

# PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Monday, May 10, 2021 | 7 pages | Volume 5 • Issue 96



www.pencitycurrent.com

## Fire destroys FM house

**UNOCCUPIED:** Blaze under investigation as no utilities were connected

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A fire that broke out Saturday afternoon in the 1200 block of Avenue D is under investigation according to Fort Madison Fire Chief Joey Herren.

The fire destroyed the home at 1210 Avenue D listed as owned by Kenneth Swolley as fire was battled on all floors. Herren said firefighters thought they had the blaze knocked down on the second floor, but then the basement caught fire.

“They started fighting it on the second floor and thought they had it down, but then the basement got going and it had them cut off for a bit. But they fought their way out of it,” Herren said. “It didn’t want to cooperate very much.”

Herren said communications via the radio systems again were difficult between firefighters and LeeComm dispatch. He had trouble calling for mutual aid due to poor signal and had to revert to a text app to get assistance. Several Fort Madison firefighters were at graduations, and out of town for Mother’s Day weekend.

“We had to call in Denmark for mutual aid on that. They have a lot of young guys and we were missing some being out of town,” Herren said, “But it was bad again. We gotta get those (radios) fixed.”

Herren didn’t comment on the point of origin or the potential cause of the blaze saying it was under investigation. He said the home was unoccupied and no utilities were



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Fort Madison Fire Chief Joey Herren, center, helps feed a line into the home at 1210 Avenue D Saturday afternoon as flames can be seen in the reflection of the door glass. Firefighters battled the blaze until just after 7 p.m. on scene. The fire broke out shortly after 3 p.m. and the house has been determined to be a total loss.

connected at the time of the fire.

Firefighters with Fort Madison Fire & Rescue, Denmark Fire & Rescue, Fort Madison Police, and Lee County

EMS officials assisted at the scene for about five hours.

The building was valued at \$94,930.



## That was close - Chinese rocket misses FM

Well, I for one, feel better.

The European Space Agency has determined that 100-foot, 22-ton piece of a Chinese rocket probably will not hit Fort Madison.

The latitude of our city, in case you were wondering, is approximately 40.63 degrees north. The ESA, according to a report in CNN, said their math shows the rocket could land anywhere from 41.5 degrees north to 41.5 degrees south.

We had a laugh about that on the way to SubArena for lunch Saturday afternoon.

I suggested that the U.S. military track the thing and if it appears to be heading toward a populated area, we target it with some U.S. Army’s Patriot missiles, I mean the thing is three stories tall. It’s moving at about 18,000 miles per hour. That would be wicked target practice.

Experts say that the huge piece of metal will probably land in water. And their math, I’m not making this up, is because the earth is 70% water. Now I’m sure they’ve done way more calculating than that and have all kinds of data about the space junk reentering the earth’s atmosphere.

Experts also say it’s too big to just burn up on reentry. So it will hit the earth.

A sports talk show host who broached the subject on Fox Sports Radio this morning asked if it hit the Pacific, wouldn’t that hit cause a tsunami.

I’m pretty sure it takes a tectonic plate shift in the earth to cause a tsunami, but the commentary brought a smile to my face.

The idea got me looking deeper into how the U.S. harmlessly brings rocket boosters back to earth. Those gotta be pretty heavy, too.

It appears that there are no real space

See ROCKET, page 7

## LEE COUNTY NEWS

### Cedar Rapids man identified in Tuesday traffic fatality

BY PCC STAFF

LEE COUNTY – A motorcyclist killed in an morning accident at the intersection of Hwys. 16 and 218 has been identified as a Cedar Rapids man.

Ronald Gerard Jurgens, 55, of Cedar Rapids died when the motorcycle he was riding collided with an Chevrolet

SUV at the intersection.

Jurgens was southbound on 218 when he struck the SUV broadside as it was crossing the intersection eastbound.

A full accident report hasn’t been released. Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber said an investigation into the accident is on going. No charges have yet been filed in the incident.

The driver of the SUV was also taken by ambulance to Fort Madison Community Hospital with undisclosed injuries.

Houghton Cedar Township Fire & Rescue, along with Lee County EMS Ambulance, Iowa State Patrol and Iowa Department of Transportation all assisted at the scene.

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## WEATHER

MON 10 May..... Light Rain, 59° F/ 41° F  
TUE 11 May..... Overcast, 57° F/ 42° F  
WED 12 May..... Mostly Sunny, 61° F/ 42° F

## IOWA LOTTERY

LOTTO AMERICA 05/08..... 4 32 34 41 44, Star Ball: 2, All Star Bonus: 2  
LUCKY FOR LIFE 05/06..... 5 13 26 32 47, Lucky Ball: 8  
MEGA MILLIONS 05/07..... 5 10 19 21 50, Mega Ball: 10 Megaplier: 4  
PICK 3 05/06, 05/07, 05/08 MIDDAY..... 625, 499, 565  
PICK 3 05/06, 05/07, 05/08 EVENING..... 887, 979, 167  
PICK 4 05/06, 05/07, 05/08 MIDDAY..... 9775, 5584, 7293  
PICK 4 05/06, 05/07, 05/08 EVENING..... 6434, 4217, 2022  
POWERBALL 05/08..... 12 17 20 21 26, Powerball: 8, Power Play: 3

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# For the Record/Obituaries

## For the Record

### Fort Madison Police Report

05/06/21 – 10:48 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1900 block of Avenue I.  
 05/06/21 – 5:27 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 5300 block of Avenue O.  
 05/06/21 – 7:25 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Shelby Renee Kemper, 24, of Fort Madison at the police station, on a charge of simple assault.  
 05/06/21 – 9:04 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 1200 block of Avenue E.  
 05/06/21 – 10:32 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Kyle Dean Seneca Meredith, 20, of West Burlington, in the 200 block of 1st Street, on a charge of driving under suspension.  
 05/07/21 – 8:05 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded

to a report of larceny/theft in the 1800 block of Avenue H.

### Lee County Sheriff's Report

05/06/21 – 7:11 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Tyler Jordon Sturm, 31, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on a charge of unauthorized possession of offensive weapons. He was taken to Lee County Jail and released on bond.  
 05/06/21 – 11:22 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Mark Clayton Larsen, 51, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on a fugitive warrant. He was taken to Lee County Jail.  
 05/06/21 – 1:36 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Dylan James Clark, 21, of Argyle, in the 400 block of S. 7th Street in Keokuk, on a court-ordered hold. He was taken to Lee County Jail.  
 05/06/21 – 3:59 p.m. – Lee

County Sheriff's deputies arrested Daniel James Burke, 56, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on a warrant for parole violation. He was taken to Lee County Jail.  
 05/06/21 – 9:10 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Kalifa Ayana Mae Devon McCaleb, 21, of Fort Madison, at the sheriff's office, on warrants for voluntary absence from custody and a judgment hold. She was taken to Lee County Jail.

### Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

05/06/21 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to three medical calls and two fire alarms.  
 05/07/21 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to one medical call.  
 05/08/21 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to five medical calls and one structure fire.

## OBITUARIES

### DARWIN E. LANG

Darwin E. Lang, 71, of Montrose, IA, passed away at 9:40 a.m. on Friday, May 7, 2021 at Fort Madison Community Hospital. He was born on February 16, 1950 in Chariton, IA to D. Eugene & Doris Kingery Lang. He married Deborah M. (Frase) Nagel on August 15, 2001 in Keokuk, IA. He worked for the Department of Human Services in Burlington as an income maintenance worker for over 23 years, retiring in 2007. He was an avid lover of blues music, the Chicago Cubs and the Iowa Hawkeyes.



LANG

Darwin is survived by: his wife: Deborah Lang of Montrose, IA; 1-step daughter: Nichole Nagel of Keokuk, IA; 2-step grandchildren: Kearra Scott & Aubree Dade; 1-sister: Cathy (Ed) DeVos of Knoxville, IA; 2-aunts: Thelma Beaver of Knoxville, IA & Marylin Kingery of Knoxville, IA; 2-nieces: Stefanie (Dan) Pfeifer of Russell, IA & Summer (Brad) Six of Knoxville, IA and many other cherished family members and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents and several aunts & uncles.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory in Fort Madison, IA and no services are planned. Online condolences to Darwin's family may be left at [www.kinglynk.com](http://www.kinglynk.com).

### RONALD D. GOOD

Ronald D. Good, 76, of Lomax, Illinois passed away at 2:30 p.m. Thursday, May 6, 2021 at his home.

He was born December 21, 1944 in Shokokon, Illinois, the son of Abe and Lois (Cook) Good. On April 24, 1963 he married Elaine Smith in Lomax. She preceded him in death on September 19, 2011.



GOOD

Ronald was a retired truck driver. He had driven for Ideal Concrete and later Shipley Construction. Earlier in life, he and his dad operated Good's Conoco in Lomax. He enjoyed watching Nascar and working on cars. He especially enjoyed family cookouts and spending time with his children and grandchildren.

Surviving are two daughters, Tammy Good of Lomax and Sherry Good of Stronghurst, Illinois, eight grandchildren, two brothers, LaVerne Good of Keokuk, Iowa and Lonnie Good of Fort Madison, Iowa and one sister, Lori Longstaff of Witchita, Kansas.

He was preceded in death by his wife, two sons, Shane Good and Richard Allen Good, one grandson, Joshua David Good, one great-grandson, Ryan David Davis and one sister, Debra Pantella.

The family will meet with friends to celebrate Ronald's life Saturday, May 15, 2021 from 5:00 until 7:00p.m. at Banks & Beals Funeral Home in Dallas City. A private family burial will be held at Carman Cemetery at a later date.

Memorials may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. To leave a condolence, please visit his obituary at [banksandbeals.com](http://banksandbeals.com).

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**PEN CITY CURRENT**

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

# Obituaries

## OBITUARIES

### ROBERT KNIGHT

Robert Knight, 92, of Donnellson, IA died Friday, May 7, 2021 at the Ft. Madison Community Hospital in Ft. Madison, IA.

He was born January 9, 1929 the son of Robert and Emma Kudebeh Knight. Robert graduated from Montrose High School with the class of 1947. After high school he enlisted in the United States Marines and served on the aircraft carrier Philippine Sea.

On November 27, 1952, Robert was united in marriage to Marian Alice Tweedy at the Methodist Church in Montrose, IA. She preceded him in death on September 22, 2017.

In Robert's younger years he worked at several service stations in the area as a mechanic and also farmed crops. He then worked for the Ordinance Plant on the railroad. He retired from Ortho after twenty years of employment.

Robert enjoyed working in his garden and took great pride in his yard. He was a gifted mechanic and enjoyed working on antique cars.

He is survived by three sons, Kenneth Robert Knight of Cedar Rapids, IA, Charles Edward Knight and Kyle David Knight (Linda) both of Donnellson, two daughters, Carolina Marie James (Ronald) of Fort Madison, and Christine Deon Johnson (Gary) of West Point, IA, two granddaughters, Heather Marie James (Caleb Nelson) of Davenport and Crystal Ann Edmunds (Ryan) of Cedar Rapids, one great-granddaughter, Autumn Pearl Thurman of Davenport, and several nieces and nephews.

He was also preceded in death by his parents, twin children, Keith and Kay Knight and one sister, Bernice.

A funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, at the Vigen Memorial Home in Montrose, IA with Elaine Foley officiating. Burial will be in the Montrose Cemetery.

Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service at the funeral home with the family meeting with friends at that time.

Social distancing requirements will be in place and masks are required at the funeral home.

Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society.

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

The Vigen Memorial Home in Montrose is in charge of arrangements.



KNIGHT



## OBITUARIES

### THOMAS J. SEDGWICK

Thomas J. "Tommy" Sedgwick, 64, of Dallas City, Illinois passed away at 12:40 p.m. Friday, May 7, 2021 at his home.

Tommy was born on March 13, 1957 in Dallas City. He was the son of William and Genevieve (Harrison) Sedgwick.



SEDGWICK

Tommy lived in Dallas City all of his life. He was always looking for jobs to do around town. He enjoyed mowing yards, snow removal and tinkering with small engines. He always had a smile on his face and never knew a stranger.

Tommy is survived by all of the Dallas City community, who he considered to be his family.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Cremation has been entrusted to Banks & Beals Funeral Home.

All friends and family are welcome to attend a graveside service Saturday, May 15, 2021 at 1:30 PM at the Harris Cemetery, Dallas City. Jim Luder will officiate.

No visitation is planned. A memorial fund has been established for the Dallas City Food Pantry.

To leave a condolence please visit Tommy's obituary at [banksandbeals.com](http://banksandbeals.com).

### 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.

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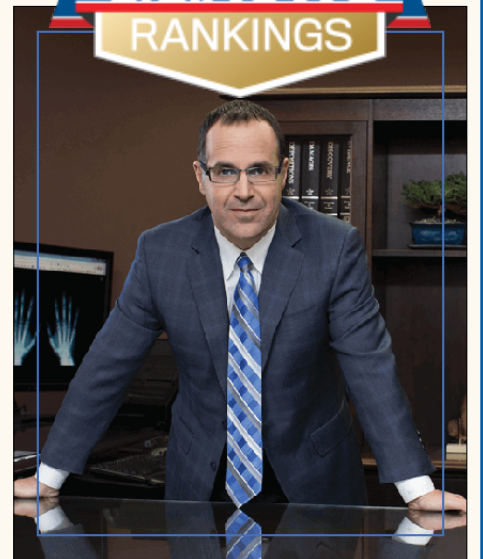
You may call or send a Facebook message to reserve tickets to be purchased at the door.

Seating is limited due to Covid restrictions.

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Firms included in the 2021 Edition of U.S. News-Best Lawyers "Best Law Firms" are recognized for professional excellence with consistently impressive ratings from clients and peers. To be eligible for a ranking, a firm must first have a lawyer recognized in The Best Lawyers in America, which recognizes the top 5% of private practicing lawyers in the United States. Achieving a tiered ranking signals a unique combination of quality law practice and breadth of legal expertise. Mr. Pothitakis has been named to The Best Lawyers in America in 2020 and again in 2021.



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## Classifieds/Public Notices

# SHOP Classifieds

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### PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC NOTICE  
SOUTHEAST IOWA  
ECONOMIC AND  
REGIONAL PORT  
AUTHORITY (SIREPA)  
REQUEST FOR  
PROPOSAL (RFP)  
FOR PURCHASE  
FINANCING OF "KL  
MEGLA BUILDING", at  
2485 280th ST,  
MONTROSE, IA  
TO ESTABLISH THE  
LEE COUNTY JOINT  
EDUCATION CENTER  
May 7, 2021**

SIREPA seeks proposals to finance the purchase of the "KL Megla Building" at 2485 280th St, Montrose, IA for purposes of establishing the Lee County Joint Education Center. The RFP will describe the following:

- Joint Ed Center Concept
- SIREPA background
- Debt service
- Financing needs
- Security
- Proposal details

**A. LEE COUNTY  
JOINT EDUCATION  
CENTER CONCEPT**  
The Lee County Joint

Education Center (JEC) is a cooperative effort between Lee County industry, Lee County Economic Development Group (LCEDG), Fort Madison School District, Keokuk School District, Central Lee School District, and Southeastern Community College.

The JEC project would see certain technical and career exploration programs developed and taught at the facility for all three school districts. Southeastern Community College (SCC) plans to implement key roles in curriculum, teaching, center management, linking students to continuing education and facilitating concurrent enrollment courses.

The operation plan has SIREPA owning, operating, and maintaining the building. LCEDG would occupy professional offices under a lease and schools would operate the course curriculum inside the building with their staff.

**B. SIREPA BACK-**

**GROUND**

The Southeast Iowa Economic and Port Authority (SIREPA) is formed under Chapter 28J, Code of Iowa, and is a tax-exempt municipality of the state. SIREPA was formed in 2006 by Lee County, Fort Madison and Keokuk by approving joint resolutions forming the entity. SIREPA can act as a municipality in all manners except they cannot levy taxes, hold elections or initiate eminent domain proceedings.

SIREPA can own, lease, buy, sell, incur debt, loan, apply police power to its property and other powers of a municipality. SIREPA's founding members appoint its six-member board, responsible for two members each. The board members serve staggered terms and are empowered to make corporate decisions. Current board roster:

- Chair, Denise Boyer (owner, Hall Towing, Fort Madison Appointment)
- Vice-Chair, Mike Hickey (owner, Hickey Contracting, Keokuk Appointment)
- Secretary/Treasurer, Mike Dunn (senior policy advisor, Steptoe, and past

roles in senior-level federal government commodity and credit agencies, Keokuk Appointment)

- Bruce Hardy, board member (retired plant manager of Silgan Containers, Fort Madison)
- Jack Smith, board member (attorney, Keokuk, Lee County Appointment)
- Bob Dodds, board member (Iowa Extension and Outreach executive, retired, Lee County Appointment)

SIREPA is administered by the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (SEIRPC) under an operating agreement. SEIRPC provides staff support, general administration and accounting services. SEIRPC is one of 17 Councils of Governments in Iowa and serves Lee, Louisa, Des Moines and Henry counties. SEIRPC has functioned as a regional entity since 1973, manages annual direct budgets of approximately \$2.5 million (around \$5 million including pass-throughs) and operates public programs such as Southeast Iowa Bus, regional business revolving loan funds, Great River Housing Trust Fund and Region 16 Transpor-

tation Planning Affiliate in addition to consultative, planning and grant writing and administration services. SEIRPC has brought over \$260 million in grants to the southeast Iowa region over its 47-year history.

**C. SIREPA DEBT SERVICE CAPACITY**

SIREPA will satisfy debt payments through contributions from other organizations and/or operational revenues. Lee County Economic Development Group (LCEDG). LCEDG has arranged for \$140,000 of upfront operating funds from the following entities: LCEDG, Fort Madison Economic Development Corporation (FMEDC) and Keokuk Economic Development Corporation (KEDC). The LCEDG contribution is in lieu of office lease payments over 5 years.

LCEDG will then concurrently complete a fundraising campaign to Lee County business and industry to satisfy the debt principle over a period of no longer than two years. LCEDG and business and industry partners have given full vocal support to raise funds. LCEDG and SIREPA will execute a fundraising agreement to specify the amount of funds needed and the delivery timing. Participating schools may also satisfy use charges to SIREPA, and those charges could be used to satisfy debt payments.

**D. SIREPA FINANCING NEEDS**

SIREPA holds the ability to purchase the KL Megla building through an assignable purchase option from LCEDG for \$1,000,000. Therefore SIREPA requires no less than \$1,000,000 in debt financing plus associated closing costs. Closing costs are estimated at 1% or less of the purchase price. Desired

terms:

- Rate: Less than 100 basis points
- Term: 20-year amortization, Interest-only first 24 months
- Fees: None

At 36 months of ownership or before, the principle will be satisfied in full by private fundraising efforts. Single or participation loan proposals will both be accepted.

**E. SECURITY**

SIREPA will offer a first mortgage position on the KL Megla building and surrounding 12 acres of land.

**F. PROPOSALS**

**1. Release of Proposals**

Proposals for purchase financing of the KL Megla building for purposes of establishing the Lee County Joint Education Center will be released on May 7, 2021, through the following methods:

- RFP on the SIREPA website
- Publication in the Keokuk Daily Gate City, Pen City Current and Fort Madison Daily Democrat linking to SIREPA website
- Direct RFP mailing to Lee County banks.

**Submitting a Proposal**

Proposals shall be received by 5:00pm, May 28, 2021. Proposals can be sent by the following methods:

- Email to [sjones@seirpc.com](mailto:sjones@seirpc.com)
- Snail mail to: Executive Assistant SEIRPC 211 N Gear Ave, Suite 100 West Burlington, IA 52655

Contents shall be sealed (unread) and opened at 8:30am, June 1, 2021 at SEIRPC offices. The successful respondent shall be notified

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## Classifieds/Public Notices

# PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

### PUBLIC NOTICES

no later than three working days after proposal opening.

#### 2. Proposal Contents

The following information shall be included with each submitted proposal

- Finance institution name, contact information
- Agreement to provide the required capital with offered security listed in Section E
- If the proposal is with a single finance institution or more than one (a joint proposal/participation loan)
- The date which capital/closing would be available
- Terms of the financing (Rate, Term, Interest-only term)
- Stated ability to provide the financing under the terms, information and spirit of the RFP

3. Proposal Evaluation SIREPA will evaluate the proposals with the following criteria:

- Lowest interest rate
- Complete response addressing all items in #3 Proposal Contents
- Lee County-chartered banks will be given priority due to the unique circumstances of the JEC, and SIREPA's purpose to serve the entities of Lee County, Fort Madison and Keokuk.

Questions about the proposal may be directed to:

Mike Norris, Executive Director  
Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission  
[mnorris@seirpc.com](mailto:mnorris@seirpc.com)  
319-753-4310

United States: +1 (571) 317-3112  
Access Code: 384-239-861

Pledge of Allegiance  
Approve Agenda  
Public Input  
Discussion and Consider Approval of Health Benefits Renewals with Group Benefit Partners  
Discussion and Possible Action on Displaying Turbine in Estes Park  
Consider Approval of Renewal of 28E Agreement with Central Lee Schools for Resource Officer Program  
Consider Approval of Annual Fiscal Agent Agreement with Children First  
Consider Approval of Contract with Cessford Construction for Road Gravel at Donnellson Quarry  
Consider Approval of Contract with Cessford Construction for Road Gravel at Beach and Geode Quarries  
Consider Approval of Quote for Purchase of Metal Culverts  
Consider Approval of and Set Public Hearing for FY 21 Budget Amendment  
Consider Approval of EMS Handbook  
Consider Approval of Real Estate and Asset Purchase Agreement with Lee County EMS  
Consider Approval of Amendment to Communications System and Services Agreement with Motorola for Communication Equipment  
Consider Approval of Resolution Removing Mobile Home from Tax System  
Consider Approval of Class C Liquor License for Papa's Bar and Grill, Keokuk  
Consider Approval of Monday, May 3, 2021

Board Minutes  
Consider Approval of Claims  
Personnel Actions:  
A. New Hire-Sheriffs Office (Replacement)  
B. New Hire-Health Department Reports:  
A. Treasurer's Report of Fees Collected  
Commission or Committee Reports  
Adjourn

Workshop to Follow

PUBLIC MEETING  
CITIZENS WELCOME

Vision and hearing assistance available upon request

Contact Title VI Administrator  
319-372-3705  
County Website:  
[www.leecounty.org](http://www.leecounty.org)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**Lee County Conservation Board Agenda**  
**May 11, 2021**  
**Lee County Conservation Center**  
**2652 Hwy 61**  
**Montrose, IA 52639**  
**4:00 p.m.**

1. Call To Order
2. New Board Member Introduction
3. Approval of Minutes from April 13, 2021
4. Public Input  
This is the time of the meeting that a citizen may address the Board on any matters pertaining to the Lee County Conservation Board. The Board cannot take formal action at the meeting on matters not included on the regular agenda, but may ask the staff to research the matter or have the matter placed on a subsequent agenda.

5. Approval of Bills
6. Approval of Financial Report
7. Update on Current Projects
8. Review and Take Possible Action on Denying Abatement Bids
9. Update Signers for Cabin Account Held at Two Rivers Bank
10. Approve Concessionaire Hire
11. Review and Approve Job Description and Pay Scale for Administrative and Outreach Coordinator
12. Staff and Director Reports
13. Board Members
14. Adjournment  
Workshop Following the MeetingNext regular meeting will be June 8, 2021

### HELP WANTED



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[heartlandcoop.com](http://heartlandcoop.com)  
Career Opportunities, Wever

### HELP WANTED

Hearing and vision assistance available upon request. Citizens are welcome to all LCCB meetings.

### HELP WANTED

#### IMMEDIATE OPENINGS CHILDCARE PROVIDER

The Fort Madison Family YMCA Learning Centers are seeking candidates to fill childcare positions at our Donnellson, Iowa daycare centers Monday through Friday.

Candidates must enjoy working with children and have a fun, loving, and caring personality.

Positions begin at \$9.00 per hour, full-time with potential wage increases based on experience and certifications attained.

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## Sports/From the Front

# Chinese rocket should have been target practice

**ROCKET** - Continued from Page 1

rules governing space garbage. No penalties, just good “stewardship” of space junk.

There are almost limitless pieces of space junk littering space just outside our atmosphere, but affected by the earth’s gravitational pull. According to NASA, the average piece is small enough to burn up as it gets sucked toward the earth.

There haven’t been any international laws that prohibit nations from just ditching their boosters into the abyss beyond the ozone. But there should be. This one’s on the Chinese and apparently they dumped it knowing full well that it would eventually drop back to earth.

The rockets are from a piece that was sent up for the new Chinese Space Station.

There is an unwritten rule or best practice for dumping rocket parts, but most of the world’s countries have said better stewardship and retrieval should be part of the planning process.

So there would have to be reason for just letting this one fall back to earth. Monetary? Simple efficiency? The better answer is that it probably had to stay attached too long and didn’t get pulled back down to earth on separation quick enough. When it did get separated, just 10 days ago, there was no way to manually retrieve it.

Maybe setting charges to blow it up instead of it just letting it jeopardize life, even if the odds are slight, is a better solution. The pieces would then most likely be taken care of by the earth’s own defense.

I don’t know. The whole things seem laughable, but then again it’s not.

As my wife said Saturday night when I explained that we were outside of the Europeans’ prediction model, “Yeah, but we live with Chuck luck”.

She’s right there.

But I’ll sleep okay this weekend outside of fear of something crushing my home. But I don’t joke when I say I hope that it doesn’t land in some neighborhood on the big blue marble where loss of life would almost be a certainty.

In the meantime, c’mon man. Clean up after yourself. After all we only have one outer space.

Speaking of dark space, Saturday afternoon City Councilman and Your Heat & Air Guy Tom Schulz kicked in the door of a home with a basement fire and crawled through heavy smoke on the first floor to see if anyone was in the home. Firefighters were on scene for about five hours making sure the home in the 1200 block of Avenue D was out. Fortunately, no one was in the home at the time and Schulz got out unscathed. Above and beyond, sir.

Ian Eaves, a volunteer with Denmark Fire & Rescue showed up to help. He changed into his gear he brought to the scene... in a golf cart. But that’s Beside the Point.

*Chuck Vandenberg is editor and co-owner of the Pen City Current and can be reached at [editor@pencitycurrent.com](mailto:editor@pencitycurrent.com).*

## Hounds earn SEC soccer title

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP  
PCC SPORT

FORT MADISON – The ball movement was crisp, almost perfect.

Fort Madison’s 10-0 win over Mount Pleasant in Thursday’s boys soccer match at the Baxter Sports Complex was a display of trust, coach Kevin Wellman said.

“When anybody was playing the ball to a teammate, you could tell that as soon as it left their foot, you could tell by their body language that they had complete faith that whoever they were passing the ball to was going to receive it properly, make a good move, and make the right play afterwards,” Wellman said. “It was very evident, and very good to see out of young players like this.”

The Bloodhounds, ranked 12th in Class 2A in the Iowa High School Soccer Coaches Association poll, won their 11th consecutive match, clinching the outright Southeast Conference title, the program’s first conference crown since 2016. Fort Madison (11-1 overall, 9-0 conference) can wrap up an undefeated conference season with a win over Burlington on Tuesday.

“Going from not having anything in conference for a couple of years, and then being undefeated, would be fantastic,” Wellman said. “It shows that

these guys are doing the right things in practice, they’re doing the right things off the field — you get your rest, you ice up what might be a little bit hurt. I think these guys are smart individuals — they’re smart soccer players, they’re smart kids, knowing to take care of the little things that they can take care of to be the best that they can be.”

It took the Bloodhounds a little more than 12 minutes to get their first goal, but they were relentless on offense. Mount Pleasant’s game plan of staying back to slow Fort Madison did little damage, and it kept the Panthers from mounting any sort of offense. They never got a shot against goalkeeper Tate Settles.

“It was nice for Tate to get that shut-out without touching the ball,” Wellman said, smiling. “I think we did pass it back to him a couple of times.”

Mitchell Pothitakis had four goals. His last one, with 17:14 to play, ended the match. Pothitakis also was credited with five assists.

Xander Wellman had three goals and and three assists. Phillip Goldie, Jacob Pothitakis and Nathen Bowen each had a goal.

Kevin Wellman said he liked where his team is at heading into the final days of the regular season.

“I do think we can be better,” he said. “But it’s pretty good.”

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