

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Friday, September 3, 2021 | 10 pages | Volume 5 • Issue 161



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\$13M well spent

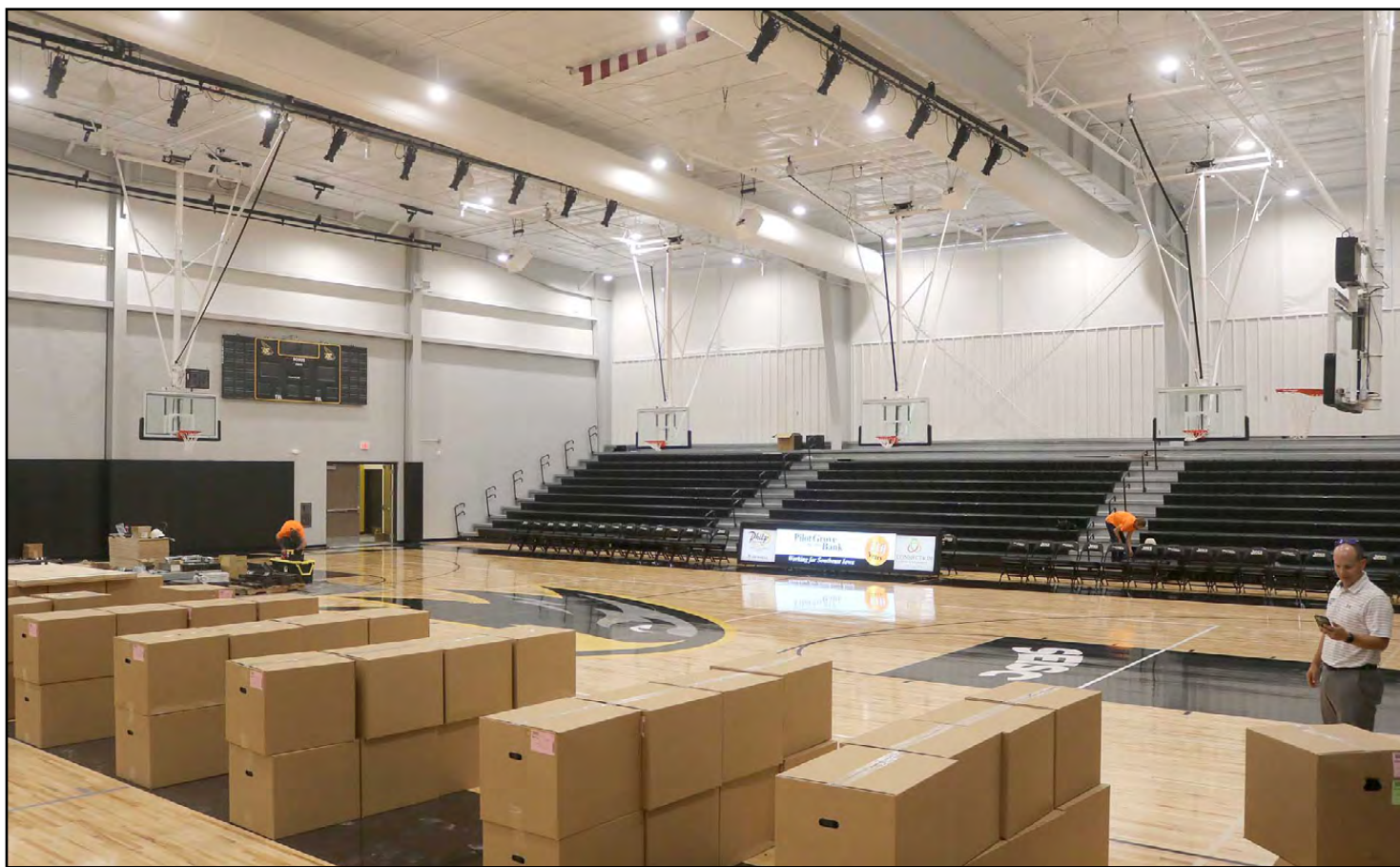


Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Central Lee Superintendent Dr. Andy Crozier stands in the district's new high school gymnasium currently being completed in Donnellson. The new scoreboard table is digital and can run videos for events. The new SEISC logo is in the basketball lanes.

CENTRAL LEE: Construction crews wrapping up \$12.9 million facilities upgrade

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

DONNELLSON – You can now officially get lost walking through the Central Lee school campus.

Walking in through the new secure entrance to the high school leaves those used to the old way wondering where they area.

The \$12.9 million facility upgrade featured improvements to security, learning, fine arts, and athletic space to the campus just southeast of Donnellson. It also afforded improvements to security and learning space at the elementary school just to the

east.

Superintendent Dr. Andy Crozier said Estes Construction could be off the property in the next few weeks, with subcontractors coming in to check off punch list items before everything is checked off complete.

He said he couldn't have been more pleased in how the project rolled out.

"All things considered when you put COVID into perspective, and everything we've gone through over the past 18 months – to be this close to the finish line is pretty good," he

See UPGRADE, page 8

FMAAA

Art-in-Central Park returns to Fort Madison in September

FORT MADISON – The following activities are on tap for the September at the Fort Madison Area Arts Association at 825 Avenue G in Fort Madison.

Art Opening Friday, Sept. 10, 5-7 p.m. Solo exhibit – Huff Stuff metal as-

semblage functional sculpture by Rick Huff. Exhibition on display through the end of the month.

Get ready for a new experience in the Fort Madison Area Arts Association Main Gallery this month! Rick Huff of Fort Madison will be display-

ing his metal work in a solo exhibit of Huff Stuff. This exhibit opens Friday, September 10, 2021 with a reception from 5pm – 7pm. Best described as "steam-punk-like assemblage sculp-

See FMAAA, page 2

IDPH

State to update coronavirus website again

Local, state, and CDC positivity ratings for county still don't match up

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

DES MOINES – The way the state reports updated COVID data is undergoing another change.

According to Iowa Department of Public Health Director Kelly Garcia, the state will be updating the coronavirus.iowa.gov site on Friday to reflect what she said was more relevant information that Iowans are wanting to see.

The site will be updated on Sept. 3 with information from Wednesday's report, and then it will be updated again each Wednesday as it has in the past.

However, new information such as the associated vaccination data from hospitalized patients will be on the landing page. The Regional Medical Coordination Center (RMCC) and hospitalization data will be combined into one Hospitalization page.

"As we know more about COVID, and as the new variant is dominant, our approach has evolved. We continually reassess the information we're sharing and the way we share it," Garcia said.

She said Iowa was one of the last states to scale back to weekly reporting, but said the department evaluates all critical data throughout the day.

"Today there is a clear interest, we're hearing from Iowans, to know and understand more so we're adjusting our public reporting," she said.

But reporting data has been a consistent source of inconsistency. This week the Centers for Disease Control had Lee County listed as a 25% 7-day positivity rating on Tuesday. But Wednesday the IDPH listed Lee County with a 9.3%

See COVID, page 3

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WEATHER

FRI 03 Sep.....	Rainy and Cool, 71° F/ 62° F
SAT 04 Sep.....	Light Rain, 75° F/ 63° F
SUN 05 Sep.....	Warm with Broken Clouds, 82° F/ 61° F

IOWA LOTTERY

LOTTO AMERICA 09/01.....	10 15 43 47 49, Star Ball: 6, All Star Bonus: 5
LUCKY FOR LIFE 09/01.....	7 21 23 26 36, Lucky Ball: 3
PICK 3 09/01 MIDDAY.....	677
PICK 3 09/01 EVENING.....	701
PICK 4 09/01 MIDDAY.....	2893
PICK 4 09/01 EVENING.....	6216
POWERBALL 09/01.....	10 20 29 48 51, Powerball: 17, Power Play: 2

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Obituaries/From the Front

Plan for Central Park day Sept. 19

FMAAA - Continued from Page 1

ture,” Huff creatively blends found historical materials like items from old farm equipment or river related artifacts with modern materials to create lamps, clocks, and other sculptural work outfitted with gauges, dials, and gadgetry. This truly interesting work will be on display through the end of September and is sure to appeal to a wide audience. If you haven’t had a reason to visit before, this may be an exhibit you do not want to miss.

FMAAA is also delighted to announce the return of their popular Lunch-ala-Art series on Friday, Sept. 24 with a luncheon at noon with Gallery artist talk by Rick Huff to follow. Reservations for this event are recommended. Please reserve your spot by contacting 319-372-3996 or emailing fortmadisonart@gmail.com by 5 p.m. September 23rd. Cost will be \$8 at the door. FMAAA gratefully thanks King’s Daughters of Pottowoc Circle for sponsoring this month’s exhibition.

Art in Central Park – Sunday, Sept. 19, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Join us in Fort Madison’s shady Central Park for FMAAA’s annual art fair event. Musical entertainment in the iconic band stand begins at 11:30 a.m. with Lisa Knipe and musicians from the Fort Madison Middle School drumline kicking off the day for us, sponsored by Lee County Bank. Followed at noon by everyone’s favorite Double Vision, sponsored by Jim Baier. BlueZillion takes the stage at 1 p.m. for a two-hour high energy performance, brought to us courtesy of MidWest One Bank. And Tony Alexander will round out the entertainment thanks again to Lee County Bank’s sponsorship. Coal Haus will be on hand throughout the day serving up fresh-made gourmet wood-fired pizzas. The Kid’s Zone, sponsored by Seither Cherry, offers hands-on creativity for young people. There is something for the whole

family at this year’s event and we hope to see you there. (NOTE: limited number of booth spaces still available – artists contact FMAAA ASAP to reserve your space!)

Raku Pottery Class – Wednesday Sept. 22, from 6 p.m.-9 p.m. – This two-part class begins with building your own unique piece of pottery in the FMAAA creative studio. We will walk you through the process of pottery basics during the first evening. Then take a field trip for an outdoor kiln firing experience in the follow-up session. Registration required. Cost is \$45. Get your friends together for a one-of-a-kind experience. Call 319-372-3996 or email fortmadisonart@gmail.com to sign up.

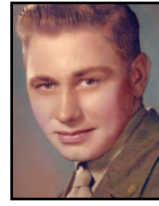
Lunch-ala-Art – Sept. 24, at noon featuring Rick Huff discussing his Huff Stuff metal “steam-punk-like” assemblage work. This ever-popular monthly event with lunch and artist talks returns. Held on the final Friday of the month, the featured artist(s) provides in depth discussion of the impulse behind their body of work. Reservations recommended. Cost is \$8 per person. NOTE: no Lunch ala Art in Dec, Jan or Feb

Finale – Friday Sept. 24th – 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. – FMAAA announces the inaugural evening of a new monthly performance series. The rationale behind this end of the month performance series is to provide the young and young at heart alike with an opportunity to perform local while recognizing and expanding the scope of our Arts Center to feature the work of performing artists. The Main Gallery at Fort Madison Area Arts Association will provide the backdrop to musicians and other artistic performances throughout the year. We will keep you posted with details of each month’s planned performance.

OBITUARIES

CHARLES E. CRAMER

Charles “Chuck” Edward Cramer, 93, of Alexandria, Missouri, passed away Tuesday, August 31, 2021, in Hannibal, Missouri.



CRAMER

Chuck was born March 19, 1928, in Keokuk, IA, the son of Tony and Viola “Vi” Cramer. He graduated from Keokuk High School in 1945 and then enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He later attended Lake Forest College. Chuck worked for Hoerner Boxes, Inc. in Keokuk, IA and also in Gurnee, IL. He became a plant manager in Columbus, IN and then was plant manager in Oklahoma City, OK before retiring to the Keokuk, IA/Alexandria, MO area.



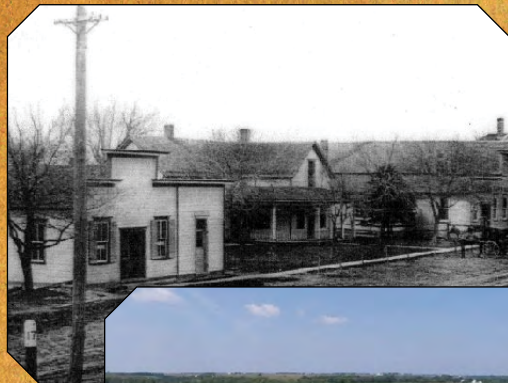
Chuck was a past President of the Southside Boat Club, a Charter Member of the Keokuk Emergency Corp and a member of the American Legion. He enjoyed traveling, playing cards with ‘the boys’ and having a cold one on the riverbank. Chuck lived a long and full life.

Chuck is survived by his companion and significant other, Hazel Lee; son: Charles (Nancy) Cramer of Lake City, FL; brother: Gerald (Joann) Cramer of Keokuk; granddaughters: Shawna (Rusty Burkeen) Lane of Murray, Kentucky and Casey (Melissa) Cramer of Fort Myers, FL; three great-grandchildren: Joshua Efinger, Madelynn Efinger and Olivia Cramer and several nieces and nephews.

Chuck is preceded in death by his parents, sister Delores “Deedee” Blanchard and youngest son, Edward A. Cramer. He was also preceded in death by his first wife, Shirley Allen and his wife of over 35 years, Maxine Cramer.

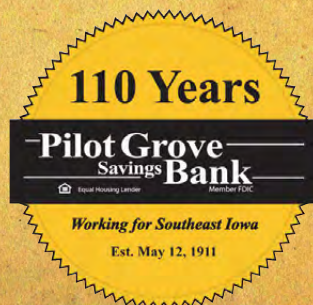
A graveside service will be held at Keokuk National Cemetery in Keokuk, IA, at 10 A.M. on Saturday, September 4, 2021 with full military rites. A procession to the gravesite will leave DeJong-Greaves-Printy Funeral Home at 9:45 A.M. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to: St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. DeJong-Greaves-Printy Funeral Home of Keokuk is in charge of arrangements. Rest in peace.

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Happy LABOR Day

Pen City Current will not publish an e-Edition Monday & Tuesday, September 6 & 7 due to the Labor Day holiday

Breaking news will continue to be published to our website www.PenCityCurrent.com and through our social media channels as it happens.

The e-Edition will resume publication on Wednesday, September 8.

Please celebrate safely.

PEN CITY CURRENT

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Member LION Publishers

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Pen City Current and www.pencitycurrent.com are products of Market Street Publishing, LLC. Pen City Current is published Sunday through Friday mornings by 6AM.

Founded in 2016
P.O. Box 366 | Fort Madison, IA

Obituaries/From the Front

Reynolds pushes for Iowans to get vaccinated

COVID - Continued from Page 1

7-day average.

Michele Ross, administrator at the Lee County Health Department, said that would be a question for the people putting out the data. But the county, as it always has, reports data provided by the IDPH.

She said one of the differences could be that the state includes antigen testing in their total positivity rate, while the CDC only reports PCR, or swab testing.

Per the state website, antigen testing makes up 36% of the total tests used to calculate county and state positivity ratings. That rate for the state as of Wednesday was 8.8%. Factoring out the antigen testing, the state has seen 363,445 positive tests out of 3.63 million tests, or right at 10%, a 1.2% increase compared to the overall positivity rate including antigen.

Specific to Lee County, 32,832 antigen tests have been reported with just

567 positive outcomes, whereas there were 39,065 PCR tests completed with 4,516 positive results since testing began in March of 2020.

The state site shows total testing data, but then somehow comes up with a 7-day and 14-day positivity rating without showing testing specific to those time ranges. That may be part of the updated website for a clearer picture of week to week spread.

From Aug. 26-Sept. 1, the county reported 124 new positive cases, according to IDPH, or an average of 18 per day. The CDC at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view> showed Lee County with 154 positive PCR tests for the same time period.

Ross said answers to those questions would have to come from CDC and IDPH officials.

"We acknowledge the CDC data tracker reports different data as well as other data sets available

out there. We suggest those who have questions about data reported by IDPH or other sources such as the CDC contact them directly to explain their source and how they report," Ross said.

"LCHD does not have control of what data they collect nor how it is reported. To remain consistent, we only report on the IDPH data which is taken directly from their website, which is available to the public.

"We do realize one difference between IDPH data and CDC data is IDPH reports both PCR and Antigen test result data and the CDC data tracker reports PCR test result data and not Antigen test result data to figure their reported positivity rates."

Reynolds continues to encourage Iowans to get vaccinated as it is showing the greatest potential for keeping people out of the hospital thus freeing up medical resources.

OBITUARIES

LORA H. BAXTER

Lora "Lou" Haley Baxter, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 8:55 p.m. on Wednesday, September 1, 2021 at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics. Lou was born in Mount Ayr, IA to Elbert and Anna Bowen Haley. On March



BAXTER

24, 1984 she married Leon Baxter in Fort Madison, IA. Lou went to high school in Mount Ayr and then cosmetology school in Des Moines. She spent several years working at Sheaffer Pen in Fort Madison and also worked at the Moose Lodge and helped friends out at their salons.

She is survived by: her husband, Leon Baxter of Fort Madison, IA her daughter, Annie Meyer of Camdenton, MO and son, AnDrew Baxter of Fort Madison, IA. Her granddaughter, Ella Meyer, 9. Her sister, Cathy (Jerald) Smith. Nephews, Chad and Danny Smith. Sister-in-laws, Jean (Tom) Neuweg and Mary Baxter and countless aunts, uncles, cousins, and close friends. She was preceded in death by her parents and her son-in-law, Calvin Meyer.

Lou had a love for collecting items like Longaberger Baskets, Isabel Bloom, Jim Shore, and Beanie Babies. She was known by friends and family for her sugar cookies, deviled eggs, coleslaw, and candy making. She was one of a kind with her generosity. If she found out something you liked, she would buy them for you any time she could. She was always getting gifts for friends. She loved boating on the Mississippi and spent a lot of the last summer doing just that. She also spent a lot of time going out with friends at some of her favorite restaurants in the area.

Leon and Lou traveled all over for his job and for pleasure. Some of their favorite vacation spots were South Carolina and Florida. When their kids were young, they visited all the states they could, sometimes being gone for weeks at a time. Lou had a sense of adventure that kept her going through many hard times. She loved roller coasters, swimming, and riding bikes. Some of her favorite quotes were, "what's for supper?" and "let's party!" Her love and generosity will never be forgotten.

Friends may call after 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 with the family to receive friends from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday evening at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. The funeral service will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory with Rev. Joseph Phung officiating. Burial will be in Oakland Cemetery. A memorial has been established for the Old Settler's Park Association. Online condolences to Lou's family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

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HOUNDS PREVIEW

Bloodhounds take 1-0 mark on the road to WB

Falcons' Travian Donaldson racked up 123 yards and a score last year in Fort Madison

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – It seems week after week the Hounds have to figure out how to contain a dangerous running back, but for the past 9 of 10 games, the Hounds have been able to get it done.

Only during last year's second-round playoff loss to Grinnell did a back seem to be able to regularly slip away from a quick Bloodhound defense.

Last week, Keokuk's Equilius Lee was held to just 67 yards, most coming on a couple runs. This week against West Burlington, Fort Madison will have to contend with junior Travian Donaldson who racked up 1,300 yards in 2021 averaging almost 7 yards per carry.

He had 97 last week against a Mid Prairie team that shoved the Falcons (0-1) around most of the night enroute to a 55-13 win. Last year in Fort Madison Donaldson had 123 yards on just 13 carries and a touchdown.

Doherty said that's been one focus this week.

"He's a dangerous back. We know that and just have to do a good job controlling him. He's going to get his yards, but we have to prevent the big runs," the Hounds 3rd-year coach said Thursday.

The Falcons start junior Hayden Vandenberg at quarterback. Vandenberg struggled in the opener going just 1 for 11 for 11 yards, but scored on a touchdown late and had 39 rushing yards.

Doherty said Falcon's first-year head coach Joe Bowman has a solid resume and will make adjustments.

"I've read his story and I'm excited to finally meet him. He was an assistant for a long time and got his chance and took it, so I can certainly appreciate that," Doherty said. "But their doing some good things and I've heard nothing but good things about Joe. So they will adjust and they'll be ready."

The Falcons didn't have much going offensively against Mid-Prairie but have some fire power behind very large offensive and defensive fronts with three line-

WHO TO WATCH FOR West Burlington

- #18: Travian Donaldson, JR – RB/LB
- #16: Hayden Vandenberg JR – QB/LB
- #8: Carson Chiprez SR – WR/CB
- #2: Isiah Fenton JR – RB/LB
- #71: Damion Snyder SR – OL/DL

FORT MADISON

- #4 – Landes Williams SR – QB/S
- #13 – Tate Johnson SR – WR/S
- #55 – Tanner Settles JR – OL/LB
- #77 – Mateo Lozano JR – OL/DL
- #54 – Austin Ensminger SR -OL/LB
- #2 – Teague Smith – SOPH – RB/LB

man over 240 lbs and senior Tyler Burch in at 6'1" 290 lbs.

Fort Madison will run out smaller front lines anchored by junior Mateo Lozano. Juniors Daniel Sokolik and Ike Thacher have also drawn attention and helped keep Division 1 prospect Trace Hackaday in line last week in the Hounds 43-0 win over Keokuk. Sokolik and Thacher combined for 11.5 tackles in last week's opener.

Doherty said assistant coach Ryan Smith was excited about Sokolik after seeing him grind away at bigger wrestlers during the winter season.

Senior Austin Ensminger also had 6.5 tackles last week and had two pick sixes, one of which was called back on illegal block. Ensminger, who plays both sides of the ball, catches breathers from senior Abram Lorence, who Doherty calls the "smartest guy on the field".

"Austin knows one way to play and that is all out. And sometimes you have to fill up that tank, so it's awesome when we have a guy like Abram Lorence, who we can stick in there and be fully confident he can do the job.

On offense, Doherty said the Hounds didn't get settled in against Keokuk.

"We're still evolving as an offense. Coach Menke has a good game plan and adjusts well and that's what I enjoy most about him. He's really even mannered and never too high or low and that's what you need in an offensive coordinator," Doherty said.

"We just don't feel like our offense was clicking. It was close at times, but never really got off the ground."

Landes Williams scored three rushing touchdowns from the quarterback spot. Two were runs through the line on reads, the third was on a scramble where he found a lane and was able to get into the secondary and score.

The senior was 9 of 15 through the air for just 67 yards, but he connected with six different receivers on the night, four to his younger brother Kane who had 17 yards.

Aside from Williams tucking and running, Fort Madison got 51 yards on 10 carries from sophomore Teague Smith who handled the majority of the hard running between the tackles. Jakob McGowan had 24 yards on nine carries and a touchdown.

The potent combination of Williams to Tate Johnson was contained for the most part by the Chiefs, but Johnson ripped off an 81-yard kick return for a touchdown to start the second half to highlight another strong special teams game from the Hounds.

Doherty said that comes from preaching three sides of the football.

"When I was at Monmouth we preached three sides of the football and that's always something big in my mind. It's awesome when you can win all sides," he said.

Doherty said the team resets at 0-0 each week, and the key to getting to 1-0 each week is not backing off the gas pedal on defense and getting that squad off the field.

"Third and long we can't bend as much as we did last week. Coach (Jason) Crooks has been on them about that and telling them if they aren't playing very much it's a good night."

"Lee hurt us last week with not letting us off the field and we've got to get our defense off the field. Fundamentally we're sound and that's a credit to the defensive coaching staff. Our guys are fast, they are in agility and speed school in athletic enhancement – they're doing it all.

"We face another dangerous back Friday and we put a high priority on this guy's gonna get yards, but we gotta minimize big plays."

Kick off is at 7 p.m. at Bill Nelson Field in West Burlington.

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Sports

LADY CRUSADERS

No. 5 Crusaders go into Rodeo break with sweep

Holy Trinity takes Danville in three sets; off until Sept. 14 when No. 1 Nikes come calling

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP
PCC SPORTS

FORT MADISON – Holy Trinity has a long wait before getting its first shot at defending Class 1A state champion Notre Dame, so it was good to go into the break with a win.

The Crusaders opened SEI Superconference play on Thursday night, sweeping Danville 25-11, 25-13, 25-14 at Shottenkirk Gymnasium.



FREESMEIER

Holy Trinity, ranked fifth in the IGHSAU Class 1A rankings that were released earlier in the day, doesn't play again until the Sept. 14 home match against the top-ranked Nikes. The Crusaders have the Tri-State Rodeo week off, and don't play in a tournament this weekend.

"I'd rather play. But then again, we're going to be busy after that," Holy Trinity coach Melissa Freesmeier said. "We're just going to try to keep them focused, just be ready for the next match."

Holy Trinity opened the season last Saturday, going 4-2 in a tournament at Bondurant-Farrar High School. The Crusaders took control of the Bears (1-1) early and never let up.

Freesmeier said her team appreciated the energy of the crowd, something that was missing at times last season because of the attendance restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Holy Trinity's junior varsity team rallied to defeat Danville in three games before the varsity match, and Freesmeier thought that set a tone.

"I loved the crowd," she said. "I don't think we've seen that for a while, and I think we missed that. (The JV win) got the atmosphere going, the energy going, and (the varsity) just wanted to follow suit. I thought it was awesome for the kids to have that back, because last year was so weird."

Holy Trinity had a balanced hitting attack. Kassi Randolph led the Crusaders with nine kills, while Natalie Randolph, Mary Kate Bendlage and Brooke Mueller each had eight kills. Reagan Holvoet had four kills, and Kayla Box had two.

"That's key," Freesmeier said. "That's what we like to see, nice and balanced. We can go anywhere, and we want to keep that middle block really wondering."

"I thought we mixed it up well. I thought we stayed aggressive, ran some things. I liked how we looked today."

Natalie Randolph led the Crusaders with 18 assists, while Kassi Randolph had eight. Anna Sobczak had 14 digs and four assists. Holvoet had two blocks, while Box, Mueller and Kassi Randolph each had one.

The Crusaders also had a strong serving night. Natalie Randolph was 18-of-19 with three aces. Kassi Randolph was 16-of-17. Mueller was 9-of-10 with an ace.

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QUALIFICATIONS:
Applicants must be law enforcement certified and meet ILEA standards for fitness, medical, and psychological requirements. Must possess an Iowa driver's license and have abilities as defined in the department job description. A bachelor's degree in criminal justice or a related field is preferred, along with 10 years of job experience and supervisory background. Supplemental supervisory training certification, such as FBI-NA or Northwestern SPSC is desired. For the right individual, any combination of education, experience, and demonstrated abilities may be considered.

TO APPLY:
Interested persons may submit requests for a PDF application packet to: fmpd@fortmadisonpd.com or, obtained in person M-F 7:00 AM-4:30 PM at the Police Department lobby at 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, IA 52627. The City of Fort Madison is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The deadline for applications is October 1st, 2021 at 4:30 PM, or until the position is filled.

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From the Front

New facilities could bring new opportunities to Central Lee

UPGRADE - Continued from Page 1

said.

“And when you consider the timing of when we went to bid and got interest rates on the bond, it couldn’t have gone better for us. I would like to say it was skill, but we just got lucky.”

A revamped cafeteria with cushioned booths all in Central Lee Hawk colors, a courtyard, an extended cafeteria lobby complete with furniture and coming television monitors will be an added attraction for fans, and students alike.

The district even has pods with swinging desk tables where students can get comfortable while doing homework.

The new gymnasium can host simultaneous volleyball games with a third possible in the old gym, a move that has Activities Director Wes McGraw thinking substate volleyball.

“We want to do some things with this space. We have way more room now for fans and amenities and we can be attractive for things like substate volleyball and other tournaments,” he said.

The new gym floor is in with a new digital scorers table, remote blinds to allow the natural light in. The gym has eight basketball hoops three on each side and the two

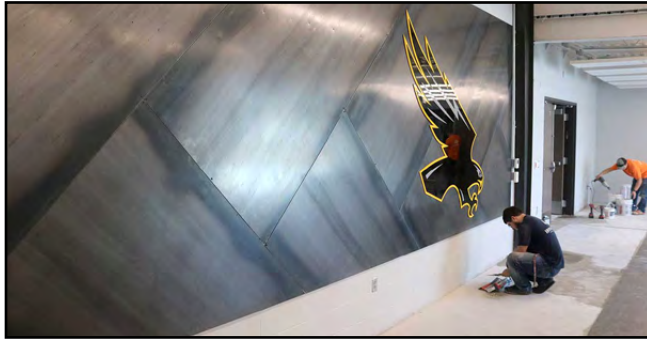


Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Workers with Holtkamp Floors, Decor and Furniture work on finishing the flooring in a new Central Lee learning space Thursday.

The new Southeast Iowa Superconference logo appears in the lane of the basketball court and a huge Hawk logo covers the middle of the court.

“It’s kind of tough for me as an Iowa State fan,” Crozier said. “But we looked at that big Tiger Hawk on the center of the Iowa Hawkeyes court and said that’s what we want.”

High School Principal Nicole Herdrich said the students and staff are wide-eyed about the new look at the high school and the upgraded facilities.

“That’s my favorite part of it. Don’t tell my boss, but I’ve sneaked a few students in (to the gym) and they are just amazed at how it looks,” she said as the new sound system

was being tested in the gym.

“We have such good things going on inside the building, I want the face of it match those good things and we’re gonna have that now. It’s like that nice new outfit I like to get to wear to work because it makes the day exciting. That’s how this feels.”

Workers were still crawling around the building working on wiring, bleachers in the gym, sealing entry way transitions with concrete and other final pieces of the project. Crozier said they are still waiting on a piece of security glass that is about 20 feet long and 10 feet high that will allow the office staff to see whoever comes into the building.

The exterior doors open into a secure foyer and all interior doors are locked until office staff buzzes open the doors.

Crozier said the work flow has been about as good as he could have expected considering all the hurdles facing the construction industry currently.

“When you look at those things I wouldn’t have traded or have it done any other way. Estes Construction has been really good. We’ve been hearing some about material delays here and there, but they’ve worked really hard behind the scenes to keep things moving,” he said.

“This past month it seems there are specific achievements every single day.”

McGraw is a 2008 graduate of Central Lee. He’s taken over the part-time AD position as well as teaching. He was the previous AD at Van Buren, but he remembers playing in Central Lee’s older gym.

“It was like the fans were right on the court. To be able to have more fans in the stands and it being more accessible is exciting.”

“Overall everyone is really excited. I’ve heard some community members talk about how nice the gym is. We had some alumni come in and they were very impressed with the facilities, too.”

Crozier said despite all the improvements in both buildings the district’s not done improving opportunities for students.

“We’re not done yet. We’ve got some other things and we’re hoping to partner with some people. We tackled some big initiatives with this, but you always have to keep improving.”

Herdrich said knowing that the district is just weeks away from having access to all the news spaces is helping detract from some of the other bumps in the road.

“The staff is super happy. Knowing that there is going to be a beautiful end product helps us deal with the little bumps like hot days, But they are excited.”

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