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Governor vetoes eminent domain bill

Proposal drafted by Charles City Rep. Thomson would have curtailed pipeline project ability to force private land access

By Bob Steenson
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Gov. Kim Reynolds on Wednesday vetoed a bill that would have placed new limits on the use of eminent domain for projects like the proposed Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline that would cut across Floyd County, including through the Avenue of the Saints Development Park in Charles City.

Reynolds' veto of House File 639 drew immediate reactions from both sides of the highly charged issue, which has sparked legal and political battles statewide over the past three years.


Supporters of the legislation argued it is needed to protect Iowa landowners from having private property taken for a project they say primarily benefits private investors.

Opponents warned the measure could cripple future infrastructure projects critical to agriculture, ethanol and energy production.

Rep. Charley Thomson, R-Charles City, who had written the bill, issued a statement saying the governor's actions put her "solidly on board" with "a ruthless cabal of politicians intent on a reckless, unsafe, and illegal pipeline project."



Reynolds



Thomson

"In the governor's view, constitutional rights, such as eminent domain protections, should

not be allowed to interfere with schemes to make money, especially if those schemes are being promoted by her friends, supporters, and contributors," Thomson said.

In her veto message, Reynolds said that while she respects both sides of the debate, House File 639 "isn't just about eminent domain."

"It goes much further – and

in doing so, sets a troubling precedent that threatens Iowa's energy reliability, economy and reputation as a place where businesses can invest with confidence," she wrote.

Reynolds said the bill would change permitting rules and inject uncertainty into critical energy projects including oil, gas

BILL VETO, turn to page 7



Press photo by Travis Fischer

Kids got to get up close with Lucille Ball Python during the Charles City Library's Wonderful Wednesday program featuring Kim White's "Incredible Bats" and lots of other animals.

Bat chat draws library crowd

Wonderful Wednesday program features live animals, hands-on learning

By Travis Fischer
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Kids went batty over the Charles City Public Library's Wonderful Wednesday program this week as naturalist Kim White stopped in to present her "Incredible Bats."

Coming from the Chicago area, the Fort Dodge native said she is enjoying her trip back home to Iowa with a nine-city tour as she educates kids about animals.

Bringing along her bats, Togo and Zulu, White separated fact from myth for the kids,



Kids enjoyed getting a close look at Chip, the three-banded armadillo, at the library program.

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Press photo by Bob Steenson

The Pure Prairie Poultry chicken processing plant in Charles City, which has been closed since Oct. 3, 2024, has had most of its assets sold in a "credit bid" transaction approved recently by a Minnesota District Court judge in Nicollet County.

Bank takes Pure Prairie assets in 'credit bid' sale

Minnesota court OK's transaction

By Bob Steenson
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Community Bank & Trust of West Georgia has taken ownership of most of the former Pure Prairie Poultry plant in Charles City, acquiring the company's real estate, equipment and other major assets through a court-supervised receivership in Minnesota.

The bank, along with another investor, Michael Helgeson, took possession through a "credit bid" – using the debt owed to them in lieu of a cash purchase – under a May 30 order signed by Nicollet County District Court Judge Allison Krehbiel, according to court documents.

The action effectively ends months of one branch of the legal maneuvering over the closed

poultry processing plant.

Community Bank & Trust had been Pure Prairie's primary lender, holding a claim of roughly \$36 million, part of which was guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The loan guarantee was issued through the USDA's Food Supply Chain Guaranteed Loan Program, created to expand domestic food processing capacity and strengthen the nation's food supply chain following disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Helgeson, who is a former leader in another poultry company, held secured claims of about \$2.1 million.

Under the credit bid, Community Bank agreed to take over

POULTRY, turn to page 14

Supervisor's death leaves vacancy on county board

Dennis Keifer, in his first four-year term, was serving this year as the chairman

By Bob Steenson
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Floyd County Supervisor Dennis Keifer, who was elected to the board in 2022 and had served as chairman since January, died Wednesday while hospitalized in Rochester, Minnesota, following a stroke.

His death creates a vacancy on the three-member Board of Supervisors that could be filled through an appointment or a

special election.

Keifer, age 73, of Charles City, was a retired crop insurance business executive whose 2022 campaign was his first bid for elected office.

He ran as a Republican on a platform of fiscal responsibility and maintaining emergency services, defeating Democrat Josh Mack, a businessman and school board member.

That election was the first

held after voters had approved dividing Floyd County into supervisor districts. Keifer was elected in District 2, representing all of Charles City north of the Cedar River and the part of St. Charles Township that is north of the city.

Coincidentally, the start of Keifer's term also saw a supervisor vacancy. Jeff Hawbaker, who had been elected to represent Supervisor District 3,

declined the position soon after the election.

A committee consisting of Auditor Gloria Carr, Recorder Amy Assink and Treasurer Jessie Holm selected Jim Jorgensen to serve as supervisor until the next general election, which occurred last November and at which current Supervisor Boyd Campbell was elected.

Those same county officers will also decide how Keifer's

vacant position will be filled.

Assink and Holm are still recorder and treasurer, but the auditor is now Morrigan Miller, having replaced Carr, who was elected and is now serving as a supervisor.

That group can either choose to appoint a new supervisor or can call for a special election to

be held in the vacant supervisor district.

If the board chooses to appoint a supervisor, it must publish a public notice letting residents of the vacant district know they can petition for a special election to be held.

If the board decides to appoint a supervisor, it must do so within 40 days of when the vacancy occurred.

An appointee must have lived in the district for at least 60 days and be eligible to hold the office.



Keifer



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