

THE VOLUNTEER

A NEWSLETTER FOR RCRV MEMBERS

October 2010
Volume 10, Issue 2

Rockwell Collins Retiree Volunteers

If you can dream it,
we can do it.

Mission

Rockwell Collins retirees connecting to identify and support volunteer needs in our community and beyond, while enriching the lives of the volunteers.

Officers

Jim Green – Chairman
Jim Spencer – Vice Chairman
Barbara Hoffman – Secretary
Arlo Meyer - Treasurer

Committee Chairs

John McDonough –
Community Projects Team
Barbara Hoffman & Cliff Koop –
Recruiting/Retention
Chuck Wehage –
Communications
Angela Berns – Agency Liaison
Jim Klein – Data Base

Web Site

<http://rcrv.org>
e-mail: contact@rcrv.org

RCRV
927 N. Compton Drive
Hiawatha, Iowa 52233
319-393-9637 (voice mail)



RCRV Meetings

Community Projects Team

The Community Projects Team meets every Thursday at 10:00 in our office in the REACT Center where we discuss future and current projects. Service agency representatives submit new project requests on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month. You are always welcome at any of the meetings.

New Retirees Orientation

Informational meetings for new retirees or others interested in becoming active members of RCRV are held at 9 AM on the third Thursday of each month at the REACT Center (927 N. Compton Dr. in Hiawatha). Those of you interested in learning more about RCRV and the many volunteer opportunities we offer are encouraged to attend. ♦

Notice of Annual RCRV Meeting

RCRV by-laws require notification to all members, including members of the Board of Directors, of the annual meeting. This year, the meeting will be held at the American Red Cross Manville Center, 4300 Rockwell Dr. NE, Cedar Rapids, on November 17, 2010 at 1:30 PM. All Rockwell Collins retirees are invited to attend the annual meeting, including inactive RCRV members and those who may wish to become active members. Officers and board members for 2011 will be elected during the annual meeting. Come join us! ♦

ATTENTION ALL Rockwell Collins RETIREES

On November 8 through the 10th, at the KTOS Center, 3375 Armar Dr, Marion (across from Carlos O'Kelly's) RCRV will hold its annual Rockwell Collins 2011 Insurance Seminars. We will provide information on the 2011 Rockwell Collins Insurance Program.

Please join us. All your questions will be answered by one of several Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) counselors either directly after the presentation in the group question time period or by individual counselors on a one on one sessions with you.

Two sessions will be held each day at 10:00 and 1:30. Reservations are required, as space is limited to 200 each session. Please call **Kirkwood Continuing Education** for reservations to the RCRV events at 398-1022 or 1-800-332-8833.

WHEELCHAIR RAMP ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAM – W.R.A.P.

In April 2005, a coalition of agencies and individuals came together to explore timely and cost-effective responses to aging and disabled populations in need of safe and effective home access via a wheelchair ramp. RCRV realized that individuals in need of a wheelchair ramp are in immediate crisis. Life in a wheelchair is not something one plans for; it wreaks havoc on one's mental, physical, spiritual, and financial health. Volunteers learned that people in need of a wheelchair ramp had multiple barriers, like funding sources and providers who could supply answers to their questions.

RCRV wanted to eliminate some of these barriers by mobilizing eastern Iowa's human service agencies that provide assistance for the disabled to work collectively to explore affordable and timely response for those in need of safe and effective home access. Thus, Wheelchair Ramp Accessibility Program - WRAP - was born!

WRAP first built ramps for low-income elderly who had home access needs. These volunteers designed and constructed the wheelchair ramps for the elderly who were eligible for the Elderly Waiver Fund (this fund paid for



Ramp construction

the ramp materials while RCRV provided design and labor). RCRV worked collaboratively with Aging Services, who connected volunteers with the elderly who needed help. Aging Services provides services that maintain, integrate and enhance the lives of seniors residing in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and surrounding communities.

RCRV volunteers learned that the demands for wheelchair ramps were tremendous, and not just for low-income elderly but for all ages and financial capabilities. Recovering stroke and orthopedic patients, Iowa's disabled military veterans, amputees, and patients with chronic illnesses like Multiple Sclerosis are some of those individuals in need of wheelchair ramps.

Over the years, fifty individuals representing over 20 agencies have come to the table to find a solution. WRAP provides affordable, soundly built (with the intent of ADA guidelines), flexible home access on a timely basis for those in need regardless of age, income, or diagnosis. All design, construction, and labor needed for building a WRAP wheelchair ramp are provided by volunteers, primarily RCRV volunteers.

In 2009, 35 jobs were completed by seven designers:

- 27 Permanent Ramps Built
- 2 Temporary Ramp Installations
- 3 Ramp Repairs
- 2 Railing & Other Repairs
- 1 Ramp Removal for materials recycling/reuse

The total length of ramps built in 2009 is 856.5 ft (285.5 yds or 0.16 miles)
The average volunteer hours per build: 45.4 hours
The average age of WRAP clients in 2009 was 66 years old (range: 4 - 91)
WRAP built ramps in the following cities:



A completed ramp with the construction crew

- Cedar Rapids: 22
- Marion: 3
- Hiawatha: 3
- Atkins: 1
- Anamosa: 1
- Martelle: 1
- Swisher: 1
- Vinton: 1
- Lisbon: 1
- Springville: 1

WRAP is one of the many projects the RCRV volunteers are involved with actively. This program has grown tremendously due to the RCRV's passion and tenacious spirit to help those in need. WRAP is a unique organization its service is not duplicated in any part of Iowa. WRAP's long term goal is to expand outside of Eastern Iowa to the entire state. ♦

Trail Counters

The following is a reprint of an article that appeared in the Linn County Trails Association newsletter *Trail Connections*, summer 2010

Linn County Trails Association maintains infrared counters to measure trail usage on several Linn County trails. You may have seen the blue, brown or white posts on either side of the trail. An infrared beam similar to the TV remote is sent from one of the posts and detected from the other post. When the beam is interrupted, a count is

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recorded. The detector measures the beam interruption period and the time between interruptions to prevent false counts due to rain drops, swinging arms, and many other events that could produce multiple false counts.

In 2004 LCTA board member, Ron McGraw, requested that the Rockwell Collins Retiree Volunteers (RCRV) develop a method to count trail users. Dick Kittrell, a Rockwell Collins retired engineer, took the challenge and designed and built the trail counters in use today. (Ed: Mike Wilson, then president of LCTA, originally recognized the need for trail counters and was most instrumental in getting them developed.) The first ten were built from surplus boards and modified TV remotes. John Wauer, another Rockwell Collins retired engineer and LCTA board member, installed the trail counters and maintains the counts. The ten counters are now installed on trails throughout Linn County.



Trail counter posts on Cedar River Trail

Recently, Linn Area Mountain Bike Association (LAMBA) requested counters for their trails in Beverly Park. We went back to Dick and asked, "Can we build more?" In the mean time, John had designed and built an additional counter, but the design was very labor intensive and not practical for building lots more counters. The surplus boards were no longer available, so Dick designed the new counters from

scratch. Another RCRV member, Kay Nelson, then built the boards. Dick and Kay have volunteered many hours working on this project. We now have ten more counters; four for LAMBA and the rest for LCTA to use as spares and on NEW TRAILS! We owe Dick and Kay many thanks for their contribution.

The trail usage data provides hard data to demonstrate the importance of trails to the Linn County residents and visitors. This in turn justifies money for maintenance of trails, improvement of trails and construction of new trails. We rely on trail users to read and report the counts. You too can be a trail count reporter. When you pass one of the trail counter posts, stop and write down the 6 digit number shown in the window in the top of one of the posts and email it to trailcount@linncountytrails.org. Include the time, date, and location along with the count. Counters are now operating on the Cedar River Trail, Cedar Lake Trail, Cedar Valley Nature Trail, and Boyson Trail. Trail counters formerly installed on the Sac and Fox Trail are currently waiting for the trail to be reopened after the 2008 flood. To view trail usage history go to <http://www.linncountytrails.org> and click on Trails/Trail Usage. ♦

Please Join Us

This newsletter goes out to nearly 4000 Rockwell Collins retirees; 220 or so have signed up with Rockwell Collins Retiree Volunteers. The reasons for this seemingly lackluster participation are many, but certainly not for any lack of willingness to volunteer in the community. In fact, when I talk to "inactive" friends, fellow retirees, I learn that they serve on boards of non-profits, help out at museums, care centers or hospitals, mow lawns at their church and are doing many other volunteer activities. They tell me they

have not joined RCRV because they are fully committed with their lives, and are already doing all the volunteering that they have time for. WELL, GUESS WHAT? **You don't need to go to any meetings, take on any more volunteer work if you don't want to. Just sign up and report your volunteer hours monthly or quarterly to Barbara Hoffman at 319-398-5372 or on RCRV.org under "Report your volunteer hours".**

WHY DO IT?

The only direct benefit of adding your hours to RCRV's total is the insurance. As a "station" of RSVP – Retired Senior Volunteer Program - members are covered for personal liability and medical while doing or traveling to volunteer activities. The insurance is secondary to your regular coverage, but you could cover your copay if you whack your thumb building a ramp, or got whiplash from hitting a deer on the way to or from a volunteer job. Those that report twelve hours per year are active members of RSVP and covered.

WHY DO WE CARE?

RCRV gets a great deal of support from Rockwell Collins – meeting facilities, publishing and mailing this newsletter, supplying materials, etc. As we increase our hours of community service, we can expect increased support from the company. By collecting the hours that you are already working, I know that the hours will go up dramatically. So far this year, we recorded over 23,000 hours from our 221 registered members. The real number is easily ten times that. If you are regularly volunteering, please consider filling out the form at our web site, rcrv.org by clicking on the "Become an active member ..." link at the bottom of the home page. Or, if not on the web, just call Barbara Hoffman at 319-398-5372

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Of course, we hope you will drop in at a meeting, most Thursdays at 10:00 at the REACT Center, Munson Building, 927 North Compton Drive, Hiawatha (behind CR Toyota). We'd like to see you, but the main purpose of the meeting is to give under funded social service agencies a chance to bring ideas and work out solutions to their problems. We can use everybody. We have assembly people, accountants, managers, marketing people and engineers – all are needed and welcome.♦

Ladder Golf

Cliff Koop received the following note from the students at Prairie View Elementary after he built two ladder golf sets for them. Cliff has built lots of the ladder golf sets for area schools.

Dear Cliff,



Prairie View Elementary ladder golf

Thank you for building us two ladder golf sets. We really like the cool designs on the balls. Mrs. Neira is teaching us the game so that we can play at 4th grade recess. We will also get to play for a reward when we have a really great day. Thank you for taking the time to build the set and paying for it for us. You are a huge Bucket Filler©. Thanks for helping us have fun activities to do at recess with our friends.

Sincerely,
Nate and Nathan
and the kids of Prairie View Elementary

Jack Hotchkiss and Les Hearther

This year, we lost both Jack and Les. These men were good at what they did in long careers at Rockwell Collins, and just kept going at the same speed the rest of their lives.

Jack was the one of the principal architects of RCRV. The inspiration for the starting RCRV came in 1997 from Jack's volunteer work in assistive technology through Kiwanis International. He concluded from that effort that "the prices that handicapped people have to pay for assistive devices is a travesty" and decided that the large pool of Rockwell Collins retirees could be organized as volunteers to provide affordable, quality solutions. Assistive technology became the keystone for the start of RCRV but it has since diversified to include many types of volunteer work and has over 200 active members. He recognized early that there was an opportunity to use the style and work ethic of the typical Collins employee for community service in retirement modeled on another program in the Twin Cities area. He recognized



Jack with some of the RCRV awards

that with just a little help from the company, an effective organization could accomplish much more than individuals working independently. Jack was a great believer in team effort, and just wouldn't let the program stagnate.

Les Hearther joined RCRV when it was founded and was one of the organization's most active members. His most notable contributions were in the design, development and production of a variety of assistive technology devices for use by students and adults with disabilities. His designs have significantly broadened the recreational horizons of disabled students and increased the productivity of handicapped adults. He was a master craftsman in wood, designing many assistive technology devices, mainly for Grant Wood Area Education Association and the students that



Les with his bowling ball pusher and ramp

GWAEA serves. His Frisbee throwers, fishing machine, catapults, bowling ball pusher and ramp, wobble switch, bow and arrow launcher, glider airplane thrower, golf ball putter, soccer ball kicker, and pen barrel assembly machine are reminders of his dedication to helping the handicapped.

Our sympathies go out to the families. These guys have been missed and will be remembered. ♦