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Federal government sues Maytag

Class action lawsuit alleges age discrimination

By PETER HUSSMANN
Editor

A federal lawsuit filed in Chicago on Thursday alleges Maytag Corp. discriminated against older workers when it shed its nationwide sales team of senior managers over the age of 50.

The suit, filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commis-

sion, alleges that Maytag violated federal age discrimination laws when it eliminated 13 of its 22 regional sales manager positions in 1999. Of 11 regional sales managers demoted to the newly created position of zone manager, eight were over the age of 50. Only one employee over 50 was able to retain his regional manager job, the EEOC complaint alleges.

EEOC attorney Ethan Cohen will

lead the federal government's litigation against Maytag. He said he hoped the class action lawsuit will result in Maytag being "enjoined from age discrimination practices in the future."

"Demoting people because they have gray hair is just as illegal as doing so because they have brown skin," he said. "In attempting to force out older workers, Maytag was not

only depriving itself of some of its most productive workers, it was breaking the law. There's nothing wrong with pushing change in the workplace, but it is wrong to assume that older workers will not be able to keep up with those changes."

Cohen told the Associated Press that Maytag allegedly feared the workers would not be able to implement new computer-based

sales procedures.

"They were stereotyping these workers believing they wouldn't be able to manage these new methodologies," Cohen told the AP.

Maytag Corp. spokesperson Lynne Dragomier said the lawsuit took the company "by surprise."

"While Maytag has been involved in an individual case, this is the first

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Earthquake rattles Iowa

AUBURN, Neb. (AP) — A minor earthquake rumbled across parts of Nebraska, Missouri and Iowa early today, shaking houses but not causing major damage.

Geophysicist Waverly Person with the U.S. Geological Survey's National Earthquake Information Center said the quake was measured at 3.3 on the Richter scale, which classifies it as minor.

The epicenter of the quake, which first rumbled at 7:17 a.m. CDT, was about 20 miles southeast of Auburn and 15 miles southwest of Shenandoah, Iowa, Person said.

A dispatcher in the Nemaha County sheriff's office said her office had reports of people feeling tremors from Auburn to Brownville and Nemaha.

There were no reports of damage, she said. Other reports came from as far north as central Sarpy County and as far south as Tarkio, Mo.

"Just a little bit of shaking,

apparently a rumbling," said the dispatcher, who declined to give her name.

Ann Kouba of Auburn thought one of her two children had fallen out of bed about 7:15 a.m., but they were fine. The low thump, however, was followed by her table moving slightly.

"The whole house started moving just like some giant was jumping up and down. It was long, probably 10 or 15 seconds," Kouba said.

At nearby Cooper Nuclear Station in Brownville, operators felt a tremor, but it was not severe enough to sound seismic alarms in the control room, said Beth Boesch, spokeswoman for the Nebraska Public Power District, which owns and operates the electric power plant.

"At this juncture, we don't think there were any impacts at all," Boesch said.

Boesch said the plant was

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Judge denies diocese attempts to dismiss suits

DAVENPORT (AP) — A judge has denied attempts by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Davenport to dismiss two of 16 civil lawsuits claiming the plaintiffs failed to file the suits alleging decades-old sexual abuse by priests before the statute of limitations expired.

Judge C.H. Pelton made his ruling Thursday in the lawsuits which allege sexual abuse by the Rev. James Janssen, the Rev. Francis Bass and the Rev. Theodore Geerts more than 30 years ago. Janssen and Bass both served in Newton.

The diocese said it continues to be interested in mediating the claims.

Meanwhile, Davenport attorney Craig Levien, who represents both of the cases in Thursday's ruling and several others, said he is in the process of giving the diocese informa-

tion on 18 potential lawsuits where the diocese has agreed they will discuss mediation without the filing of a lawsuit.

"I think the ball is in the diocese court now to determine whether they want to continue legal attacks on the claims," Levien said.

He said that a court order bars his clients and the diocese from comment on possible settlement figures in public.

"We view these as very substantial claims," Levien said.

Attorneys for the diocese and priests arguing for the dismissal of the lawsuits allowed to continue on Thursday said the age of the actions alleged in the lawsuits makes them impossible to defend.

Judge Pelton said filings by the two generated questions of

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From left: John Trickel, Alliant President and Chief Operating Officer Bill Harvey and Alliant Product Manager Kim King cut the ribbon to unveil the newly-built Alliant Energy PowerHouse Home.

PowerHouse unveiled

By ANDY KARR
NDN Staff Writer

John Trickel stood outside the Alliant Energy PowerHouse Home Thursday afternoon with a wistful look on his face as he gazed upon his creation — the Alliant Energy PowerHouse.

Representing two years of hard work for Trickel, Zero Net and Alliant Energy, the now-completed PowerHouse was unveiled to the public at a ceremony Thursday.

"I feel great," Trickel said, looking at the home. "I'm proud of what we've done here."

The completed PowerHouse at 2900 S. 12th Ave. W. is the culmination of the work of Zero Net and Alliant. The partnership teamed up to construct a home featuring all the latest energy-saving technology.

"We've created a place where our customers can come to see and feel," Alliant spokesperson Karmen Wilhelm said. "We really want to show people that energy efficiency can be beautiful and stylish."

Members of the public and media got to tour the house as part of Thursday's unveiling.

From the outside, the home looks like a typical larger house. It has five bedrooms, three and a half baths and more than 3,000 square feet.

But on closer inspection, the differences become more apparent from the moment you walk into the kitchen, filled with energy-sav-

ing appliances and lighting.

What's not immediately apparent is that the home's energy efficiency starts from the ground up.

Rather than using traditional construction techniques, builders used prefabricated wall panels made of expanded polystyrene with a glass fiber reinforced concrete coating.

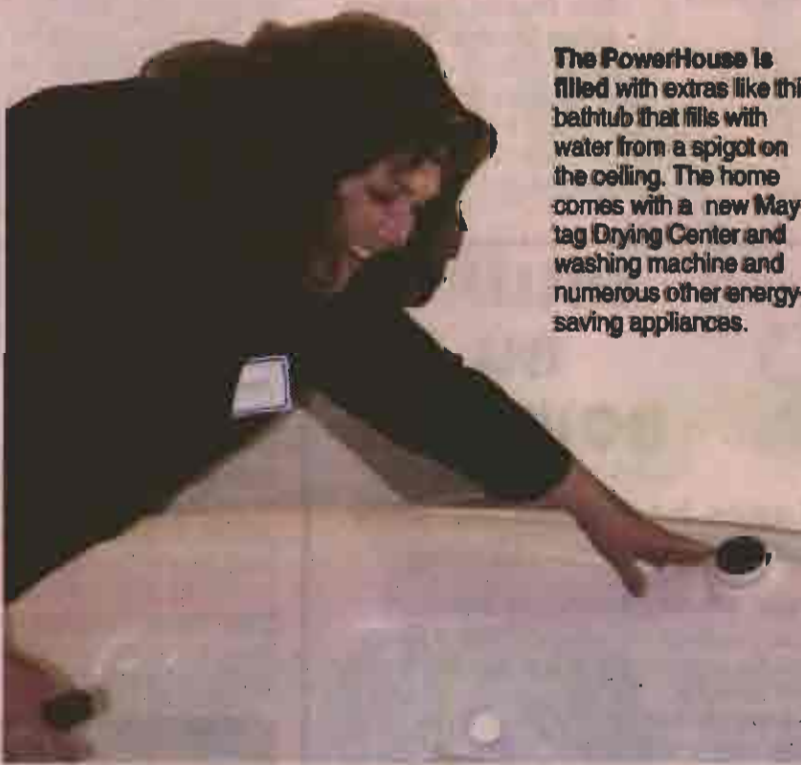
The end result is a design that helps keep warm air inside during the winter and outside during the summer, making the home 60 percent more energy efficient.

Some of the other interesting

features of the home are:

- Radiant heating throughout using zoned, in-floor hot water piped to all areas of the house. The home has no furnace.
- A cooling system with a two-stage condensing unit and zoned cooling to maintain different temperatures throughout the house.
- In-home water conditioning and high-efficiency filtration.
- Digitally-controlled lighting systems.
- Complex heating, cooling and

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The PowerHouse is filled with extras like this bathtub that fills with water from a spigot on the ceiling. The home comes with a new Maytag Drying Center and washing machine and numerous other energy-saving appliances.

Photos by
Andy
Karr/Daily
News

PowerHouse: Come and look

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humidity controls in the basement.

• A full gamut of energy-saving appliances, including a Maytag washer and drying center.

The home offers some neat amenities as well, like a "fun bar" in the basement equipped with a wine cooler and microwave, a deep tub that draws water from a fixture on the ceiling and a spacious walk-out patio and deck.

The home is the first of its kind. Alliant Product Manager Kim King said it was likely to be the only one of its kind sponsored by Alliant. She talked about why Alliant chose to pursue building the PowerHouse.

"As a regulated utility, we have a responsibility — one we take very seriously — to educate our customers about energy efficiency," she said.

King sees the PowerHouse as a great way to do just that, allowing Alliant customers to get a firsthand look at energy efficiency in progress.

"Hopefully, when our customers come here they can take away some energy-saving tips," she said.

Speaking at the ceremony, she praised the Newton community for all the support given to the project.

The house is already on the market, although Trickel and other officials said they're unsure exactly how much it will sell for. Trickel estimated that as a first-of-its-kind model, it would likely price around the "mid 400s."

While that's more than a comparable-sized conventional home would cost on the same lot, Trickel sees potential to reduce costs of future models to roughly the same as traditionally constructed homes.

He's hoping the PowerHouse is just the first step in a line of new energy efficient homes.

Persons interested in touring the home can do so on tours during weekends through the summer.

Alliant is kicking off the public tours with an ice cream social at the home on Saturday and Sunday from 11 to 4 p.m. for Jasper County residents.

The home will be open for regular public tours Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 4 p.m.

Group appointments can be arranged at other times by calling (319) 788-4326.