

Money drive begins for fairgrounds arena

By Gary Grimmond
Staff Writer

MASON CITY — Armed with brochures and fortified with pep talks, committee members for the North Iowa Recreational Arena planned for the fairgrounds here started their \$500,000 fund drive Wednesday.

At a noon kickoff luncheon at the fairgrounds, drive chairman Dave Kingland said, "It's important to get this off and running from day one and that's today."

Kingland said workers are expected to have most of their calls made in a month and set Tuesday, Feb. 16 for the first report meeting.

The building is to cost \$900,000, with \$400,000 donated by the Kinney-Lindstrom Foundation. Plans call for groundbreaking this spring or early summer for the 150-by-250-foot facility. It will have an 85-by-200-foot ice arena during the skating season. The rest of the year, it will have a 120-by-200-foot arena for horse shows and other activities.

Kingland, senior vice president at the First National Bank of Mason City, also announced the committee chairmen for the various divisions of the campaign.

Mrs. Keith (Peggy) Hannan, Mason City, will be the fund drive coordinator.

Jack King, co-owner of Yelland and Hanes, will be chairman of the volunteers seeking contributions from business and industry.

Jack Nielsen, president of First National Bank, will call on financial institutions. Dr. Harold Brenton, president of the North Iowa Fair Board, will be responsible for the "large gifts" division. Elaine Olson, a fair board member, will be responsible for contacting livestock breed associations and other groups involved in the fair.

Jon Ewing will be in charge of the horse interests; Dr. J.D. Thoreson, the professional division, and Al Duea, Clear Lake, a support section.

Mrs. Jack (Joyce) Nielsen, publicity chairman for the drive, said there are about 125 committee members and about 90 were at the luncheon.

She said workers will call on area firms and individuals, most of whom have been sent letters and informational brochures which include pledge forms. About 5,000 pledge brochures have been printed and many were passed out at the luncheon.

Kingland said committee members will take any cash donation. However, pledge cards are expected to be the main source of raising money for the building.

As provided for on the pledge cards, Kingland explained that one-third of a person's contribution could be made now, one-third Feb. 1, 1983, and the other third Feb. 1, 1984. This would enable the donations to be spread over three tax years.

Kingland said there will be three donor boards. One will be for "major" contributors, \$5,000 and over; another for "champion" contributors, those pledging \$1,200 to \$5,000, and the "blue ribbon" board for those contributing \$600 or more.

Kingland also said drawings of the facility have been developed by Wallace, Holland, Kastler and Schmitz and Co., Mason City engineering firm, and will be displayed in banks and other public institutions in the area.

Also speaking after the lunch was Brenton, who traced the development of the fairgrounds from a short-time fair in the summer to year-around use.

He noted how several years ago he and Bill Bjerke approached the fair board about using one of the buildings "that stood empty during the wintertime" for tennis.

He then mentioned efforts of the fair board and secretary manager Stan Zirbel to develop the fairgrounds for recreational and other purposes.

"We've got to do more out here for more people because it belongs



Laying out the layout

Dave Kingland, chairman of a fund drive to raise money for construction of a proposed North Iowa Recreational Arena at the North Iowa Fairgrounds, explains architectural plans for the facility to Patrick and Terri Donnelly, Mason City, during a kickoff luncheon Wednesday. (Staff photo by Gary Marshall)

to everybody," said Brenton.

He said that the recreational building, also known as the ice hockey and horse arena, is needed because of the "unpredictability of the weather in this climate."

Brenton said the fairgrounds can't survive with just two weeks of fair. There has to be more of a "cash flow to justify the overhead," said Brenton, who added that for years the fair "survived on the basis of our rural friends."

Zirbel said the proposed building will be of great benefit to the fair by providing more stall space for horses and space for agricultural exhibits. He mentioned the problems of using the main exhibit

building for livestock shows and then getting it back in shape for "people-type shows."

Zirbel said the facility will make it a lot easier to accommodate large shows and it is his hope that it will be finished in time for the Royal Lipizzan Stallions, world-famous horse troupe from Vienna, Austria, which will perform at the fairgrounds Oct. 9.

Also commenting was Leigh Curran, a member of the fair association when it was chartered in 1940. He said that after the fairgrounds "got going" with some good years, a slow period set in.

"It's nice to see something coming in again," Curran said.