

## GAS STATION DEBATE

Crooked Tree gas station sparks debate among residents

Arnav Damodhar | Staff Writer

Get off my lawn.

For the past several years, the proposal for the construction of a gas station has been an ongoing battle between the residents of Crooked Tree and the Mason City Council. Residents have come together and protested construction of a Shell gas station on the roundabout at the intersection of Mason-Montgomery and Bethany Road.

According to Crooked Tree resident Scott Stevens, the residents in this area have spoken to the city council and county court to protest.

"When it went before City Council in 2011, the entire neighborhood protested this and lost," Stevens said. "The City Council favored the developer. It has already been approved and there is nothing else we can do."

According to City Planner Brian Lazor, the gas station will actually serve the community better.

"The developer did a marketing study and it showed that area was underserved," Lazor said. "The gas station will provide the residents in the area shopping option. There will also be a convenience store."

Though the gas station is approved, it doesn't follow the stipulated ordinances according to the City of Mason, Stevens said. According to Stevens, he knew that the zone was a commercial zone, but never expected a gas station.

"I knew that when I built my house in 2002, that there would be a business in the area," Stevens said. "There is an ordinance stating that gas trucks aren't allowed to travel on any routes in the City except for Route 741 or Route 42. This gas station is not on either of the routes. We always knew that a light business like a dry cleaner's, or a doctor's office would go there, but never a gas station."

## MUSICAL REIGN

Santos set to retire from esteemed musical kingdom



Choral director Elaine Santos conducts Honors Concert Choir students in her classroom.

Photo by Madison Krell

Jessica Sommerville | Staff Writer

Choral director Elaine Santos, ruler of Mason High School's musical empire for 16 years, will relinquish her crown next year as she retires.

Since her coronation, she has crafted a legacy infused with successes, including superior, state-level recognition and the first three-discipline concert.

According to Santos, she was hired under former Superintendent Kevin Bright to grow the music program.

Its development included an increase in enrollment; Santos said the music department reaches over 1,000 students, or "about a third of the school".

Santos said she challenges students to be their best selves which allows them to both realize their pursuit of music and add to the program's prestige.

"When they feel a sense of pride, that pride emits from every single one of them to the greater population," Santos said. "So there's another level of prestige that's being built."

ment because a lot of what we do is individual," Young said. "Once a year, we get to really come together and collaborate (for) the spring musical. That's one of the nicest times for us...I'm going to miss that with Mrs. Santos particularly because she's such a good colleague."

**"I've done what I can do, and I'm very eager to find out who the winner of this interviewing process will be. I know it will be someone outstanding."**

— ELAINE SANTOS  
CHORAL DIRECTOR

This acclaim may propel students to music careers in which transitions in colleagues are common, according to theater teacher Allen Young.

"I've worked with (her) for 14 years...and she teaches very good vocal technique," Young said. "Somebody new (will) bring a whole new philosophy and approach, (but) it's good if you are training for a career to work with different people and learn different philosophies."

Young said that it will be up to the current staff to acclimate the new choral director, but he will miss collaborating with Santos.

"It's been great to work with Mrs. Santos guiding the depart-

While Santos is an integral member of the music team, she said that her successor may have the potential to elevate the choir and pursue national recognition.

"I've done what I can do, and I'm very eager to find out who the winner of this interviewing process will be," Santos said. "I know it will be someone outstanding, and I know it will be someone who can move the program to the next level of recognition...someone who has the energy and the foresight to see: 'This is where they are now, and this is big. I think this is where I can take them which is even bigger.' That would bring me such joy."

