

A4 CENTRAL ILLINOIS Decatur, Illinois • Thursday, December 16, 1999

## Illinova gives reforestation funds

By SUSAN REIDY  
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — Illinova Corp. is giving \$3.7 million to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to plant 50 million trees during the next five years in the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

The donation is the largest private reforestation effort in the nation, said Tom MacKenzie, spokesman for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"It provides for the reforestation of 13 national wildlife refuges at no expense to the taxpayer," he said. "There's no way we could have been able to do this on our budget. It would have taken years and years."

Illinova realizes there is a balance between providing energy that customers require and the impact on the environment, said Illinova Power Co. spokeswoman

Molly Hall. The trees can help clear the atmosphere of carbon dioxide, which is created in part by the burning of fossil fuels.

"We see it as a recognizable, positive and proactive approach to environmental concerns about carbon dioxide in the air," Hall said.

Seedlings will be planted starting in the spring, MacKenzie said. More than 10,000 acres, at a pace of about 20,000 a year, will be replanted with native hardwood trees.

The foundation will work with Environmental Synergy Inc. to plant the trees that will provide a habitat for migratory waterfowl, black bears and birds. Trees will be planted at the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Illinois and other refuges in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

"We're just ecstatic about it and we're ecstatic for the American people too because they get a whole lot of trees to enjoy," MacKenzie said. "It might take awhile, 20 to 30 years, but it's something our kids will be able to enjoy."

Illinova has partnered with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Conservation Foundation in a reforestation program since 1993.

The utility company has spent more than \$1 million on the program, Hall said. By the end of this year, about 6 million trees will have been planted.

Since April, Macon County received about 8,700 of those trees, while Shelby County got about 16,000; Sangamon County about 18,700; Madison County 61,500; Platte County 20,500 and Logan County 6,500.

## CENTER: More than 600 companies are contracted to use the facility

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mine for 15 years," Fletcher said at that time. "We need in our community a facility like this that will help attract employers. It will help control worker's comp costs."

He said the 10,000-square-foot, two-story warehouse would include workstations that simulate the workplace environment. The center also would house underground storage tanks, telephone and utility poles, a truck driving simulation station, car engines, hoists, an underground mine, loading dock, shoveling pit, railroad boxcar and delivery truck.

On Tuesday, the Richland Community College Board did, however, authorize Novak to negotiate a contract with the center.

Tuesday night, board President Wayne Dunning said, "A lot of community colleges will be watching what we do."

"It's something that has not been done before," he said. "We're on the cutting edge with this."

Richland already has a Center for Business Training and Development. It offers computer training, technical skills instruction, OSHA courses and management and leadership development.

Richland specifically offers OSHA training for scaffolds, forklifts, first responders, construction safety and confined spaces. It also has professional truck driver training.

—H&R Staff Writer Brad Mudd  
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## Decatur man's drug case ends in mistrial

Alternate juror was allowed into jury deliberations in trial of Sterling W. Shelby.

By TOM COLLINS  
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — A mistrial was declared Wednesday in the criminal trial of Sterling W. Shelby.

Shelby, 23, faces multiple felony drug charges, including possession, conspiracy and delivery charges that carry sentences of six to 30 years.

His trial began Monday and the jury retired Wednesday to deliberate.

But Macon County Circuit Judge Jerry Patton had to declare a mistrial after he, the attorneys and court staff failed to catch a mistake.

Shelby's lawyer, Asher O. Geisler, explained that an alternate juror was accidentally admitted to the jury room for deliberations.

An alternate juror hears evidence but only deliberates if a fellow juror is ill or absent.

"Nobody got sick or anything, and we forgot to excuse the alternate before the jury started deliberating," Geisler said. "So there were 13 people in the jury deliberating."

Everybody missed it," he said. "The prosecutor, the judge and myself."

Shelby's drug case resumes for a pretrial hearing on Jan. 3.

Previously, Shelby was found guilty May 25 of aggravated battery of a police officer and resisting a police officer. In August, he was sentenced to two years in prison.

Shelby also is a plaintiff in a \$30 million civil rights lawsuit against the city of Decatur. The lawsuit claims his civil rights were violated on Sept. 7, 1998, when he was beaten by police and bitten by a police dog following a traffic stop.

That case goes to federal court for jury trial in March.

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## JACKSON: Arrests came during protests

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When asked why charges were filed almost a month after the arrests, Fletcher said "we always try to have the (charges) in before they have to appear in court. With this case in particular, we wanted to review all the factors involved."

The arrests were the culmination of nearly two weeks of demonstrations to protest the expulsion of six Decatur students after a fight at a football game at Eisenhower High School. A seventh student withdrew from school before the Decatur school board acted on a recommendation to expel him.

Attempts Wednesday night to contact local Rainbow/PUSH Coalition representatives about the charges were unsuccessful.

Jackson, the founder of the group, was asked by the local chapter to intervene in the expulsion issue. According to court documents obtained by the Herald & Review, police say Jackson brought six students to Eisenhower on Nov. 8 and ushered them onto school property. The expelled students are barred from school property as part of their punishment, and some of the students are minors.

The charges against Willis stem from his alleged actions on Nov. 16. It's alleged that when Willis was arrested, he held his arms out and span in a circle, striking two officers, according to court documents. When Cunningham was arrested, he pulled away from police officers and struggled while they attempted to handcuff him, according to the documents.

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## STATION: Illinois Power will buy at least 75 percent of plant's electricity output

Clinton's 900 employees will become AmerGen employees when the transaction is complete. The company said earlier that Clinton has about 200 more employees than other power plants it operates. There will likely be some layoffs, mostly through attrition.

Clinton Power also expects some layoffs related to support work for the plant.

"When you bring a plant in like this, you probably will have some duplication, particularly in the areas of engineering and maintenance," Jones said.

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