

# PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Thursday, January 21, 2020 | 8 pages | Volume 5 • Issue 23



www.pencitycurrent.com

# NO PARKING



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Fort Madison city crews are in the process of putting up signs on the south side of Avenue E. Citations, beginning with warnings for any cars parked on that side of the street, are beginning to be enforced through an education campaign. The city will also be painting center lines down the thoroughfare.

## VACCINE ROLLOUT

### LCHD looking for numbers for those 75 and older

*(Editor's Note: Pen City Current will continue to print LCHD official information regarding COVID-19 vaccines in their entirety when they are received, to keep our readership up-to-date on this fluid situation)*

FORT MADISON – Lee County Health Department intends to be straight forward with all county residents when it comes to available COVID-19 vaccines and when it is your turn.

Since the week of December 21, 2020 to present day,

Lee County Health Department has received 500 Prime (first) doses of the Moderna Vaccine at our facility. Most of these prime doses have been or will be (still having clinics) administered to those in Phase 1A through the end of January.

On February 1, 2021, Iowa will activate Phase 1B. By then, LCHD expects to have received another 100-200 doses for those we plan to vaccinate in the first week of Febru-

See PHASE 1B, page 6

### Iowa Workforce to reissue all 1099-G forms due to error

DES MOINES – Today, Iowa Workforce Development announced that it will reissue new 1099-G tax forms to all claimants on Jan 25, 2021. After recently mailing the 1099-G forms, IWD discovered the forms may not have included all of the benefits received by claimants in

2020. The form is used to report unemployment compensation, and state and federal taxes withheld. The reason for the error has been identified and corrected.

If you receive a 1099-G prior to Jan. 25, we ask that you please disregard and destroy it. There is no need to

contact IWD at this time to notify us of an incorrect 1099-G amount. IWD is committed to ensuring that all claimants receive accurate 1099s, and we thank you for your patience and understanding

See FORMS, page 2

## 2022 BUDGET

### County may bump property taxes by 2%

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – Lee County taxpayers could be looking at a reduction in property taxes again this year despite a property tax ask of just over \$14 million.

In preliminary budget talks, County Budget director has proposed a tax rate of \$8.35/\$1,000 of assessed valuation for “urban” areas and a \$10.75/\$1,000 of assessed valuation in “rural” areas. The levies are projected to generate \$14,027,730 in the proposed tax structure.

The total dollars through levy represents a 2% increase from the year ending June 30, 2021. Anything over the 2% increase would require additional public hearings in front of the Lee County Board of Supervisors and a 4-of-5 vote by supervisors to approve going over the state-mandated softcap.

The total proposed budget county spend for the next fiscal year starting July 1, 2021 surpasses the \$40 million mark for the first time in history and represents a \$6 million shortfall in early projecting. Revenue are anticipated to be \$34.3 million down from 2021 numbers of \$38.7 million.

Part of the increase in revenues for 2021 is from bonded proceeds for county maintenance and the digital radio upgrade totaling \$7.2 million. Without those figured in, revenues would be up about \$2.5 million for regular services.

The top department projected spends for the county include \$8.8 million for secondary roads, which represents a \$700,000 shortfall compared to revenues for the year. But the roads fund is projecting a \$2.79 million balance at the end of June, creating an ending balance for 2022 of just over \$2 million.

The county budget taken as a whole is projected to have a \$15.6 million

See BUDGET, page 6

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## WEATHER

THU 21 Jan.....	Clear Skies, 40° F/29° F
FRI 22 Jan.....	Partly Cloudy, 28° F/14° F
SAT 23 Jan.....	Light Snow, 30° F/13° F

## IOWA LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS 01/19.....	10 19 26 28 50, Mega Ball: 16 Megaplier: 2
PICK 3 01/19 MIDDAY.....	4 6 4
PICK 3 01/19 EVENING.....	2 1 9
PICK 4 01/19 MIDDAY.....	2 1 5 2
PICK 4 01/19 EVENING.....	0 4 5 3

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# Obituaries/From the Front

## OBITUARIES

### AILEEN BLAISE

Aileen Blaise, 91, of Keokuk, died Thursday, January 12, 2021 at Unity Point Health in Keokuk, Iowa.

She was born March 24, 1929 in, Kahoka, Missouri, the daughter of Avard and Kathrine Kober Washburn. Aileen graduated from Kahoka High School with the class of 1947.



BLAISE

In 1951, she was united in marriage to Charles Pete Blaise Jr. in Kahoka. He preceded her in death on February 17, 1976.

Aileen was a waitress at Fortunes Restaurant and Six to Six Café in Keokuk. She had been employed at McDonald's in Keokuk for twenty-five years before retiring in 2015.

She was a member of the St. Paul United Church of Christ in Kahoka, MO.

Aileen enjoyed working. She always had a smile on her face and liked being around people. She will be remembered fondly by the locals at McDonald's. Aileen was a caring mother and grandmother and loved spending time with her family, especially her grandkids.

She is survived by her two sons, Charles "Pete" Blaise III of Keokuk, Steve Blaise (Jessica) of Keokuk, one daughter, Barbara Jean Maulding of Keokuk, twelve grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren, with three on the way, three sisters, Shirley Asher of Florida, Nola Edens of Farmington, Dorothy Sturm of Keokuk and many nieces and nephews.

Besides her husband, Aileen was preceded in death by her parents, one daughter, Vickie Lynn Blaise Burgess, two grandsons, Howard Burgess and Corrie Blaise, three brothers, one sister and a son-in-law, Howard Burgess.

A graveside service will be held 1 p.m. Tuesday at the Keokuk National Cemetery.

Visitation will be held after 1 p.m. Monday at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk with the family meeting with friends from 5-7 p.m. Social distancing measures will be in effect and masks are required.

Memorials may be made to the Ronald McDonald House.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at [www.vigenmemorialhome.com](http://www.vigenmemorialhome.com).

### DORRIE COCHENOUR

Dorrie Cochenour, 37, of Keokuk, IA passed away Monday, January 18, 2021 at the Blessing Hospital in Quincy, IL due to complications of diabetes.

She was born on April 13, 1983 the daughter of Dave Stinson and Barbara Maulding in Keokuk, Iowa. She graduated from Keokuk High School with the Class of 2002.



COCHENOUR

Dorrie was united in marriage to the love of her life Jeremy Cochenour on October 7, 2017. He survives.

Dorrie is also survived by her children, Torrie and Trinity Jean of Villa Grove, IL, Tallon Cochenour of Keokuk, three stepchildren, Nicholas, Carter, and Olivia Cochenour, one grandchild, Luna Lee

Cochenour of Keokuk, her father, Dave Stinson and mother, Barbara Maulding of Keokuk, her father and mother-in-law, Jerry and Brenda Cochenour of Arbela, MO, one sister, Kaitlyn Maulding, one brother, Cody Stinson, one sister-in-law, Kelly Ambrose (Derek) of Memphis, MO and nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and friends.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, one brother, Corrie Blaise, an aunt, Vicky Burgess a cousin, Howard Burgess and a sister-in-law, Carmen Cochenour

Dorrie was employed at Kentucky Fried Chicken in Keokuk.

Dorrie was known for her kindness and gentle spirit. She enjoyed watching birds and squirrels outside. Her family meant everything to her and she loved them tremendously. She will be greatly missed by all of those who loved her.

A Gathering of Remembrance will be held from 5 - 7 p.m. on Saturday at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk. Social distancing requirements will be in place and attendees may be limited according to those requirements. Masks are required.

Memorials may be made to the family.

Online condolences may be made to the family at [www.vigenmemorialhome.com](http://www.vigenmemorialhome.com).

## Forms should be mailed before the end of January

**FORMS** - Continued from Page 1

during this process.

Unemployment insurance benefits are taxable, and payments of \$10.00 or more are reported annually to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance. An IRS Form 1099-G is mailed by January 31 of each year to individuals who received unemployment insurance benefits during the prior calendar year. This form pro-

vides important tax information that must be reported on your state and federal income tax returns, including the amount of benefits paid during the tax year and the amount of state and federal taxes withheld.

As always, additional information will be provided as needed on the IWD website at: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/>.

# DO YOUR PART

## CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS



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# Obituaries/For the Record

## OBITUARIES

### SYLVIA K. ECKMEIER

Sylvia Kay Eckmeier, 77, of Donnellson, Iowa, passed away at 10:42 a.m. Tuesday, January 19, 2021, at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City.

She was born on September 28, 1943, in Burlington, Iowa, the daughter of Bryan and Ruth (Kemp) Starr. On April 11, 1964, she married Robert Eckmeier in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. They later divorced.



ECKMEIER

She is survived by one daughter: Kelly (Mike) Walker of Brimfield, Illinois; one son: Ryan (Annette) Eckmeier of Frederick, Maryland; four grandchildren: Jarred (Kuiyin) Carter, Michael (Taylor) Walker, Karina Eckmeier and Kiara Walker; two great grandchildren: Noah Carter and Jorie Walker. Also surviving are several nieces, nephews and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Sylvia was a graduate of the Burlington School of Nursing, she achieved her bachelor's degree at the College of St. Francis and her masters degree at Western Illinois University. She worked as a nurse for thirty-seven and a half years at the Mental Health Institute and was their Director of Nursing for eighteen years. Sylvia was a member of St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Donnellson, Treasurer of St. Paul's Planning Board, member of St. Paul's Naomi Circle, member of MHI Retired Nurses, member of Tourney Girls Forever, member of Chapter CK TTT and was Co-Queen of Pampered Pals Red Hatters. She was a long time fan of the Iowa Hawkeyes football and basketball programs. Sylvia enjoyed sewing, reading, puzzles, playing cards and games, watching birds and squirrels in her back yard and spending time with others.

Friends may call from 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. Friday, January 22, 2021, at Schmitz Funeral Home in Donnellson. Attendees will be required to wear masks and social distance.

A private family service will be held at Saturday, January 23, 2021, at Schmitz Funeral Home in Donnellson with Reverend Robert Molsberry officiating. Following her service, a video of her funeral will be posted on her Tribute Wall at [www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com](http://www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com).

Burial will be at Evangelical Cemetery in Donnellson.

Memorials have been established in her memory for St. Paul United Church of Christ or Chapter CK TTT.

Online condolences may be made to the family at [www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com](http://www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com). Schmitz Funeral Home of Donnellson is assisting the family with arrangements.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Well... it was way up there and didn't want her picture taken after she leapt into the air off a branch overlooking the Mississippi River at Willow Patch. The majestic bird took off up to Blackhawk Heights for a glide over the neighborhood Wednesday afternoon.

## For the Record

### Fort Madison Police Report

01/19/21 - 10:13 a.m. - Fort Madison Police cited Harley Lee Vonkaenel, 27, of Fort Madison, in the 600 block of Avenue H, on a charge of driving under suspension.

01/19/21 - 7:46 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 500 block of 14th Street.

01/19/21 - 12:46 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a stolen vehicle in the 1400 block of Avenue D.

01/19/21 - 4:29 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 4200 block of Avenue L.

01/20/21 - 12:08 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2600 block of Avenue L.

01/20/21 - 7:09 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 2500 block of Avenue A.

### Lee County Sheriff's Report

01/19/21 - 12:55 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Lindsay Marie Swindler, 33, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on a judgment hold. She 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

01/19/21 - Fort Madison firefighters responded to three medical calls and one false alarm.



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# PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

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# Sports

## HTC boys move over .500 with win over VB

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP  
PCC SPORTS

FORT MADISON – It was back on January 8 when Holy Trinity’s boys basketball team faced the running clock in the second half of a 37-point loss to New London.

The clock was running in the Crusaders’ favor in Tuesday’s 63-24 win over Van Buren County at Shotenkirk Gym.

“We’ve come a long way,” Holy Trinity coach John Hellige said.

The Crusaders (8-7 overall, 6-5 SEI Superconference South Division) have gone 3-2 since that 69-31 loss to New London, but Hellige appreciates how much his team has grown.

“Really, I come back to our toughness,” he said. “No weight room, no football team here. So we’ve got to find ways to be tougher. It starts with the mental aspect of it. Really, what we’re going to is we’re going to embrace physical play versus running from physical play. And I think you saw that tonight. When we play strong and tough, it leads to confidence and poise, easy offense and tough rebounding and defense.”

Holy Trinity dominated early, leading 20-6 at the end of the first quarter and 30-10 at halftime. The Crusaders got to a 35-point lead late in the third quarter, leading to a running clock the rest of the game.

The Crusaders had balanced scoring, led by Jason Thurman’s 13 points. Kadin Medland had 12 points and Chandler Rung had 11.

Holy Trinity had 11 3-pointers.

“We definitely have a team of shooters, for sure,” Hellige said. “Sometimes it’s hot, sometimes it’s cold. I think we’re kind of warming up here at the right time.

“The shooting is awesome. But I think it goes back to the toughness, being able to handle teams that push and shove, and our aggressiveness helps things tremendously.”

Jackson Manning led Van Buren (0-12, 0-9) with 13 points. Hellige understood the struggles that legendary Van Buren coach Fred Parsons is facing this season.

“I really respect him and I’m amazed at his time of 61 years on the bench,” Hellige said. “He’s a great coach and his young team is going to be tough down the road.”

## Lady Hawks getting more than Merschman

PCC SPORTS

DONNELSON – The Central Lee girls basketball teams continues to see an uptick in offensive production from players other than senior Mya Merschman, one of the top scorers in the state.

On Tuesday, the Hawks downed Danville 73-49 and Merschman scored 32. But the story may have been the 17 points from transfer Alivia Myhre, who just got on the varsity floor under transfer protocols last week.

The Hawks also got 11 points from Makayla Morrison.

Central Lee, 6-5 in SEISC play and 7-7 overall, left no doubt early on going up by as many as 12 just four minutes into the game and rushed to a 38-19 double up at halftime.

The girls hit on three 3-pointers in the 3rd quarter pushing the lead to 20 at 49-29 and never looked back.

Myhre hit on four 3-balls on the night for her best outing of the year.

Merschman continues to put up some of the highest point totals in

the state and is just a free throw away from 400 points on the year. She’s second in the state in all classes behind Van Buren’s Isabel Manning with 445 after Tuesday’s game.

Central Lee also got four points each from Macy and Maura Watkins, three from Ella Sanders and two from Kelsie Stewart.

Danville was led by Cassidy Yaley with 11. Taylor Moore and Jacey Moore each had nine for the Bears.

Central Lee hosts Mt. Pleasant on Saturday night in a non-conference matchup.

## Manning goes for 32 in win over HTC girls

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP  
PCC SPORTS

FORT MADISON – Holy Trinity’s girls basketball team didn’t have an answer for Isabel Manning.

And the Crusaders are still looking for answers on offense.

Tuesday’s 51-41 loss at Van Buren County was another night of plenty of missed shots for the Crusaders.

“I didn’t think our defense was bad,” Holy Trinity coach Tony Johnson said. “Offensively, we just get out of sync, crowd each other. We’ve got to make shots.”

Johnson was especially frustrated at the Crusaders’ rebounding problems.

“We’d play great defense for 20 seconds, and then give up second-chance shots,” he said. “You’ve got to reward yourself on defense at some point.”

Holy Trinity (4-13 overall, 3-9 SEI Superconference) fell behind 21-8 after the first quarter, but got to within 44-37 with 4:45 left in the game. The Crusaders, though, couldn’t trim more out of the Warriors’ lead.

The Crusaders are without junior forward Kassi Randolph, who has missed the last three games with an ankle injury.

“We’ve had to move some people around with Kassi out,” Johnson said. “That’s not an excuse, though. We have to do what we have to do.”

Raquel Schneider led Holy Trinity with 15 points, and Brooke Mueller added 12. Schneider had the team’s only two 3-pointers.

“We cannot shoot from the outside this year. I don’t know what it is. We work on it. I don’t know if it’s because we lack confidence, or whatever. But I don’t think there’s been one game where we’ve shot well. Even an OK game at this point would be pretty awesome for us.”

Johnson used 11 players in the game.

“Trying to find magic,” he said. “Anyone who could make a shot for us outside the lane. I just don’t know what to do.”

Manning, a senior, had 32 points for the Warriors, 19 in the first half. Zoe Best had 10.

## Central Lee boys avenge December loss to Danville

PCC SPORTS

DONNELSON – Six weeks ago, the Central Lee boys basketball team couldn’t hold things together in the final two minutes and lost to Danville on the road.

But Tuesday night, the Hawks flipped the script and put a 6-point deficit to start the fourth quarter behind them rallying to down the Bears 51-44 in

Southeast Iowa Superconference action.

The Hawks, 6-5 in the SEISC, and 6-8 overall used an 8-2 run from the last minute of the third period to the first two minutes of the final period to take a 42-40 lead that they never would give up.

But Central Lee trailed the entire first half, a 7-7 tie notwithstanding.

Senior Kade Myhre who had just one point in the first half, scored six in the final period. Seniors Jaxon Betker and Dylan Stuecker combined for six free throws down the stretch to ice the game.

Betker finished with 12 on the night, while Stuecker had 10. Nine Hawks scored on the night, with Myhre having seven, Kaleb Sanders scored six, Bronson Sargent had five, Seth Mayes chipped in with four points and Derick Denning had a two free throws in the first period.

The Hawks are off until Saturday when Mt. Pleasant comes to town for a non-conference tilt. The Hawks have yet to win a game outside the SEISC this year.

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## From the Front/Classifieds

# Sheriff's budget on par with 2020

**BUDGET** - Continued from Page 1

fund balance on June 30, and with the current projected shortfall, will have a balance under \$10 million on June 30, 2022, the lowest fund balance in at least the past four years.

County officials are projecting a \$1.45 million spend for Mental Health services, which is down about \$30,000 from the current year. That fund is carrying a \$360,000 balance at the end of 2022.

The Lee County Sheriff's budget is almost on par with the current year's budget. County officials have budgeted \$4.44 million compared to revised 2021 numbers of \$4.42 million.

The Board of Supervisors budget is proposed at \$1.28 million compared to a \$2.14 million budget last year. Revised estimates for 2021 are closer to \$2.2 million. The additional funds in the current year are due to the increased assistance given to Lee County EMS. Those funds are rolled up into the new budget this year, with the county taking over the service.

The county has budgeted \$3 million in the next fiscal year for the future county owned ambulance service. This year supervisors approved expenditures of \$106,000 to get ready to take over the service.

The Lee County Conservation District is showing a reduced budget for 2022. The Conservation officials are estimating a \$1.35 million budget compared to \$1.79 million in current year expenses. Through December the department had only used about 25% of the budget for the year, but spring and summer projects could catch up the spend.

**Got a news tip?  
Call Chuck (319)371.1670**

**WHEN WILL I GET A COVID-19 VACCINATION?**  
Vaccine Distribution to Priority Populations - Phase 1

**PHASE 1A**

- Health care personnel
- Residents and staff of long term care facilities
  - Nursing homes
  - Skilled nursing facilities
  - Assisted living facilities

**PHASE 1B**

Persons age 75 and older

OR the following populations vulnerable to high risk of exposure or severity of illness:

- Individuals with disabilities living in home settings care staff
- Correctional facility staff and individuals incarcerated
- Staff of and individuals living in congregate settings (does not include College dormitories)
- Food, agriculture, distribution and manufacturing workers

**PHASE 1C**

- Details for who will be eligible and timeline for Phase 1C will be shared soon

*Note: Persons in Phases 1A and 1B who work in or live in congregate settings that do not allow for social distancing.*

## If 75 or older call to get on LCHD list

**PHASE 1B** - Continued from Page 1

ary. This will include scheduled appointment times for those 75 years of age and older only.

Please understand not everyone on our current call back list for those 75 years of age and older will be contacted for this first round. Many more clinics will be planned and people from our list will be scheduled over the next several weeks. When you are called and scheduled for an appointment, details of the date, time, and location will be explained to you. It is very important for you to keep your appointment and to arrive on time to avoid wasting of any vaccine.

If you are 75 years of age or older and live in Lee County, Iowa and have not already called LCHD to be placed on our list, please call 319-376-1077 to provide

us your contact information. You too will be placed on our call back list to be scheduled for a future appointment.

For all others included in the priority groups for Iowa's Phase 1B, we will get to you either through direct contacts made to your employer or the congregate setting you live or work in.

Please understand we can only move as fast as we receive adequate vaccine supplies. We do plan to eventually have additional providers in the county assist with vaccinations as more vaccines become available in the county such as our local pharmacies and health clinics. We have been in constant contact with the Fort Madison Community Hospital and UnityPoint Health-Keokuk and are working closely together on our vaccine plans for the county.

# PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

**Everyone** has the right to marry. **Not everyone** has basic rights.

In 31 states, it's legal to discriminate against LGBT Americans.

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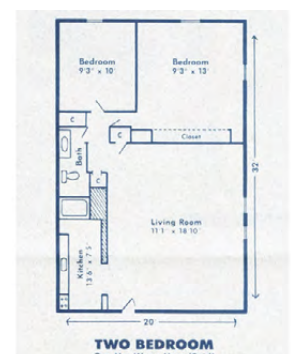
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## Education News/Ag News

### SCC offers FAFSA clinic Feb. 2

WEST BURLINGTON - Southeastern Community College will offer complimentary assistance with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at its FAFSA Ready Iowa event on Tuesday, February 2. The event will take place from 3 to 6 p.m. at both the West Burlington and Keokuk campuses. The West Burlington event will be held in Room 192 and the Keokuk event will be located in Room 417.

"Filing for financial aid can be intimidating for students of any age and their families," says Stacey Abell, SCC Financial Aid Director. "We help people through the process so they know it is right the first time. Even families who have completed the FAFSA before find comfort in having assistance with the application process, so they come back every year. It is a great way to get the FAFSA completed without interruptions and in a timely manner."

This event is free and open to students of any age or income, regardless of which college they plan to attend. There is no need to pre-register; attendees will be assisted throughout the afternoon and evening on a first-come, first-served basis. Staff members from the SCC Financial Aid Office, the Educational Opportunity Center, and various other college departments will be on-hand to guide students through the FAFSA and to answer questions about financial aid.

Abell recommends that students under age 24 attend with at least one parent or guardian. Most traditional college-age students are required to include parental information on their FAFSA, so it's im-

portant that both the student and at least one parent attend.

To complete the 2021-2022 FAFSA, students and parents should each bring the following:

- Social Security number, driver's license number and date of birth
- 2019 federal and state tax returns, complete with all schedules and worksheets
- W-2 forms or other records of income earned in 2019
- Current bank statements and investment records
- Records of untaxed income received last year
- Your A-Number (if not a U.S. citizen)

A complete list of required information and documents, as well as frequently asked questions and other financial aid resources, can be found at <https://www.icansucceed.org/fafsa-ready-iowa>.

Students and parents may register in advance for an FSA ID to electronically sign the FAFSA and make future changes. Create or retrieve an FSA ID at <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm>.

Students who are unable to attend this event are encouraged to contact Outreach Advisor Shawn Hopper at the Educational Opportunity Center on SCC's campus. Appointments are available year-round to provide assistance with filing the FAFSA.

For more information or to make an appointment with Hopper call (319) 208-5026 or email [shopper@scciowa.edu](mailto:shopper@scciowa.edu). For more news or to learn about Southeastern Community College, visit [https://www.scciowa.edu/aboutsc/office\\_mktg\\_comm/news/archive.aspx](https://www.scciowa.edu/aboutsc/office_mktg_comm/news/archive.aspx).

### USDA staff, producers work to protect dairy operations

WASHINGTON - In an unprecedented year, USDA staff and dairy producers across the country worked together to protect dairy operations for the 2021 production year under USDA's risk management program options - the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC), Dairy Revenue Protection (DRP), and Livestock Gross Margin for Dairy Cattle (LGM) programs. Recent enrollment data for these programs indicate that dairy operations are proactively managing their risk.

"In a year rife with challenges, our staff worked diligently to improve customer service and seamlessly deliver programs to assist agricultural producers," said Bill Northey, USDA's Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. "Through patience and perseverance on both sides of the virtual counter, as well as added resources made available to producers and staff for operating in a pandemic, producers were able to timely participate in these programs."

Administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency, DMC

offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer.

Nearly three-quarters of all U.S. dairy operations with established production history are enrolled in DMC for the 2021 program year. Compared with 2020 enrollment of 13,532 operations, participation for 2021 increased to cover nearly 18,500 operations nationwide - meaning an additional 4,900 dairy operations recognized the value of DMC to their bottom line.

This enrollment success is a testament to the value of DMC to dairy operations. DMC is a cashflow-friendly program that offers enrolled operations the option to select a \$4.00 catastrophic level of coverage with no premium fee or elect to buy up coverage. The premium on buy-up coverage is based on margin triggers between \$4.50 and \$9.50 on 5 to 95% of established production history. For coverage at the maximum margin trigger

of \$9.50, producers pay \$0.15 per hundredweight of established milk production history.

To date, DMC has paid out more than \$500 million in program benefits to dairy operations enrolled in calendar years 2019 and 2020. Margin payments triggered seven months in 2019 and four months, to date, for the 2020 DMC program year.

Approximately 3,000 operations purchased additional protection under DRP, which covers 30% of the milk supply and has provided more than \$400 million in payments to covered operations since 2019. DRP, now in its second year, has grown from 2,500 policies in 2019. Additionally, 200 producers purchased coverage through LGM. Both LGM and DRP are managed by USDA's Risk Management Agency.

While DRP insures against unexpected declines in the quarterly revenue from milk sales, LGM provides protection against the loss of gross margin (market value of milk minus feed costs) on the milk produced from dairy cows.

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