

From the Board of Supervisors August 2020

Your Fayette County Board of Supervisors recently took bids on the 12 oak swivel chairs that were original to the 1920s era construction of the courthouse in West Union – which for many years made up the jury box in the large courtroom.

Since the original bid period, I took some time to research the history and discovered the chairs were built in the 1920s by B.L. Marble Chair Co. of Bedford, Ohio. Chairmaker Barzilla L. Marble began making chairs at age 12 and formed his own company in 1894. His chairs and other furniture made its way by railroad into homes and offices, schools, courthouses and taverns around the U.S. During WWI, the company even made wooden airplane propellers – three of which are on display in the Bedford Museum.

Nine chairs remain, so we've decided to again take bids, hoping someone might like to preserve a bit of history in their home or business. Please submit a per chair bid in a sealed envelope marked 'Jury Box Chairs' by dropping the envelope in the drop box outside the courthouse, leaving it in the auditor's office, or mailing the envelope to the Fayette County Board of Supervisors, PO Box 267, West Union, IA 52175. Bids should be postmarked by or delivered by Aug. 21. Please indicate your name and address, and phone number so we can contact you. The highest bidder will have first choice to purchase one or more chairs at the 'per chair' price. The next highest bidder will have next choice and so on, until the chairs are gone.



At least one of the chairs had the paper tag on its underside indicating the manufacturer and style of the chair – hence the history. As a reminder, the chairs were constructed with a metal base that was screwed to the floor. (See photo.)

And while we're 'cleaning house,' there are a number of used air conditioners that seem too useful to landfill. They are listed on the county's website www.fayettecountyiowa.org. Prices have been reduced by 50% from what was previously listed. There are also a couple of flood lights and floor mats listed.

As part of the clean-up of the courthouse attic, custodian Tim Cummings reports 2,160

pounds of old electronics were removed to the landfill for recycling. This represented many years of discarded computers/monitors, keyboards and other hardware.

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Have you noticed how much more our local natural resources are being frequented during the pandemic? Living near the Volga River Rec Area I've seen horse trailers parked in the equestrian day area nearly every day of the week. Weekends, the lot is full. While walking through the park this past week, I talked to equestrians from Madrid and Clarksville and saw license plates from Buchanan, Clayton, Winneshiek, Black Hawk, Boone, Linn, Keokuk and Bremer counties. And that was just the equestrian campground during the middle of the week. On the weekend, add in four or five license plates from Wisconsin and Cedar, Johnson, and Allamakee counties from around the state and it appears to give quite a boost to our economy.

Conservation Director Rod Marlatt estimated that use of local recreational areas (county parks) is probably up 75% during the pandemic.

"Normally we would have the State Fair going on so that could be one reason for the increase this past weekend, but in talking to people they really appreciate their local recreational opportunities. We're here to serve and we're ready to do it," he said of the packed campgrounds and increased use of equestrian trails at Gilbertson Rec Area near Elgin.

Marlatt loves to hear instances in which visitors have such a great experience that they return with their friends and family.

When's the last time you picnicked at a local park, walked a trail or watched the sunset over the Turkey or Volga rivers, or Volga Lake?