PIG BARN

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and environmental protection agencies.

"We're happy," Josh Fanter said. "We're kind of a little bummed out that it's taken so long. The amount that stuff that has gone up (in price) since we started this process is unreal."

Fanter said the cost of wood skyrocketed and now has settled back to near normal levels while the price of steel has climbed.

"We're trying to figure some things out," he said. "We don't know what we're going to do right now."

Fanter said the price increases in materials will hurt the profitability of the operation but not to a point where he would cancel his plans.

"I wouldn't say it wouldn't work," he said. "It's definitely going to make things tighter."

The delay in approval until October also shortened the construction season significantly, Fanter said, although the building could be enclosed in time if temperatures remain moderate.

"If you could get somebody in there in the next couple days starting the excavation, and if you could get the concrete in there while you still have warm days and warm nights, it could still be done," he said.

Fanter said delays in pouring concrete could again escalate the cost of the project, adding as much as $6 per yard.

"We're kind of running out of weather if we're going to build it this year," he said. "It might be something where we might wait until spring."

Fanter said his financing application was approved by the FSA a couple weeks ago, and he already has all the permits he needs from the county.

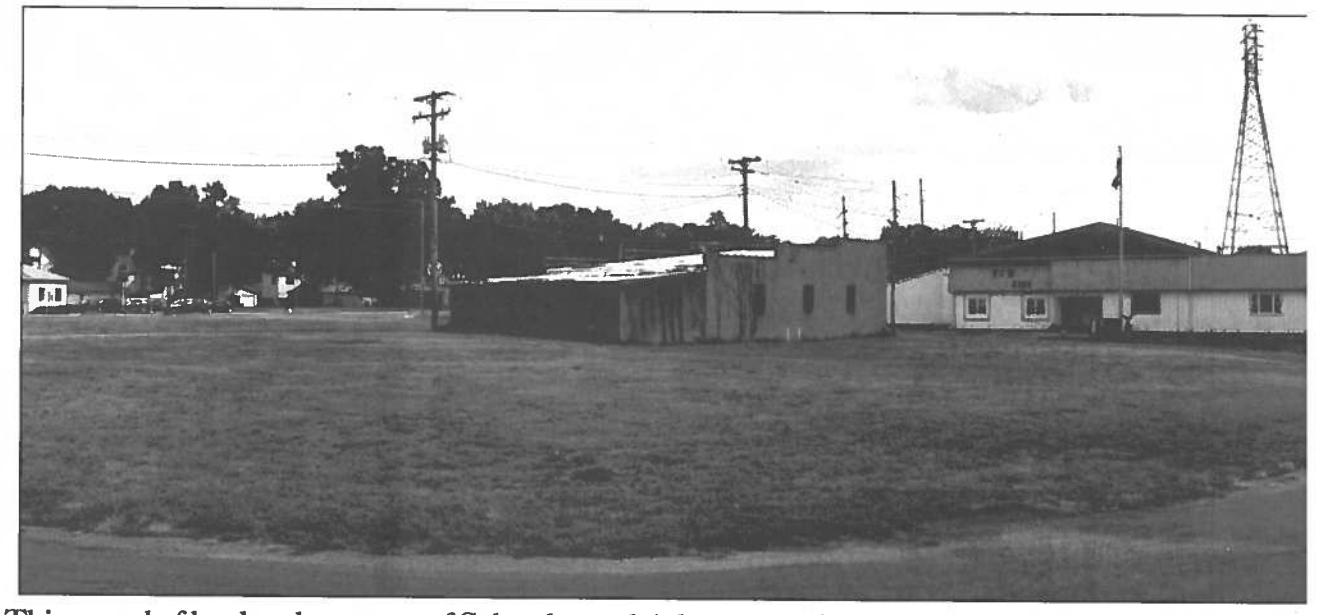
The process brought the Mason County Board to write letters to state lawmakers asking that the board and residents be granted the right to have input on such facilities. Current law allows pig feeding operations with fewer than 2,500 head of swine to go through the permitting process without public hearings.

The proposal did gain the support of the local Farm Bureau and fellow farmers, who pointed out the county had other similar facilities that operated without problem.

Mason County Board Member Hugh McHarry has been opposed to the operations and said he was "aghast" to find the environmental review of the site would not be done before permits were granted.

"They routinely approve sites on which they had no previous confirmed sightings of Illinois chorus frogs, and threatened species," McHarry said. "One of their own local employees is aware of the fact that the site is classic habitat for this species, and there is a confirmed siting in the (Illinois Department of Natural Resources) database within two miles of the site."

The Fanters themselves, both fifth-generation Mason County farmers, see it as a step in building a viable business that will attract their children to continue their farming tradition.



This parcel of land at the corner of Schrader and Adams could be the future home of the Illinois River Biological Station, with a building housing offices and labs, a visitors' center, a museum and facilities for t for Spoon River College and Havana H dents. The building would be owned by tl

IRBS

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The special meeting on Monday, Sept. 27, was called after IRBS administrators and the city discovered the technical assistance grant, which has a deadline for submission of Oct. 3.

The facility would occupy city-owned land at Adams and Schrader, across Adams from the VFW and stretching from Schrader to the Illinois River where a pair of large grain bins once stood. Mayor Brenda Stadsholt reminded the council that the city owns the land and would own any building built upon it. The city would lease the property to IRBS, which currently occupies rented space further north on Schrader, originally purchased for a hotel.

Many in city government and the business community see nothing but a positive impact from moving IRBS to a new building on the edge of downtown. That's because plans call for IRBS labs and offices to share space with a visitors' center and museum, designed to attract tourists to the city.

Further, Lamer said he and other PhDs at the center would be available to teach classes related to their field of study, benefiting not only high school students in the city, but also Spoon River College students.

He said he received a strong positive response from the Havana school district and the college to the idea of teaching classes and labs at the center.

"We have talked to some local educators in the area about incorporating a regional educational facility … that would be focused on the natural sciences and help build up our schools here in town as well as the community college," Lamer said.

Lamer said the grant would aid in the estimation of construction costs for the visitors center, regional education center and field station facility. The grant would allow for architects and engineers to dra floor plans.

Previously, Lamer and ed the cost of constructio anywhere from $5 million

"There are a lot of ur think that's why we feel tl step, getting a small grant prepared," said April Bur manager.

"I am definitely 100% be said Brenda Davenport- economic development have to keep that vibrant going attract businesses a to live here. Helping out S and our high school, that better place to live."

The council unanim motion to advance the $4

Lewistown wants to be just like H

The Lewiston City Council wants their town to be more like Havana.

The City Council and the Lewistown Citizen's Committee are gathering ideas on what people want and need in a downtown business district. They hope to win economic development grants from the state and federal government to make it happen.

During a discussion of the matter last week, Ald. Kendall Miller said the city needed to approach downtown redevelopment in the same way Havana has been doing, with the city government working with local businesses and property owners.

Miller pointed to events like First Friday, organized by Chamber of shops, restaur es open late a displaying art

"Havana has tion," Miller s it's at and that' be."