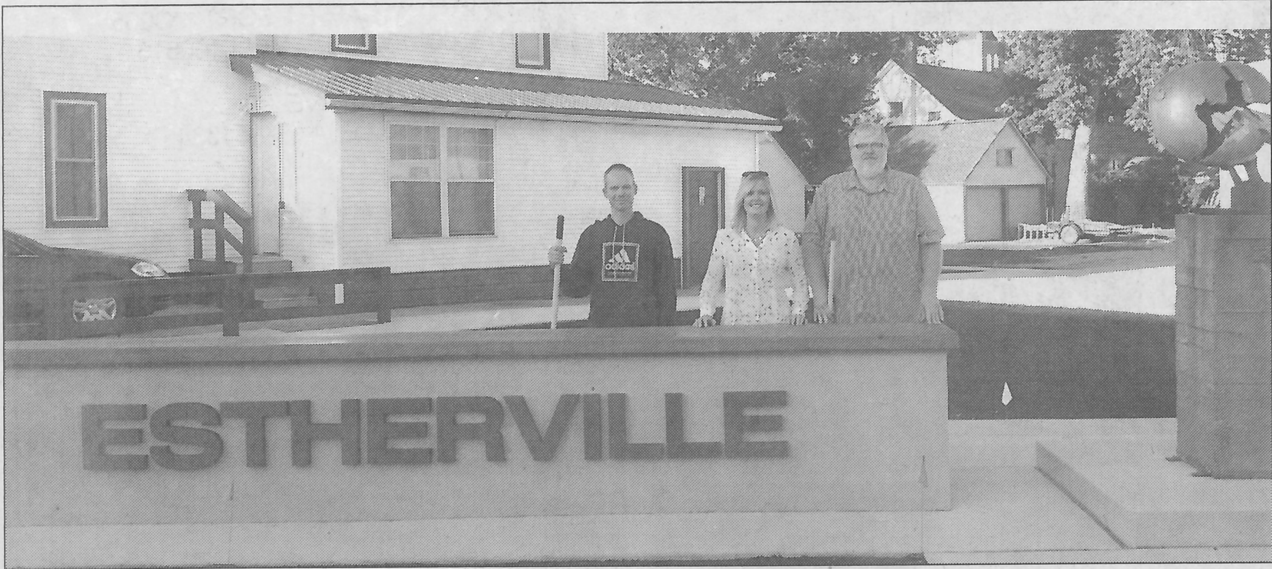


NEWS



Jacob Theesfeld, Sandy Clayton and Bob Jensen worked on the landscape around the Estherville Meteorite Center on the southwest corner of Highways 9 and 4 in Estherville.

Photo by Glen Caron

Jensen continues work on Meteorite Center landscaping

By DAVID SWARTZ
MANAGING EDITOR

Around 137 years ago, a 455-pound meteorite fell to earth in Emmet County a few miles north of Estherville.

Still known as the largest meteorite to be witnessed falling to earth in North America, two pieces of that meteorite can be viewed in Estherville.

Bob Jensen, a Parks and Recreation Board member as well as the American Family Insurance Agency, has been behind putting a Meteorite Center together.

A museum, located in his building at 814 Central Avenue, houses a piece of the meteorite that was purchased by the Estherville Chamber of Commerce in 2010.

On the southwest corner of Highways 9 and 4 (Central Avenue and Ninth Street), Jensen has been busy putting in the finishing touches of the Meteorite Center.

While the museum portion has been done, recently Jensen, with help from others, has been busy working on the outside portion, which includes a sculp-

Estherville Meteorite

On May 10, 1879, a 455-pound meteorite fell to earth in Emmet County a few miles north of Estherville, and has become known as the Estherville Meteorite.

This is the largest meteorite that has been known to have fallen in North America. When it struck it buried itself 15 feet in the ground. Portions of the meteorite are on display in the Estherville Meteorite Center, the Estherville Public Library, the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria.

ture commissioned in 1980 to commemorate the meteorite's fall to earth.

"We've installed a full irrigation system and hydro seeded the area," said Jensen. "There will be more landscaping done with native grasses and pinnacle oak trees."

Jensen gives credit to Jacob Theesfeld for his help on the project.

"He had drove by a few times and he

just came with tools and helped prepare the site," said Jensen. "I really appreciate all his help."

While some of the funds for moving the sculpture, which was in library square previously, and other items was provided from Excel Estherville monies, Jensen said has paid for the majority of the improvements.

Locally, Estherville Lincoln Central students have visited the museum and learned about the meteorite's history during spring school trips.

Jensen estimates thousands have toured the center since it opened.

"Some just stop on a whim while others have found it online and planned a visit," Jensen said. "People have come from all over the country."

Jensen tells visitors about the other piece of the meteorite located at the Estherville Public Library as well as the meteorite monument located on the east side of Highway 4 just north of town.

Jensen said the Estherville meteorite has been showcased on online travel sites with one calling it one of Iowa's "quirkiest" attractions.