

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's **Black & White** and **Read** all over

Friday, April 9, 2021 | 6 pages | Volume 5 • Issue 77



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Council gives \$1.5M nod to Marina



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

An initial \$6 million investment in a proposed Fort Madison Marina got a boost Thursday night in the form of a \$1.5 million commitment from the Fort Madison City Council.

RESOLUTION: City Council move paves the way for federal funding application

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A resolution in support of a \$1.5 million spend was approved Thursday afternoon by the Fort Madison City Council in a special meeting.

The \$6 million project, labeled a “5-star marina” by Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld, needed the commitment from the city to kick start other partner investments including a possible \$1.5 million kick-in from the Southeast Iowa Regional Riverboat Commission, and possible federal earmark that is part of the American Recovery Plan, and other private investments.

Mohrfeld said the application for the federal grants



MOHRFELD

through a Community Project Fund program via U.S. Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks is being put together by Mike Norris of the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission, and is set to be turned in on Thursday.

The resolution Thursday was approved by a 6-0 vote with Councilman Chad Cangas not in attendance. The resolution gives support to applying for the federal grant, as well as specifies the city shall commit \$1.5 million to waterside infrastructure at the marina, which fulfills its “ownership obligations”.

Councilman Mark Lair, who seemed opposed to the spend

See **MARINA**, page 3

HUMPHREY BUILDING

Barker officials take a look-see at historic structure

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A familiar face has entered the fray to try and save another historic building in downtown Fort Madison.

Barker Financial Chief Financial Officer Kyle Galloway said he toured the

Humphrey building with company President David Barker earlier this week. Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld and two of the children of the late owner Bryan Humphrey, also met with the group.

The building at the southeast corner of Avenue G and 8th Street in downtown Fort

Madison is now part of Humphrey’s estate. It has been in the city’s cross-hairs since the west side started to crumble onto the sidewalk in 2019.

The city took Humphrey to court over his inaction to sufficiently shore up the

See **BARKER**, page 2

EDITORIAL



Marina will be part of burgeoning riverfront

Social media this week’s been abuzz with observers watching the city’s handling of a proposed \$6 million Fort Madison Marina project, that will, according to Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld, ultimately almost double in price to about \$11 million when all’s said and done.

Mohrfeld is on record as saying he’s buying the first beer at the new marina that he says will be open, but maybe not totally completed, by April 1, 2022.

The new project brings in four new dock structures, two of which will be covered, a move that brings more quality of life to the boaters who rent those slips.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is back on board with helping mitigate some of the heavy silting that’s occurred inside the marina. Not only are they back on board with helping resolve the flood-caused rising of the floor of the river, but they are looking at taking extra silt out to create possibly four feet of water in the dock area, which is attractive to those wanting to build boat lifts at the docks.

The new jetty wall, uhh...pier that is being planned will be built out further into the river and will be constructed to allow a walking path and tables to possibly be included in 5Ks that run up and down the river.

The public/private motor that is being planned to operate the marina, gets turned over with a key from the City of Fort Madison. A \$1.5 million key to be exact. That will be tax money for sure. Whether the city borrows from an internal fund such as the Highway 61 rehabilitation fund, or some other mechanism, it will have to be paid back and that will come

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WEATHER

FRI 09 Apr..... Rain, 68° F/ 48° F
SAT 10 Apr..... Heavy Rain, 53° F/ 46° F
SUN 11 Apr..... Rain, 61° F/ 42° F

OpenWeatherMap

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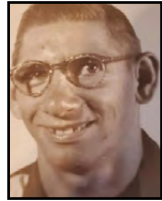
Obituaries/From the Front

OBITUARIES

ELVIN E. HARKER

Elvin Edward Harker, 83, of Keokuk, passed away on Monday, April 5, 2021, in Rushville, Illinois.

Elvin was born on October 31, 1937, at Graham Hospital in Keokuk, Iowa, the son of Eddy Simon and Elizabeth (Hackard) Harker. In 1972, he was united in marriage to Keitha Cooper in Kahoka, Missouri.



HARKER

Elvin was a member of the First Baptist Church in Keokuk, Iowa. Elvin is survived by his wife, Keitha; two sisters, Glenda Madden of West Point, Iowa and Virginia "Ginger" Malaney of Quincy, Illinois; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Elvin is preceded in death by his parents.

A private family graveside service will be held at 2 pm on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, at Sunset Memorial Park in Keokuk.

Tributes and condolences may be left at www.dejongsfuneralhome.com.

DeJong-Greaves-Printy Funeral Home of Keokuk is in charge of arrangements.

Pen City Current obituary policy

Pen City Current runs obituaries one time at no charge to funeral homes and they run the day they are submitted in most cases. They are also run as submitted by the funeral homes. Reposting of obituaries due to changes can only be requested by the submitting funeral home and will be assessed a \$15 reposting fee.

#HyperLocalSuperFresh

Barkers may step in again downtown

BARKER - Continued from Page 1

building and Humphrey was facing eviction as the issue worked its way through the court system.

Galloway said the situation is extremely preliminary, but he met with architects Thursday morning to try and get blue prints into a CAD system as a place to start for someone, even if it's not Barker Financial.

"It's very preliminary right now. David and I did come down and met with Ben (Humphrey) and Taylor (Humphrey Frietag) and toured the building," Galloway said.

"There are some complications there, but from our perspective it's a building near where we have apartments across the corner and the YMCA is right across the street. It's a prime position."

"And I have to tell ya, it probably has one of the best views of any building in Iowa."

Galloway said Barker Financial, out of Iowa City, likes to try and preserve historic buildings, but it has to make financial sense. As with the other apartments they've renovated in Fort Madison, funding mechanisms like Community Development Block Grants and historic tax credits would all be part of the calculations.

"These buildings always need some form of outside assistance," he said. "They never pencil out on their own merits. The other part is how broken the building is."

At this time Galloway said architects are looking at original blue prints of the building to see what it's going to take to preserve the 141-year-old structure in the heart of Fort Madison's resurging downtown district. Finding the original blue prints was like finding a treasure, Galloway said.

"That's huge and pretty rare to find in a building that old. We're taking those and getting them into a CAD (Computer Assisted

Design) file to have a place to start for someone," he said.

"At the highest level, we'd like to be a part of the solution there. It's certainly something we wouldn't want to see bulldozed."

Galloway didn't get specific about what role Barker Financial is considering with the building, but calculating the costs of rehabilitation will be a big part of that decision. He said he didn't get the sense on the tour that the building was unsalvageable and said the family would like to see it preserved.

"I could be way off on that, but that's my gut," he said. "It's just an issue of if it pencils out with the cost of materials going crazy. And then, of course, any hidden surprises."

The building would have to maintain retail space on the first floor, but Galloway said upper apartments would probably be the way to go for any developer of the building.



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PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

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For the Record/From the Front

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

04/05/21 – 8:23 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1200 block of Avenue F.
 04/05/21 – 8:47 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Jennifer Gayle Traman, 34, of Fort Madison, in the 1500 block of Avenue I, on a charge of public intoxication, drug paraphernalia, and possession of a controlled substance. She was taken to Lee County Jail.
 04/05/21 – 4:01 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 4800 block of Avenue O.
 04/05/21 – 4:40 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 5000 block of Avenue O.
 04/05/21 – 11:03 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Amie Theresa Schmitz, 42, of Fort Madison in the 1800 block of Avenue H, on a charge of driving under suspension.
 04/06/21 – 2:49 a.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Sonia Dee Ferraraccio, 43, of Fort Madison, in

the 1000 block of Avenue F, on a charge of aggravated domestic abuse assault. She was taken to Lee County Jail.
 04/06/21 – 5:48 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 100 block of 2nd Street.
 04/07/21 – 8:41 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2200 block of Avenue H.
 04/02/21 – 9:29 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 5400 block of Avenue O.
 04/07/21 – 1:16 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Zachariah Justice Raines, 19, of Fort Madison, at the police station on a charge of simple assault.
 04/07/21 – 2:51 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2100 block of Avenue E.
 04/07/21 – 3:13 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Heather Dawn Daniels, 40, of Fort Madison, in the 300

block of Avenue H, on a charge of trespass. She was taken to Lee County Jail.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

04/07/21 – 3:39 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Jason Lee Hartman at the sheriff's office on a warrant for violation of probation. He was held in custody at Lee County Jail.
 04/07/21 – 5:02 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Nathan Washington Ferguson, 29, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on a warrant for interference with official act. He was taken to Lee County Jail.
Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

04/06/21 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to one false alarm and two burning complaints.
 04/07/21 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to three medical calls and one false alarm.

Mayor "tickled" city a step closer to Marina funding

MARINA - Continued from Page 1

at Tuesday's regular council meeting, said additional information had come forward and the project seems more understandable.

"It's been a rough day for me making a decision after what was said at the council meeting the other night," Lair said "I was presented with a lot more information and you've done a good job bringing information and the media was able to put something out that makes this more understandable, and things seems to be rolling good."

Mohrfeld said the project is about tourism and quality of life.

"I'm tickled that we're one step closer," Mohrfeld said.

Where the money will come from for the contribution has yet to be finalized, but Mohrfeld has said he's in favor of borrowing funds from the Hwy. 61 rehabilitation fund, and then including the \$1.5 million on the back end of the highway project. City officials have already indicated they will need to borrow funds to complete that project.

The proposed marina project will be a partnership anchored by city ownership. The city would non-profit and for-profit organizations to run the hospitality center including the convenience store. Additional plans for the project after the initial \$6 million could push the price tag to \$11 million all in, according to Mohrfeld.

Proceeds from those operations of the hospitality center would prop up maintenance of the docks and dredging of the marina to make the project self-sustaining.

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Classifieds/Public Notices

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE NEW CONSTRUCTION ANNOUNCEMENTS Notice to Bidders Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Sealed bids will be received by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources by email, at procurement@dnr.iowa.gov until 11:00 am, April 22, 2021 for the public improvement projects listed below. In an effort to mitigate the spread and effects of the COVID-19, the Department of Natural Resources will ONLY be accepting proposals submitted via email for these projects. The subject line of the email containing the proposal, with the proposal guarantee, must include the Project Number, Project Title, and the Bid Date and Time. No bids shall be accepted by FAX, mail or hand-delivery. After the bid opening, information concerning bid results may be obtained by visiting the Department's website at www.iowadnr.gov.

Note: The bid opening for this project will be held by conference call only. No facilities will be available for an in-person meeting. Interested parties may call in to the following number to listen to the bid opening:

Conference call number: +1 (505) 738-1452
PIN: 886 923 111#

In order to improve sound quality, please mute your phone by pressing *6. If you have questions, you can unmute your phone by pressing *6.

While bids are due by 11:00 am CST, the bid opening teleconference will not begin until 11:30 am to allow staff ample time to print bids before reading them aloud.

Project documents, including drawings, specifications, proposal forms, and addenda items for the project are available at Beeline and Blue, at 2507 Ingersoll Ave, Des Moines IA 50312. Please visit www.beelineandblue.com or contact (515) 244-1611 for more information.

Alternatively, Bid Documents can be viewed or printed online at <https://programs.iowadnr.gov/engreal/projectlist.asp>

The Department shall comply with all public improvement procurement laws, as outlined in the plans and specifications

and including but not limited to: Iowa Code chapter 26 related to public construction bidding; Iowa Code chapter 73 related to preferences; Iowa Code chapter 573 related to labor and materials on public improvements; rules promulgated by the Department of Administrative Services – General Services Enterprise as they may apply; rules promulgated by the Department of Natural Resources and the Natural Resources Commission, as they may apply; and any federal statutes, rules and/or executive orders that may be associated depending on funding sources. Bidders shall comply with these laws to be considered and are encouraged to be familiar with public improvement procurement requirements and the bidding documents before submitting a bid.

Each bidder shall accompany the bid with a scanned copy of the bid security as defined in Iowa code section 26.8. Additionally, bid securities in the form of a certified check, cashier's check, or money order must also be mailed to the Department at the Wallace State Office Building, 502 East 9th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319. The bid security must be in an amount set forth in the

bidding documents and made payable to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Failure to execute a contract for the proposed work and file an acceptable Performance Bond in an amount equal to 100% of the contract price and a certificate of liability insurance within thirty (30) days of the date of the award of the contract will be just and sufficient cause for the rescinding of the award and the forfeiture of the bid security.

STORY COUNTY PROJECT NO. 21-02-85-02

State Forest Nursery
Grading Room Renovation

Proposal Guarantee: \$25,000.00

Completion Date: 09/17/2021

Bid Letting Date: 04/22/2021

Project Description:

State Forest Nursery in Ames, IA will have its grading room renovated. It has been over 50 years since the building was constructed and the grading room no longer meets the needs of the staff. This project will demolish the interior of the grading and processing room, paint the walls, new emergency egress doors, new ceiling grid and water-proof panel sys-

tem, lighting, electrical, and radiant tube heaters. This project will upgrade the two rooms for new conveyor equipment to be installed this summer and function for staff needs now and into the future.

MULTIPLE COUNTIES PROJECT NO. 21-02-42-02

Iowa State Parks
A3 Entry Signs
Proposal Guarantee: \$6,250.00

Completion Date: 09/30/2021

Bid Letting Date: 04/22/2021

Project Description: Iowa State Parks has redesigned their signage and will be installing new entry signs throughout the State in the summer of 2021. This project is for all A3 signs within the Parks system, there are six (6) of these signs at different locations. These locations shall all receive the A3 sign: Stone, Mini-Wakan, Dolliver, Walnut Woods, Pine Lake, and Geode State Park.

CLAYTON COUNTY PROJECT NO. 21-03-22-02

Pikes Peak State Park
Road Maintenance
Proposal Guarantee: \$6,250.00

Completion Date: 09/30/2021

Bid Letting Date: 04/22/2021

Project Description: This project consists of granular roadway maintenance - RCP culvert removal and replacement,

ditch cleaning, blading/shaping, spreading additional rock, seeding/fertilizing and the placement of approximately 110 SY of 6-inch reinforced PCC pavement.

TAMA COUNTY PROJECT NO. 21-05-86-01

Otter Creek
Lake Restoration
Proposal Guarantee: \$37,500.00

Completion Date: 11/30/2021

Bid Letting Date: 04/22/2021

Project Description: This project consists of mechanically removing sediment from two existing sediment ponds, replacing two pond spillway pipes, the draining of the main lake, and the construction of a low level drain pipe on the main lake.

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY PROJECT NO. 17-04-78-07

Wilson Island SRA
Pavement Repair –
Rebid

Proposal Guarantee: \$25,000.00

Completion Date: 09/30/2021

Bid Letting Date: 04/22/2021

Project Description: This project consists of a bituminous fog seal, patching, painted symbols, longitudinal and transverse joint repair and crack and joint cleaning and filling (pavement maintenance).

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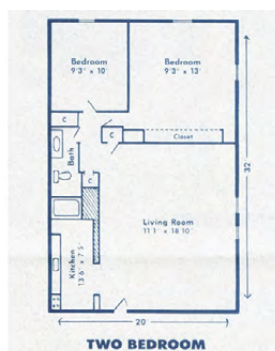
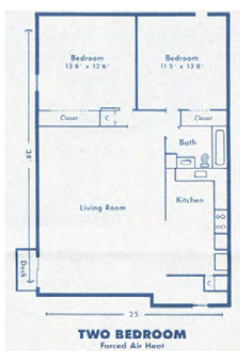
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Scene Around Town/From the Front

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Fort Madison Cub Scout Pack 7 and Boy Scout Troop 7 recently took part in the National "Scouting for Food" event. The scouts teamed up with Fort Madison Hy-Vee and did a "pack the trailer" event the weekend of March 20th and 21st. The scouts took in 996 lbs. of food and \$865 in cash that was donated to the Fort Madison Food Pantry.

Marina would be piece of missing riverfront economy

RIVERFRONT - Continued from Page 1

with a bond. The city approved a resolution supporting that spend at a meeting Thursday.

People were complaining that cost is too high and they want the roads fixed. It's a bit disingenuous to not see the extra money the city has been putting into the budget at least the past five years to improve city roads. Avenue E by the library, 24th Street, 6th to 10th Street on Hwy. 61 to name a few. Improvements have been on the eastern side of the city on Avenue G and 4th. But it's not enough. Not nearly enough, It's hard to ignore however that they are moving as quickly as funds will allow.

That's coming from a news group that sits in on all city meetings and reports on budgets. The tax payer money being spent on roads is increasing and the overlay program has addressed many streets. In other words, seeing is believing.

But two of the most prominent street improvement run right in front of the beautiful Fort Madison riverfront. We now have riverboat excursions. We're months away from bringing the depot back to its rightful place on the riverfront, and now we could be just a year away from what Mohrfeld "won't apologize for" being a 5-star marina.

It's not just a dock for Fort Madison's boating enthusiasts. Make sure you know the full tilt of this project. It's a restaurant and convenience center with increased parking, permanent and visitor docks, and a gorgeous view of the panoramic Illinois bluffs tucked behind the country's only double decker swing span bridge.

The pandemic has done one thing and that's push people back to their love of the river. The city plans to capitalize on that in the partnerships. Proceeds from the slip rentals and sales from the hospitality center are earmarked for keeping the marina maintained and dredged creating a sustainability outside city coffers. Yet the city, through the lease agreements with the partners, will own the property which will enable state and federal grants in the event the Mississippi gets disgruntled again.

But here's the bigger picture. The marina not only will bring in a projected 50,000 visits per year, according to Mohrfeld, but it puts yet another feature on a riverfront that for decades has been underestimated and under utilized.

With the riverboats docking, the Old Fort becomes a bigger attraction. Moving the Amtrak Depot also adds potential, and Charles Craft & Co. bring tens of thousands in yearly for four days of music, events, games, carnival, and food.

Stop and look at what's going on downtown. We're creating, very quickly we might add, a culture center around eclectic food, art and shopping – an attractive day stop for boaters, river cruisers, and rail riders.

The city could have borrowed millions to fix roads any year for the past... who knows how many years. We're gonna have to borrow to finish that stretch of Hwy. 61, but another \$2 trillion federal infrastructure bill is being finalized and pushed in Washington D.C. We might be able to capitalize on that money if we're shovel ready with city projects.

Borrowing isn't bad if it makes sense and the future looks good to repay it. At Tuesday's City Council meeting, City Manager David Varley said the general fund outlook is improving. The city hasn't yet begun tapping into utilities through the passed franchise tax so things could continue to improve.

Sure there's other things we need. The home of the fire department is way passed it's efficiencies, the city street department basically functions out of a shed...and yeah, our roads are rough. But the sewer separation project that is being mandated by the Department of Natural Resources will require some roads being torn up so it makes sense to wait on those until that work is completed.

This is a good spend at a good time. It brings attention to the riverfront and takes a project that would have taken city money alone to resurrect, and leverages it to bring another \$4.5 million in private investment to improve the quality of life. That attraction brings spending, which Mohrfeld said could hit \$7.5 million if you use economic rollover numbers.

It has the potential, and likelihood, to put us on the map with regard to top boating destinations along the Mississippi River, and with all the other burgeoning activity in the works, it's a big piece of the entire riverfront economy.

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