financial goals.

"A 100-Percent Tax Cut" was the title of a column in the Friday, July 28, edition of the Wall Street Journal. Written by Susan Lee, an economist and member of the Wall Street Journal's editorial board, the column attacked the tax system as "confiscatory, unfair, frustrating,

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downright irritating, and amazingly inefficient in the economic sense.” Lee then analyzed the no-tax libertarian position. She came up with a very intriguing way of financing the government in a tax-free society – charitable giving while providing for a strong defense. If charitable donations would rise to 4 percent of national income under a no-tax regime, with a national income of \$7.5 trillion, that would yield \$300 billion, more than enough to cover the bill of a greatly reduced government, while still providing for a strong defense, she argued.

Grant applications for the Scott County Regional Authority grant cycle are now available. Grant forms must be dated Fall 2000 and are available at several locations including Davenport, Bettendorf, Walcott and LeClaire city halls and the Bettendorf, Davenport, and Scott County libraries. Deadline for submission is October 1, and awards will be announced in late November. Applications should be sent to the Scott County Regional Authority; P.O. Box 474; Bettendorf, IA 52722.

The Davenport City Council is asking hard questions concerning the chain of command in the police department and might consider changes before hiring a new chief. The questions come after the city released a transcript of an interview with former police Sergeant Greg Collins as part of an internal-affairs investigation. In the interview, Collins said he ran the vice unit as he saw fit, including the creation of a secret slush fund to pay fines and bail for informants.

A federal court finally released the names of influential unindicted co-conspirators in previous Governor Jim Edgar’s administration in a state-contract scandal with a private consulting firm that scammed \$12.9 million from the State of Illinois. Management Services of Illinois, Inc. had a contract with the Department of Public Aid to decrease welfare costs by identifying insurance coverage for people on public aid that would replace health care benefits paid by the government. In 1993, the state paid MSI \$409,000, but by the next year payments to the firm for essentially the same services skyrocketed to \$11.2 million. Prosecutors resisted publicly identifying the alleged co-conspirators fearing that it would hurt future cases. However, the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago set precedence by ruling in favor of releasing the names because, “...the secrecy violated the fundamental right of citizens to know what is happening in their courtrooms.” The political power brokers’ names included Michael Belletire, Edgar’s deputy chief of staff and later head of the Illinois Gaming Board; Janis Cellini, Edgar’s patronage chief and the sister of Springfield business tycoon William Cellini; and Jim Owen, a former assistant to James “Pate” Philip, Senate President.