

The Courier

METROLIFE

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Nancy Raffaenberger Newhoff, Managing Editor (291-1445) ■ Larry Ballard, Regional Editor (291-1451)

Vets divided on worth of expanding commission

■ They agree Board of Supervisors should have gotten their input first.

By TIM JAMISON
Courier Staff Writer

WATERLOO

Members of the Black Hawk County Veterans Affairs Commission are split over a proposal to expand the size of their board.

But they offered a unified, angry denunciation Wednesday of last month's effort by the Board of Supervisors to appoint two new members without input from the three commissioners or local veterans groups.

"I feel hurt; I feel like I have been raped, and I'm totally upset," said Lloyd Green, the only commissioner contacted by supervisors about the proposal.

The supervisors' plan was tabled July 29 when representatives from local veterans groups and the VA Commission accused them of an ambush.

Green was outraged that some supervisors said he supported the idea.

"I told (supervisor) Sonia Johansson that it sounded like a good idea, but I needed to bring it back to the commission," he said. "I felt like no decision would be made until it went back to the Board of Supervisors from this commission."

"I still stand behind what I said," Green added. "I think it's a good idea that would give us more input from outlying communities and more input from the veterans."

But VA Commission Chairman Roger Redman wasn't so sure.

"I personally think going to five is a waste," he said. "Three of us are doing the job just fine right now."

Supervisor Barbara Leestamper said she was not trying to hurt veterans by increasing the size of the commission.

"The only reason I felt it was a good idea going to a five-member board was that I felt it would give you better representation," she said.

There are more than 13,000 veterans in the county, but more than 8,000 don't belong to organizations such as the AMVETS or Disabled American Veterans, Leestamper said.

"I felt, and I still feel, that those veterans still need representation too," she said.

But commissioner Elaine Clemens questioned who would be represented.

"The purpose I saw in the stacking of the (commission) was to get people who would know how to get the Board of Supervisors," she said. "It looked like the board was going to get better representation, not the commission."

"Five people would not get anything more through the board than we'd be able to get with three," Clemens added.

Michael Lesch, who was scheduled to be appointed to one of the new commission seats, agreed that the supervisors could have handled the process better.

"But I would like to see the commission expand to five," he said. "You have to keep in mind that there's a bunch of us (not in veterans' groups) that want to be represented too."

Having commissioners not associ-

Dillard's grand opening, mall renovation mark new chapter at Crossroads

By KEVIN O'DONOGHUE
Courier Staff Writer

WATERLOO

Dillard's really knows how to throw a party.

Eager shoppers who came to the grand opening ceremony Wednesday were ready to burst through the ceremonial ribbon before store officials had a chance to cut it.

"It's been a very exciting time these last six weeks seeing the bricks and mortar turned into what you see here," store manager Jim Long told the milling crowd.

Shoppers with a plate full of fruit in one hand and a shopping bag in the other packed into the lower-level Dillard's court area for a free continental breakfast while a jazz band trumpeted out a festive beat.

Once Long and other Dillard's officials had made their speeches and cut their ribbons, employees donning pink carnations on their name tags rushed into the store to prepare for the shoppers.

"I love the way the store looks," said Rachel Christensen, who was on hand for the grand opening. "I like the way, floor to ceiling, you see merchandise."

Cedar Falls resident Betty Johnson said Dillard's took her to a new place.

"When you walk in the store, it gives you the feeling you're in Chicago or Minneapolis. It gives you a feeling of Florida also."

Dillard's employees were as much taken with their new workplace as customers were with the new shopping haven.

"It seems like they really care about their employees," said Shelly Hansen, who landed a full-time position with the Little Rock, Ark.-based retailer. "They've got excellent benefits."

The \$20-million, 155,000-square-foot store is the largest single retail construction project in Waterloo since Crossroads opened in 1970.

Grand opening attendees also got their first look at the newly remodeled Crossroads, which completed its \$4 million renovation just in time for the event.

Crossroads did away with its food court to make way for spacious court areas providing easier access to stores and escalators.

"Most of our customers and a lot of our merchants did not like the food court because it blocked the visual effect," general manager Bonnie Smith said. "It gave them a closed-in feeling."

Restaurants now are opening in the in-line spaces between the mall's anchor stores, and small retailers are opening booths in the court areas.

The future at Crossroads comes as a boost to a retail area that has seen two major disappointments recently. Montgomery Ward & Co. announced earlier this month it will close its Electric Avenue & More store here, and Venture closed its doors for good on Sunday.

Ready to roll

Dillard's customers wait for the ribbon cutting Wednesday so they can see what the new store has to offer.

From country store to retail empire

■ Dillard's founder says company's success lies in giving customers their money's worth.

By SAUL SHAPIRO
Courier Editor

WATERLOO

Fifty-nine years and 43 million square feet ago, William T. Dillard opened his first retail store in Nashville, Ark.

Wednesday, Dillard, 83, witnessed the opening of the 25th department store to bear his name—an eye-popping, two-story, 155,000-square-foot addition to the Crossroads Center mall.

Not bad for the son of a cotton farmer—albeit one who had the family's 12,000 acres to tend as well as a country store to help run in tiny (pop. 700) Mineral Springs, Ark.

His background in farming caused Dillard's eyes to light up when speaking about Waterloo.

"In my career I've dabbled in a number of different things," he said. "But I've never really made any money except running a store and farming. I used to be a pretty big size farmer, and I used nothing but John Deere equipment—two cylinders."

The Waterloo market is the second in Iowa for Little Rock, Ark.-based Dillard's. A Council Bluffs store is already open. A Coralville store is being built.

"We try to go to a town where we think we could add something to the retail scene," Dillard said. "It's pretty tough when you've got competition just as good as you are."

Dillard would like to be in Des Moines.

"Youmiers has kept us out of Des Moines," Dillard said. "They're in the three good malls in Des Moines, and we've not been offered a loca-

William Dillard was in Waterloo Wednesday for the opening of his new department store—the 25th in 27 states.

tion in one of the three good malls."

Dillard said the company expects to do \$7 billion in business this year.

According to Forbes magazine, it ranked No. 217 in sales among the nation's largest companies last year.

It was in 1938 that Dillard—a University of Arkansas grad with a master's degree from Columbia University—went into business for himself.

"I was a trainee of Sears for nine months and, from that time on I've worked for myself," he said. "The first store I ever had was a 25-foot storefront in Nashville, Ark.—50 miles from Texarkana. It took me about 10 years to make enough money to go to Texarkana."

"From Texarkana, 10 years later I bought a store in Tulsa, Okla. That store was in deep trouble. I saved the bank \$7 or \$8 million, and from that time on I've never had any financial worries because they

CALL THE COURIER

Questions concerning local issues are seen on a special Courier phone line at 234-3666.

Q. What is the e-mail address for Steve Rapp? For the Courier?

A. Rapp's is www.usdc.gov. The Courier's is wfcourier@aol.com.

Q. How do I write to Dear Abby?

A. In care of Universal Press Syndicate, 4520 Main St., Suite 700, Kansas City, MO, 64111.

Q. Are all signed letters to the editor published in the Courier? If not, why not, and how do they decide which ones will or won't be? Also, once a letter is received how long before it's in the paper?

A. Editorial page editor H. James Potter said, "Not all letters are published. Some may contain unverifiable or unverifiable claims, others are of such a strictly personal nature to be of little interest to our readers, others may simply cover the same ground covered by earlier writers. However, we make every attempt to publish as many letters as possible in order to encourage discussion of topics of public interest. The typical turnaround for the more than 3,000 letters we publish each year is about a week. Attempts to contact the authors for verification may sometimes extend this."

Q. Is Dillard's at Crossroads Mall going to pay for any traffic improvements along Crossroads Boulevard?

A. Dillard's is reviewing the traffic changes needed on Crossroads Boulevard, said Waterloo City Planner Don Tenney. Dillard's will provide any traffic lights required.

Q. Supposedly U S West sent out a flier saying customers would receive three-way calling free in June and unless we called to cancel they would start billing us for this service in July. Is it legal for them to do this if you never received the flier and didn't know you had to cancel?

A. U S West Communications spokeswoman Lynn Gipple said the company will not bill any customers for three-way calling who do not use the service. Starting on June 26, U S West started offering pay-per-use three-way calling. The service was free from June 26 to July 25, and now customers are charged 75 cents for each use.

Waterloo customers can use three-way calling by phoning the first person, then pressing the hook down lightly and dialing the second number. When the third person answers, press the hook down again to bring everyone together. Customers also can subscribe for unlimited use of the service for \$3.50.

Q. Why are the antlers backwards on the deer pictured on the deer crossing sign?

A. It's either because that's what they look like if you hit them with your vehicle, or because visitors to Iowa figure everything about us is backward, anyway. On a more serious note,