



Ground broken for Clinton railport

Steven Martens | Posted: Friday, August 20, 2010 12:33 pm

CLINTON, Iowa — Clinton County Supervisor Jill Davisson knocked on the side of the wooden podium Friday, addressing a crowd of state and local officials gathered in a field between Clinton and Low Moor.

“You hear that?” she asked. “That’s opportunity knocking.”

The crowd watched the groundbreaking ceremony for the Lincolnway Railport, which will provide mainline access to the Union Pacific Railroad line from an industrial park that could cover 1,000 acres or more in Clinton County.

Steve Ames, president and CEO of the Clinton Regional Development Corp., said the project, which will represent a total investment of about \$30 million, could be ready for a tenant to begin building in the industrial park in 12 to 16 months.

Iowa Gov. Chet Culver was one of several officials who took a turn swinging a sledgehammer to drive in ceremonial railroad spikes. Culver said the project will attract companies looking to take advantage of the railport to ship their manufactured goods, potentially bringing 3,000 to 4,000 jobs to the Clinton area.

“This will open up a whole new corridor in terms of moving manufactured goods,” Culver said.

Culver said the \$10 million investment in the initial stages of the project included funding from city and county sources, as well as \$2 million in federal economic stimulus funds allocated by the Iowa Department of Transportation.

The Clinton County Community Development Association, which holds the gaming license for the Wild Rose Casino in Clinton and distributes a portion of gaming revenues to local organizations, also has pledged \$2 million for the project. Association president Brig Tubbs said the project will create economic development, which will expand the community’s tax base.

“It’s great to have this day finally here,” he said.

Development officials already are marketing the railport site, but no tenants have announced plans to locate there.

Jim Young, the CEO of Union Pacific, said the UP line that runs near the site is one of the busiest in the country, making it easy for manufacturers to ship goods all over North America.

“The possibilities are really unlimited,” he said.

Young said UP chose to support the railport project because the project already had the financial support of the city and county, as well backing from state and local economic development leaders.

Pete Clausen, chairman of the board of the regional development group, said Friday was a day of thanks for those who had supported the project and worked to make it a reality since its inception about 15 years ago.

“This project is going to set us apart from the masses,” he said. “We really are on our way to having a first-class facility.”

Clinton Mayor Rodger Holm said the ceremony represented “the dawn of an era of growth in our city.”