



John C. Ackerman

Tazewell County Board

Continuing a Family Tradition of Community Service

December 28th, 2009

***** Press Release *****

2009 Year in Review

As is customary in most area of endeavor, the end of the calendar year is a convenient time to review the previous year's activities. This month marks the anniversary of my first year of the present four-year term as you Tazewell County Board Member for District Three. This will show that I have either completed or began work on many of the last campaign's stated objectives. I feel that it is important to provide an accounting to the citizens who placed their trust in me.

For the sake of brevity (so as not to lose your interest) this is a somewhat brief listing of the more significant events of 2009. For a more complete detailed description, please see the "In The News" tab of my website for the News Updates, Position Papers, Press Releases and of course, County Board Agendas, County Board Minuets and County Board Recaps.

I consider it an honor and a privilege to serve you on the Tazewell County Board and if I can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

January

Prior to being sworn in to office in December, I scheduled and began meeting with all of the Municipalities and Townships in District Three. The purpose of these meetings was to introduce myself to these elected officials that may or may not have already known me and to hear their thoughts, concerns, ideas, and goals. While some in the media and a few members of the County Board criticized me for not waiting until I was sworn in, this actually proved to be a very important source of guidance and information concerning every part of this vast district. I made a commitment to make this a yearly visit as I found the information and also the opportunity to socialize invaluable. County Board Member Mel Stanford attended several of these meetings.

February

Organized and Sponsored a visit from Fritz Klein, one of the nation's leading Abraham Lincoln impersonators, to all of the City of Washington Grade Schools. The event was a great opportunity for the students to learn more about Abraham Lincoln and to celebrate his 200th birthday.

Reversed my earlier vote at the Property Committee and voted in favor of remodeling a small portion of the Tazewell Building. At committee I had voted against this because the County did not have a Long Term Plan or a Space Needs Study to base this remodeling on. Voted in favor of this at County Board Meeting after receiving the support of several senior Property Committee Members to help me move towards getting these studies in the future.

March

Announced that I would be joining fellow Tazewell County Board Member Mel Stanford in supporting Illinois State Senator Bill Brady's Gubernatorial Campaign.

Stated my position that I disagreed with the Human Resources Committee's tabling of hiring a Human Resources Manager. Stated that while I understand that concern for the outlook for the economy was the reasoning for not moving forward with the position, I feel we had already seen the cost of not having this position with the continual stream of lawsuits we have had to payout. Stated that both this position and the Information Technology Position are needed and the county needs to take action to hire these individuals instead of waiting any longer.

Provided a listing of different amounts of Federal Stimulus Funding the county had received and the projects that is was going to be funding in the next several years.

Announced the creation of my new website, www.JohnCAckerman.com. I stated that it was my hope that this new website would not only be a source of information concerning the Tazewell County Board and Tazewell County, but also an important step in accomplishing a campaign commitment of increased communication and transparency.

April

Voted with Member Mel Stanford against a grant application for the Sheriff's office that could add two new positions. Stated that after the HR Committee voted last month not to hire an HR Manager and IT Position, both of which had funding and in my opinion were more needed to help stop the continual flow of lawsuits the county has faced, I could not then support these possible additions.

www.JohnCAckerman.com reaches a milestone with its 500th visitor.

May

May's Adventure Sports Outdoors Column marked the 12th Monthly Political Column I had written. Started writing my Monthly Political Column for them in May of 2008.

Was a Station Sponsor at the Sporting Clay Shoot Fundraiser for State Senator Bill Brady hosted by the Sportsmen for Brady. While I did not shoot that day, I am looking forward to joining them in the fun this coming year!

Organized and Sponsored an Educational Fundraiser in support of the Village of Mackinaw's Tree City USA efforts involving the Third Grade Students of Dee-Mack School District. The students rooted and potted up Corkscrew Willow Trees I donated and then they were sold throughout the year at Beth Wiegand's Garden Gate Floral in Mackinaw, who was also a sponsor. All of the proceeds from the sell of the Corkscrew Willow Trees went to the Village of Mackinaw's Tree City USA efforts and by the end of the year we had raised \$200.00 from the fundraiser.

Voted with the rest of the County Board to take ownership of the Monge Building in downtown Pekin. Also stated that this acquisition made a Space Needs Study and Long Term Plan for our facilities more important.

After months of talking about it on the Property Committee and without seeing much movement on action to correct the issue, I started a public awareness campaign to expose the potential risk and the basic need to improve and provide Storm Shelter Facilities at our Tremont Location. In the months that followed, Property Committee Chairmen Carol Imig formed a Sub-committee to research the issue and they have already improved the existing Storm Shelters and are currently working on a long-term solution to providing the whole facility with protection.

Also in conjunction with this effort, I requested that we start regularly practicing fire and storm evacuation drills at all of our facilities and it was quickly implemented by the ESDA Director.

June

Participated in the Tremont Turkey Festival Parade.

www.JohnCAckerman.com reaches another milestone with its 1000th visitor

Voted with the rest of the County Board to help the City of Washington, the Village of Morton, and the City of Pekin fund a Retail Development Study. The City of Washington's part of this involved Sunnyland Plaza. The County had these funds budgeted for Economic Development.

July

Participated in the Hopedale 4th of July Parade

Listed the local funding from the Illinois Jobs Now Program.

Attended the Dedication of the Rail Splitter Wind Farm

During the County Board Meeting, made a statement that I was "disheartened by the improper release of material covered in Executive Session by the Sheriff" concerning the Merit Commission ruling from earlier in the week.

It was announced that I was added as a Contributing Writer to the McLean County Pundit, www.mccopundit.com. Several of my columns and letters to the editor have shown up on this website, which has helped expand my contact into McLean County. My columns have also been on the Illinois Review out of the Chicago Area several times; www.illinoisreview.com.

August

Announced my position on Video Gaming in Tazewell County, which was and still is that we need to work with the Municipalities to make sure we do not setup multiple levels of rules within the county. I stated that I wanted to see just what the interest level was within the district and the county and that we need to move only after we understand fully this level of interest.

In conjunction with above, I started scheduling and meeting with all of the Municipalities in District Three for the second round of yearly visits.

Announced my position on the Eastern Bypass Study, which was and still is that it should not be located any farther east than the eastern edge of the City of Washington.

Participated in the Mackinaw Mack-a-fest Parade

Organized and Sponsored Bill Brady Day with the Peoria Chief's Baseball. Event raised proceeds for Senator Bill Brady's Gubernatorial Campaign and attracted participants and elected officials from Tazewell, Peoria, Woodford, McHenry, McLean, Knox, Logan and Sangamon Counties to name a few.

The week of August 16th - 22nd is the second most visited week for www.JohnCAckerman.com. Most visits for a week is still the first week after going public, March 29th - April 4th.

Voted to uphold the County Boards procedure of accepting the lowest qualified bidder.

After months of conversation on the Transportation Committee about needing to assist townships with the repairs and upgrades to some of the busiest township roads in the county, I was happy to announce that Highway Engineer John Anderson had found a grant through Senator Dan Rutherford's office to upgrade Cooper Road in Dee-Mack Township. This was a great example of how the County can work with the Townships.

After several weeks of heavy gossip concerning me as a candidate for Tazewell County Treasurer, I stated that I would not be at this time. I stated that my wife and I wanted to start a family, that I had much I still wanted to accomplish on the County Board, and that I just felt that now was not the time for me to run for that position.

September

Participated in the Delavan Fall Festival Parade.

Participated in the Pekin Marigold Festival Parade.

Attended the Woodford County Republican Party Picnic as an invited guest.

www.JohnCAckerman.com reaches another milestone with its 2000th visitor and it turns 6 months old.

Participated in the Morton Pumpkin Festival Parade.

Maria and I was guest for a tour of the Tazewell County Museum and Educational Center and got a preview of the new Astronaut Scott Altman Wing of the Museum.

Maria and I celebrated our one-year anniversary.

October

Announced in conjunction with the Sunnyland Business Association, and with the approval of the City of East Peoria and IDOT, new plans for Illinois Route 8 Phase Three Construction to include landscaped medians.

Maria and I announced that she is pregnant with our first child. Due date is June 3rd, 2010.

Maria and I was a guest of the Tazewell County Museum and Educational Center at the Scott Altman Tribute Dinner in Pekin.

Was one of many Sponsors of a Columbus Day Fundraiser for Senator Bill Brady in Bloomington.

Was happy to vote for the hiring of a County HR Manager. This new position will be responsible for writing the policies we need to stop these wasteful lawsuits. Also made the statement that "all of our leadership throughout the organization" needs to "utilize this individual once he/she is hired, in all staffing decisions and actions."

Voted against the Behm Settlement do to the fact that it had a confidentiality clause that denied the County Board Members the right to talk with the public about the case. I feel it is our responsibility to communicate with our constituents and that any attempt to block this communication is wrong.

November

Was one of many Sponsors of a Reception for Senator Dan Rutherford in Peoria hosted by Peoria City Councilman George Jacob.

The week of November 15th - 21st is the third most visited week for www.JohnCAckerman.com. Most visits for a week is still the first week after going public, March 29th - April 4th.

Organized and lead a vote to suspend the rules of the County Board to allow for public input on the Video Gaming Ban after their request to speak at the meeting were denied by Chairmen Dave Zimmerman.

Voted to send the Video Gaming Ban back to the Executive Committee for further review.

Attended the Deer Creek Middle School PTA Pancake and Sausage Supper

December

It was announced that I had been added as an Contributing Writer to the Peoria based Blogging While Republican; www.bloggingwhilerepublican.blogspot.com.

Announced completion of the second round of Municipal Visits and the beginning of the second round of Township Visits. County Board Members Mel Stanford, Paul Hahn and Russ Crawford attended several of these meetings.

Introduction of my new **Blog**, www.JohnCAckerman.blogspot.com, which aims to continue increasing communication by allowing an opportunity for my constituents to post their thoughts and concerns.

It is announced that the new and improved Official Tazewell County Website is now available. While I am proud that the citizens of Tazewell County now have more information available to them anytime they want it, I think more information needs to be made available via this communication media. I had supported updating the County Website since being elected to office.

Introduction of my new **Facebook** page. Link can be found on the Home Page of the website. Facebook is just another part of my continual goal to increase communication with my constituents.

County Board produced it's first yearly Legislative Agenda. While I supported many of the issues in this agenda, I questioned why one of the upcoming years most important issues was left off. The need to Reform of the Redistricting Process in Illinois will be one of this upcoming years most discussed issues. I strongly support any changes to the current system that takes the power away from politicians to decide who votes for them. I think the current system leads to too much corruption and takes the power away from the general public and puts it in the hands of a few individuals. I believe on reason it was not addresses was because we have the same issue in Tazewell County, where a few County Board Members decide what the County Board Districts are rather than an independent council.

John C. Ackerman
(309) 635-7624
www.JohnCAckerman.com