



Other editions: [Mobile](#) | [Mobile text alerts](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [E-Newsletters](#)

Find it: [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Apartments](#) | [Home Services](#) | [Coupons](#) | [Dating](#) | [Place an ad](#)

DesMoinesRegister.com

SEARCH ALL

All Local News Calendar Jobs More »



SPONSORED BY:

HOME NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE COMMUNITIES OPINION OBITUARIES WEATHER CLASSIFIEDS HELP SHARE NEWS

Quick links: [Drake Relays](#) [Special reports](#) [Contests](#) [Data](#) [Metromix](#) [Moms](#) [Live chats](#) [Juice](#) [Photos/Videos](#) [Blogs](#) [Forums](#)



Comment, blog & share photos

[Log in](#) | [Become a member](#) | [Search people](#)

GET REGISTER NEWS ON THE GO

[Our mobile site](#) | [Breaking news text alerts](#)

## Hansen: Wind carries cynicism away in Newton

BY MARC HANSEN • MAHANSEN@DMREG.COM • APRIL 23, 2009

[Read Comments\(5\)](#) [Recommend\(1\)](#) [Print this page](#) [E-mail this article](#) [Share](#)

**Newton, Ia.** - On a sunny, blustery Earth Day 2009, this town on the mend seemed like a perfect place to fly the flag for wind energy.

It was the wrong place for cynics, at least for a few hours. Even the Republicans standing across the street from Trinity Structural Towers, waiting for Barack Obama to drop from the sky and ride past in his motorcade, were excited to see the president of the United States.

A few protesters held anti-abortion signs and photographs, but the mood was upbeat. Nobody said a word about socialism or deficits or tax relief.



Marc Hansen

ADVERTISEMENT

**SmartMoney**  
magazine says  
Des Moines is the  
place to buy.

You needed an invitation to get inside the wind-tower plant, watch Obama tour the facility and listen to what he had to say.

The people on the roadside had no invitations. They parked a quarter-mile away and were told to move no closer than 30 feet from the street.

Evelyn George sat in the grass, a super-size set of binoculars at her side, and read a book as she waited for the president.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," she said. "What are the chances of this happening? The president coming to Newton, of all places, on Earth Day."



Arturo Fernandez/The Register

George was a Maytag casualty. She and her family lived in Newton for 21 years. When her marketing job disappeared, they moved to Coralville. Two and a half years later, another job brought them back.

"I was ready to knock on the door," she said, "and ask the people if we could have our house back."

When I asked whether she voted for Obama, George smiled and said it was a historic day for Newton and she didn't want to miss it.

She almost did. We all almost did. The helicopters landed, the cars drove by, the president waved.

A man wearing Hawkeye attire yelled into his cell phone: "Dadgum, he waved and I didn't get a picture."

Schoolteacher Cara Schwanz from Newton showed up with her fifth-grade son, who had just come from the orthodontist.

"I'm a Republican," she said, "but I always support the president, whoever it is."

Newton was sounding more and more like an all-American city.

Al Hansen, 83, a retired farmer and World War II vet from Kellogg, was there with his daughter. He watched the show from a lawn chair.

"It's something nobody can take away from you," he said.

Hundreds of people who want to be president come through often enough. But how often does the real thing

Chet Guinn, left, of Des Moines and Vernon Naffier of Ankeny, members of the Progressive Coalition of Central Iowa, stand Wednesday at Fleur Drive and Southwest McKinley Avenue on Des Moines' south side to celebrate Earth Day and welcome President Barack Obama.

### Related articles

[Obama's plan looks offshore for energy](#)

### Related Stories

- Hansen: Scrutiny of Shawn may go beyond lemonade
- Hansen: Backers of driver in bike wreck allege he's getting a bad rap
- Hansen: Gay-friendliness could help state economy thrive
- Hansen: He'll mend, but will rift between autos, bikes?
- Hansen: Today's special dish: Those who dine, dash
- Hansen: TV viewer vs. satellite company, the sequel
- Hansen: Business Trompeter grew up in is now very different
- Hansen: Civility is essential value of democracy
- Hansen: Judge Hanson gets birthday present
- Hansen: With Capitol tensions rising, civility is sinking
- Hansen: Adding channels has added headaches

show up in your little town?

Harry Truman, as more than a few Newtonians pointed out Wednesday, was the last sitting president to make an appearance.

Jane Morrison, 81, a former Maytag employee who went from the mailroom to senior auditor in her "42.6 years" at the company, saw Truman on the back of a train during a whistle-stop in Grinnell. And she'll never forget it.

"I was a Republican at the time," she said. "I'm such a liberal old lady anymore, though, and I like Obama. We'll see what change he means. It's early, but I'm willing to wait and see and hope."

I'm not saying the cynicism isn't out there. You hear it daily.

On the morning Obama came to Iowa, a commentator from the "libertarian" Cato Institute was on "liberal" public radio talking about the president's plan to cut \$100 million from the budget in the next 90 days.

Sounds like a lot of money, right? Not according to the commentator, who called it a drop in the red sea of Obama's \$3.5 trillion budget.

If that wasn't enough to make a listener run his car off the road, the commentator reminded everyone a billion is a thousand million, and a trillion is a thousand billion.

It's a tough job ahead. Talking about becoming energy independent is one thing. Becoming energy independent is another.

In May 2001, the folks at an Iowa Energy Center facility in Nevada were just as thrilled to see the last new president. George W. Bush popped into town with a 163-page plan that featured tax credits for entrepreneurs producing biomass-based fuel, which was supposed to be the new petroleum.

People were almost giddy. What isn't to like about burning cornstalks and other farm waste to produce energy? The plan featured broad changes and sweeping proposals.

But then things happened or didn't happen, the excitement died down and we're on to the next great Iowa thing - harnessing the power of the wind.

It's early yet. We'll see what happens.

- **Online discussion standards:** What we'll allow and what we won't allow
- **About discussion:** A message from the editor.

### In Your Voice | READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY

Hide Comments ▲

Newest first



Rockm wrote:

We need to keep these things in perspective - I believe at its peak Maytag employment was 4000 and the turbine company employs about 140....But it is a start, I guess.

4/24/2009 9:29:52 AM

Recommend(1)

New post

Reply to this Post

Report Abuse



stormn wrote:

Celebrities can be intoxicating.

4/23/2009 6:46:11 PM

Recommend

New post

Reply to this Post

Report Abuse



ML144 wrote:

I'm sure everyone in Newton is now in love with the Messiah. C'mon, Marc. Get real.

4/23/2009 2:00:35 PM

Recommend

New post

Reply to this Post

Report Abuse



cubreporter wrote:

Delusional.

4/23/2009 8:52:13 AM

Recommend

New post

Reply to this Post

Report Abuse



commonsense wrote:

- Hansen: Tirrell ponders what he's thrown away
- Hansen: The business of death turns to discounts
- Hansen: Crowds frown as they fill employment office
- Hansen: Let's debate Narcisse's 10 solutions for district

■ more stories

### More News Headlines

- Update: 260+ same-sex couples apply for marriage licenses; most in Polk Co. (552)
- Update: 5,000+ sign gay-marriage protest petitions (19)
- Outside Des Moines: Gay marriage license applications, protest petitions (209)
- Culver 'pleased' by '09 session, except for labor bills' failure (7)
- Q & A with Gov. Culver: Iowa and same-sex marriage law (4)

ADS BY PULSE 360

Get Listed Here

### My Wrinkles Disappeared

Learn how this Mom combined 2 products & got rid of her wrinkles.

nancyskinsuccess.com

### Tresemme® Style Seeker

Find the latest trends from the biggest names in fashion.

www.Tresemme.com

### Know Your Score

Use It To Your Advantage!

www.equifax.com

### Most Viewed Stories

Today	Yesterday	Last 7 Days	Last 30 Days
-------	-----------	-------------	--------------

- Update: 260 same-sex couples apply for marriage licenses; most in Polk Co.
- Outside Des Moines: Gay marriage license applications, protest petitions
- Gays could wed today, but rights don't follow out of state
- Twister touchdowns are reported in 3 counties
- Ankeny man stabbed while waiting in line for pizza
- 2nd all-nighter at Statehouse yields biggest budget ever
- List of high water street closings in D.M.
- Poll: Do you agree with the decision to legalize same-sex marriage?
- Hawkeyes go 1-2 in third round of NFL draft
- Keeler: Lolo should have said no-go to the Relays

ADVERTISEMENT



- Barack Obama
- Wind Power
- Renewable Energy (Green Energy)
- Marketing
- Cellphones
- Energy

Powered by [Topix.net](#)

Inside [Desmoinesregister.com](#)



**Top Cat contest**

Vote for the Top Cat in town. One lucky cat will win a year of free cat food.



**Drake Relays**

Get complete coverage leading up to and during the 2009 Drake Relays in Des Moines.



**Des Moines Frugal**

Trying to save some money? Get ideas from other readers and suggest your own here.



**Downtown lunch**

Get downtown lunch specials sent to you as a text message each day, starting April 6



**New Kids on the Block**

The New Kids on the Block performed a concert April 6 at Wells Fargo Arena in D.M.

**Site index**

[Full index](#)

**Marketplace**

[Classifieds](#)  
[Jobs](#)  
[Cars](#)  
[Real Estate](#)  
[Apartments](#)  
[Place an ad](#)  
[Coupons](#)  
[Garage sales](#)

**News**

[Business](#)  
[Opinion](#)  
[Columnists](#)  
[Politics](#)  
[Crime](#)  
[Education](#)  
[Nation & World](#)  
[Obituaries](#)  
[Databases](#)  
[Photos](#)  
[Video](#)

**Communities**

[Ames](#)  
[Ankeny](#)  
[Clive](#)  
[D.M. East, North](#)  
[D.M. South](#)  
[D.M. West](#)  
[Johnston](#)  
[Urbandale](#)  
[Waukee](#)  
[West Des Moines](#)

**Sports**

[Preps](#)  
[Bulldogs](#)  
[Cyclones](#)  
[Hawkeyes](#)  
[Panthers](#)  
[Chops/Bucs](#)  
[I-Cubs](#)  
[Sports stats](#)  
[Auto racing](#)  
[Golf](#)  
[Outdoors](#)

**Lifestyle**

[Travel](#)  
[Health](#)  
[Home & Garden](#)  
[2 cents worth](#)  
[MomsLikeMe.com](#)  
[Vacation Iowa](#)  
[dmJuice.com](#)  
[Engagements](#)  
[Weddings](#)  
[Anniversaries](#)  
[Recipes](#)

**Entertainment**

[Metromix](#)  
[Restaurant guide](#)  
[Events calendar](#)  
[Dining](#)  
[Music](#)  
[Arts & culture](#)  
[Movie Listings](#)  
[TV Listings](#)  
[Datebook](#)  
[Celebrity news](#)  
[Horoscopes](#)

**Extras**

[Obituaries](#)  
[Photos](#)  
[Today's headlines](#)  
[Forums](#)  
[Blogs](#)  
[Newsletters](#)  
[RSS feeds](#)  
[Mobile Site](#)  
[Text alerts](#)  
[Sudoku](#)  
[Comics](#)



Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) [Cars: Cars.com](#) [Homes: Homefinder.com](#) [Apartments: Apartments.com](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Place an Ad](#)

Copyright ©2009 The Des Moines Register. All rights reserved.

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) , updated March 2009.