

Con 12-15  
Grinnell Coal Gas

# WILHELM IMAGING RESEARCH, INC. 1379

713 STATE STREET, P.O. BOX 775, GRINNELL, IOWA 50112, U.S.A.

PHONE: 641-236-4284

[www.wilhelm-research.com](http://www.wilhelm-research.com)

FAX: 641-236-4222

May 5, 2005

**CON 12-15**  
**Doc # 1379**

Michael B. Leat  
Environmental Engineer, State of Iowa  
**Department of Natural Resources**  
Environmental Protection Division  
Wallace Building  
502 East 9th Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Mick:

Enclosed is a copy of our recent letter to Dean Hargens, Environmental Engineer for **Alliant Energy** in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, regarding his management of the cleanup of the former manufactured gas plant here in Grinnell. Naturally, you also deserve much credit for your successful collaboration with Mr. Hargens and Alliant, so please excuse us for not writing a separate treatise to you. Because Dean was our primary and regular contact over the nearly three-year period, whose presence was nearly constant at times, we address our comments directly to him.

Communication will always be one of society's greatest challenges, and we know how critically important it is to take the time to be positive and constructive in our communications – especially when it seems that many people have little trouble finding time to complain. I remember being only too eager to protest when you first called about this unwelcome event. Now, of course, we have only praise and gratitude to express!

Thank you for your essential work and daily contributions – past, present, and future – toward making the world a cleaner and safer place in which to live and work!

Sincerely,

*Henry and Carol Wilhelm*

Henry and Carol Wilhelm  
President and Vice President  
**Wilhelm Imaging Research, Inc.**

Enclosure

# DATE STAMP

9944 05/16/05 PM 10:41

# WILHELM IMAGING RESEARCH, INC.

713 STATE STREET, P.O. BOX 775, GRINNELL, IOWA 50112, U.S.A.

PHONE: 641-236-4284

www.wilhelm-research.com

FAX: 641-236-4222

May 1, 2005

Dean A. Hargens  
Environmental Engineer  
**Alliant Energy**  
200 First Street SE  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52406-0351

**COPY**

Dear Dean:

As Henry and I reflect upon the past three years, the event that stands out most in our memory is the one we refer to as *The Alliant Project*. It was indeed an experience we will never forget – and one that deserves a little broadcasting.

First of all, Henry and I would like to thank you for the excellent work you did organizing your “team” for the remediation assignment at the site of the former manufactured gas plant here in Grinnell. You deserve high praise for your professionalism and patience sustained throughout the planning, implementation, supervision, restoration, all the way to the final closing of the groundwater monitoring wells this past December, which marked the successful end of an amazing project. We were relieved and remain grateful that the operation took so little time overall, especially the actual excavation and cleanup. Coordinating that was a remarkable feat!

It was a true inspiration to see **Alliant Energy** and the **Iowa Department of Natural Resources** put their talents together in such an unequivocally worthwhile program. There’s proof that we can all be on the same side in making a better world. And it started with your talent for keeping the lines of communication open between everyone under trying circumstances.

The adventure began, as you remember, with the friendly but unwelcome telephone to our office in May 2002 from Michael Leat, fellow environmental engineer at **IDNR**. Wilhelm Imaging Research, had outgrown its existing facility and was preparing to put up a new building – and no one in the company wanted to think about anything that might slow us down, least of all something we couldn’t see that had been buried under the ground for decades. We asked, “What would happen if we simply declined?” That was when you and Mick clearly told us that we needed to cooperate and that it was in everyone’s best interests to pause long enough to get the job done sooner rather than later.

We know that the operation had challenges on your side as well as ours. Day after day, we observed how each difficulty was remedied smoothly without undue delay. Everyone demonstrated high professional standards, including the many drivers and other specialists who were called in. It was quite impressive to watch Steve Johnson (**DCI Environmental**) maneuvering the three different pieces of heavy equipment with a finesse most commonly associated with artists and surgeons. The Wilhelm family will certainly never forget how Steve’s skill combined with his sharp eye and his compassion saved the life of our little cat who jumped in front of that enormous bucket!

Please extend our appreciation to Barbara Butler, the site manager for **Black & Veatch**, and her company’s representatives as well as those from **Dustcoating, Inc. (DCI)** and **Aqua-Drill**, for their professional excellence and positive attitude throughout the planning, excavation and removal of contaminated materials from our property. Gordon Abell, Doug Lade, Steve Johnson, Rick Petersen and Rick Tolman, with follow-up by Mark Murphy, Eric Schwartz, Steve Wilson, Doug and Josh, were all notably diligent and personable. (Hope we haven’t overlooked anyone!)

**DATE STAMP**

9945 05/16/05 AM10:41

We are especially grateful for everyone's consideration regarding the disruption to our company's workflow and potential for damage to our ongoing tests. Gordon's investigation and ultimate success in locating suitable air filters, followed by his ability to get them set up and running despite many hurdles will always be remembered. Those three units, in conjunction with Black & Veatch's monitoring instruments installed and tracked by Gordon and Doug were essential in maintaining our confidence and ability to continue our tests with minimal interruption. Gordon and Doug, whose pleasant personalities helped keep us in good spirits, stayed on each day until all details were checked and the paperwork was completed. And when everything was done and the groundwater monitoring system was closed, we very much appreciated your sending us copies of the Black & Veatch report and the Certificate of No Further Action, which have helped us to have a better understanding of what "normal" means.

To add to these many compliments, **McDonald Landscaping and Construction** did an outstanding job mending the broken terrain that marked our property for nearly seven years. Like everyone else associated with the remediation, Dwight McDonald exhibited a positive and friendly attitude. Talk about restitution!

Each individual in his or her own way demonstrated competence, intelligence, and enthusiasm, which made it a pleasure to accommodate everyone at their various tasks, and to offer refreshments. During those times when we were simply curious bystanders, we appreciated the patience and clarity with which our questions were answered. We learned so much that we no longer mind paying our Alliant bills!

You can see that across the board we have only praise to give. If all endeavors – especially those out of the ordinary that are necessarily disruptive – were approached with the same excellent organization, thoughtful implementation, supportive supervision, and responsible follow-through, our world would indeed be a much nicer place in which to live and work.

We will never forget, however, that the most important results of your work extend far beyond what any of us will ever know towards insuring a cleaner planet for the future. Thank you for a splendid job. We would welcome working with you again any day!

Sincerely,

Henry and Carol Wilhelm  
President and Vice President  
**Wilhelm Imaging Research, Inc.**

P.S. Having recently seen the excellent publication at the Iowa State Fair: ***Power Planting: A Guide to Help You Choose. . . The Right Tree in the Right Place*** (#71-0780), we would like to also commend Alliant for its partnership with **Trees Forever!**

P.P.S. Last but not least, thank you for the referral to John Koch at the **Iowa Waste Exchange** and Perry Nelson at **Western Iowa Tech Community College**, to whom we gave hundreds of partially used fluorescent lamps.

cc: Michael B. Leat, Department of Natural Resources (State of Iowa)  
Kathy Lipp, Alliant Energy (Wisconsin)  
Gregory A. Taylor, Alliant Energy (Iowa)  
Thomas Hickey, Black & Veatch (Missouri)  
Barbara Butler, Black & Veatch (Missouri)  
Frank Kellogg, DCI Environmental, Inc. (Minnesota)