

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

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www.pencitycurrent.com

FM man charged with attempted murder

SHOOTING: Shaffer faces 25 years in prison with elevated charge

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

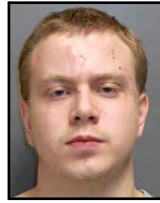
FORT MADISON – An 18-year-old Fort Madison man is now being charged with attempted murder after a shooting incident on Saturday in the 2600 block of Avenue I.

Wade Lee Shaffer, 18, is being held at the Lee County Jail on charges of attempted murder and carrying weapons. The attempted murder charge is a Class B Felony in Iowa punishable by up to 25 years in prison. Carrying weapons is an aggravated misdemeanor.

Shaffer is alleged to have fired multiple shots at Zachariah Raines, 19, also of Fort Madison, striking him once in the shoulder, as a result of a fist fight the two were having in a yard on Saturday, March 20, right at noon.

Lee County Attorney Ross Braden said he moved the charges up after evidence showed Shaffer fired more than one shot in Raines direction with one striking him.

“Anytime in Lee County when you produce a gun and discharge it at someone, we tend to believe your intent is to



SHAFFER

kill the other person,” Braden said.

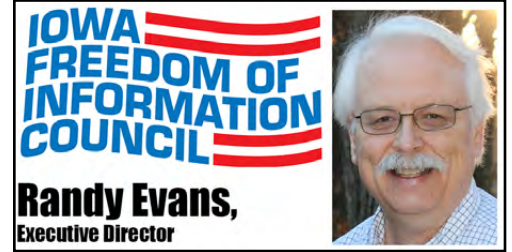
Braden said Shaffer had a protective order against him prior to the fight which prohibits him from carrying a weapon. He also said evidence shows that Raines was unarmed during the fight.

Shaffer is being held on a \$250,000 cash only bond. Curtis Dial of Keokuk is listed as Shaffer’s attorney and filed an appearance on Tuesday. A preliminary hearing is set for March 30.

Fort Madison Police were called to the 2600 block of Avenue I just after noon Saturday after receiving a report of the incident. Search warrants were executed on two homes and two vehicles on the block during a five-hour investigation of the scene and circumstances.

Raines was taken by ambulance to Fort Madison Community Hospital and was later airlifted to Iowa City for treatment where he was listed in good condition.

Shaffer is held under a presumption of innocence until proven guilty in a court of law.



Randy Evans,
Executive Director

In lawsuits, a win can still feel like a loss

Many years ago, during a conversation with an old lawyer, he made a comment I still remember: “You can sue the bishop of Boston for bastardy, but that doesn’t mean you are going to collect.”

It was Frank Karpan’s way of reminding a young editor that merely filing a lawsuit is not the most important occurrence in a dispute. The outcome is.

My friend’s Frank-isms have been quoted in these columns before. My favorite is the rarely wrong observation, “I never had a client listen himself into trouble, but I’ve had plenty who talked themselves into trouble.”

Frank’s comment about the bishop occurred back when it was easier to figure out winners and losers in court fights. These days, however, someone can win in court but ultimately lose, because the cost of a skilled legal defense can be staggering.

A bill in the Iowa Legislature tries to address this legal conundrum, and lawmakers’ efforts are worthy of support.

House File 456 was unanimously approved in the Iowa House. A Senate subcommittee approved the bill last week, moving it closer to a final Senate vote.

This is an important bill because retaliatory lawsuits can have a profound effect on people’s freedom of expression — particularly when cases are filed to intimidate opponents or critics from speaking out on matters of public concern or when cases try to discourage newspapers from reporting on these matters.

House File 456 is called the anti-SLAPP bill. The acronym stands for strategic lawsuits against public participation.

The bill establishes an expedited process for judges to decide lawsuits arising from people or businesses exercising First Amendment rights on matters of public

See EVANS, page 8



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Unplanned test

Workers put down permeable pavers on the city-owned parking lot at 8th Street and Avenue F during a sprinkle Tuesday morning. No water was seen running off the bricks as they are designed to absorb a certain amount of rainfall.

IOWA NEWS

Two staffers killed in Anamosa penitentiary attacks

BY PCC STAFF

ANAMOSA – At approximately 10:15 a.m., multiple staff members were assaulted at the Anamosa State Penitentiary. A department nurse and a correctional officer have died as a result of their injuries.

At this time, the department is collecting and confirming details of the assault. What the department can confirm is that an inmate attacked multiple staff members and inmates in the prison’s infirmary. As a result of their injuries, a correctional nurse and correctional officer have died.

Additional security staff arrived and restrained the inmate. Staff began attempting life-saving first aid on the injured until paramedics arrived.

This information is preliminary,

See PRISON, page 8

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WEATHER

WED 24 Mar.....Overcast, 51° F/ 45° F
THU 25 Mar.....Light Rain, 44° F/ 42° F
FRI 26 Mar.....Overcast, 58° F/ 39° F

IOWA LOTTERY

LUCKY FOR LIFE 03/22.....3 5 24 31 45, Lucky Ball: 1
PICK 3 03/22 MIDDAY.....4 6 4
PICK 3 03/22 EVENING.....2 4 5
PICK 4 03/22 MIDDAY.....19 2 9
PICK 4 03/22 EVENING.....3 3 9 3

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OBITUARIES

GARY E. BLOMME

Gary Eugene Blomme, 74 of Montrose, IA died Monday, March 22, 2021 in Montrose, IA.

He was born July 2, 1946 in Marengo, IA the son of Lawrence and Esther Van Hammie Blomme. He graduated from Victor HLV High School with the Class of 1964.



BLOMME

Gary was a veteran of the United States Army and proudly served his country during the Vietnam War.

On November 9, 1968 he was united in marriage to Shirley Toney at the St. Bridges Church in Victor, IA. She survives.

Other survivors include two daughters, Jeanette Blomme (Mike Hemmie) of Montrose, IA and Becky Blomme (Peter Boyle) of Warsaw, IL, one son, Buck Blomme (Lori Druppel) of Montrose, IA, one grandchild, Hanna Blomme of Montrose, IA, two sisters, Janice Campbell of Victor, IA and Phyllis Strabala of Riverside, IA and one brother, Duane Blomme of Victor, IA and several brothers and sisters-in-law.

In his younger years, Gary had been employed by Caldwell Feeds and Victor Locker in Victor, IA. He later had been employed by the Iowa Gateway Terminal from 1979 until his retirement in 2008. After his retirement, Gary was a truck driver for Blomme Trucking.



He was a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Montrose.

Gary enjoyed driving around the Montrose area and seeing what was going on. He loved his dump truck "Katie" and his 1963 Ford, that he was in the process of restoring.

A Mass of Christian burial will be held at 11 a.m., Saturday, at the All Saints Catholic Church in Keokuk with Reverend David Brownfield Ph.D. officiating. The funeral mass will be lived streamed and may be viewed on the Church of All Saints Facebook page or on their YouTube site which can be found at www.allsaintskeokuk.org/live. Burial with military rites will be held in the Montrose Cemetery.

Visitation will be held from 5-8 p.m., Friday, at the Vigen Memorial home in Keokuk with family meeting with friends at that time. Masks are required and social distancing is encouraged at both the visitation and the funeral.

Memorials may be made to the Montrose Fire Department.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.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.

Mediapolis Telephone Co. gets \$725K for broadband

PCC STAFF

DES MOINES – Mediapolis Telephone Co. received \$725K as part of a \$15 million CARES Act grant broadband build out program from the State of Iowa Monday.

The MTC project will cover about four squares of miles of Fiber to the Premises construction (FTTP) at a cost of just under \$1 million.

According to the company's proposal the project is shovel ready and can be completed in 2021.

Iowa awarded 14 broadband providers with \$15,542,302 in Empower Rural Iowa broadband grants Monday made possible through Governor Reynolds allocation of federal CARES funding. These grants will impact 21 Iowa counties and more than 2,800 homes, schools, and businesses.

"The COVID-19 pandemic only underscored the need for fast, reliable, and accessible broadband," said Gov. Reynolds. "This investment goes directly to projects that are in significant broadband deserts. While today's allocation will help improve broadband in more communities, we can do better. Iowa must have universal broadband access to compete and succeed in the 21st century, which is why I'm working with the legislature for significant funding over the next three years that will ensure access for all Iowans by 2025."

This latest grant round shows the demand for broadband grants in Iowa. More than 42 providers applied with applications valued at more than \$41 million dollars. That is nearly a three to one ratio of funds requested to funds available. This demand speaks to the need to support and fund broadband infrastructure within Iowa to remain competitive in the post-Covid world.

The \$15 million dollars is the remainder of the \$50 million in CARES funding Governor Reynolds designated for broadband grants from a previous round of funding. The full list of providers awarded grants can be found by going to <https://ocio.iowa.gov/empower-rural-iowa-broadband-grant-program-notice-funding-availability-005>.

DO YOUR PART

CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS



WEAR MASKS WEAR GLOVES WASH HANDS OFTEN KEEP DISTANCE

Great River Regional Waste Authority urges you to wear gloves when moving bins or residential trash pick-up. Workers can touch over 2000 bins a day before even touching yours. Don't forget to wash your hands after bringing in your bin!

for your community



WWW.GRRWA.COM

For the Record

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

03/19/21 – 3:30 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 4800 block of Avenue O.
 03/19/21 – 9:07 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Brandon Allan Erb, 26, of West Point, in the 1000 block of 34th Street on a charge of driving under suspension.
 03/19/21 – 11:10 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Samantha Gayle Brecount, 34, of Fort Madison, in the 1200 block of 34th Street, on a charge of driving while barred. She was released on a promise to appear.
 03/20/21 – 5:59 a.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Ethen Shane Howard, 23, of Donnellson, in the 200 block of Avenue H, on a charge of driving under suspension.
 03/20/21 – 12:13 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Wade Lee Shaffer, 18, of Fort Madison in the 2600 block of Avenue

I, on charges of attempted murder and carrying weapons. He was taken to the Lee County Jail.
 03/20/21 – 2:25 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 900 block of 2nd Street.
 03/20/21 – 6:05 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2600 block of Avenue L.
 03/20/21 – 8:22 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested James Eugene Martendale, 56, of Donnellson in the 4000 block of Bluff Road on a charge of driving while barred. He was released on a promise to appear.
 03/21/21 – 1:18 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Heather Ann Pierre, 34, of Fort Madison in the 2100 block of Avenue F, on a charge of driving under suspension.
 03/21/21 – 3:59 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Sean Lee Crank, 43, of Fort Madison, on Sunny-side Drive, on a warrant for tampering with a

witness, and violation of a no-contact order. He was taken to Lee County Jail.
 03/21/21 – 4:12 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft on Iris Lane.
 03/21/21 – 5:14 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Ashley Marie Privia, 30, Fort Madison, in the 3400 block of Avenue P, on a warrant for failure to appear and driving under suspension. She was taken to Lee County Jail.
 03/22/21 – 10:54 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 2700 block of Avenue K.
 03/22/21 – 7:20 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a vandalism in the 1300 block of Avenue B.
 03/22/21 – 8:02 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 4100 block of Avenue O.
 03/23/21 – 8:16 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1200 block of Avenue E.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

03/19/21 – 10:12 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Stone Fylyp Shoup, 25, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on a charge of sexual exploitation of a minor. He was taken to Lee County Jail and released on bond.
 03/19/21 – 3:09 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Nicole Liana Huffman, 51, of Hamilton, at the sheriff's office on a judgment hold. She was released after serving the weekend.
 03/19/21 – 4:44 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Stephanie Nicole Devitt, 29, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office, on a judgment hold. She was released after serving the weekend.
 03/19/21 – 5:44 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Michael Allen Wagner, 37, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office, on a judgment hold. He was released after serving the weekend.
 03/19/21 – 6:18 p.m. – Lee

County Sheriff's deputies cited Daniel Lee Morris, 40, of Galesburg, Ill., at milemarker 20 on Hwy. 218, on charges of possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia.
 03/19/21 – 6:30 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Jacob Allen Anderson, 31, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on a warrant for probation violation. He was taken to Lee County Jail.
 03/21/21 – 3:51 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Keaton Ray Sattler, 22, of Burlington, at the sheriff's office on a judgment hold. He was taken to the Lee County Jail.
 03/21/21 – 8:53 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested David Lee Hoadley, 52, of Keokuk, near Kilbourne and McKinley in Keokuk, on warrant for probation violation and a charge of driving under suspension.
 03/22/21 – 4:32 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Marty Joe Coche-nour, 44, of Fort Madison,

at the sheriff's office on a judgment hold. He was taken to Lee County Jail.
 03/23/21 – no time listed – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Joseph Robert Decker, 29, of Burlington, at the sheriff's office on a warrant for failure to appear. He was taken to Lee County Jail.
 03/23/21 – 7:04 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Chance David Beach, 28, of Wever, at the sheriff's office, on a judgment hold. 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

03/20/21 – Fort Madison firefighters responded four medical calls and burn permit
 03/21/21 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to six medical calls
 03/22/21 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to four medical and a report of burning odor.

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W-2319024 11/11

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Charles Vandenberg, Editor
 (319).371.1670
 editor@pencitycurrent.com

Lee K. Vandenberg, Sales Manager
 (319).371.4125
 sales@pencitycurrent.com

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Red all over

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 319.371.4125

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE MEETING NOTICE

The Green Bay Levee & Drainage District will hold a regular meeting at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, March 25, 2021, at Heartland Co-op, east of Wever.

Follow Us @pencitycurrent



NOW HIRING LEE COUNTY CERTIFIED EMS PROVIDERS

Lee County is now accepting applications for full and part-time Iowa certified EMS providers. We are a county owned and operated ambulance service providing emergency services to Lee County, Iowa as well as critical care transport services. Our primary full-time schedule is based on a 24-48 rotation with a Kelly Day, flexible scheduling for part-time employment. Strong progressive protocols, new fleet power load equipped. Starting wage EMT \$15.82 per hour, \$42,777.28 per year. Starting wage paramedic \$20.16 per hour, \$54,512.64 per year, based on a 48-hour full-time work week. 2% wage increases annually for three years. 10 cents per hour increase for every year of EMS experience after your first year. Benefit package includes health insurance through Blue Cross Blue Shield (80/20 plan), chiropractic, prescription plan, annual wellness, vision, dental, life, protection class IPERS, optional 401K, Aflac, Lee County Credit Union. Annual uniform allowance provided. In house continuing education provided. Positions will start July 1, 2021.

Paramedic Qualifications:

- High School Diploma (GED or High School Equivalence Certificate)
- Current IDPH-BETS EMS Certification at the Paramedic level
- Valid Driver's License/insurable
- Current BLS
- Current ACLS
- Current PALS

EMT Qualifications:

- High School Diploma (GED or High School Equivalence Certificate)
- Current IDPH-BETS EMS Certification at the EMT level
- Valid Driver's License/insurable
- Current BLS

Applicants must be eligible to work in the U.S. Veterans will be given preference but all candidates will be considered. Applications and job descriptions may be found online at www.leecounty.org and may be also obtained at the Lee County Auditor's Office, 933 Avenue H, Fort Madison Iowa. Applications accepted through April 5, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. Complete background check, drug screening and post-offer physical required. Lee County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Please mail or email applications to or for more information:



Lee County EMS
 Attn: Dennis Cosby, EMS Director
 933 Avenue H, PO Box 190
 Fort Madison, Iowa 52627
dcosby@leecounty.org

2020 WATER QUALITY REPORT FOR WEST POINT MUNI WATER SYSTEM

This report contains important information regarding the water quality in our water system. The source of our water is surface water. All of the water is purchased. Purchased water comes from Ft Madison Muni Water Works. Our water quality testing shows the following results:

CONTAMINANT	MCL - (MCLG)	Compliance		Date	Violation Yes/No	Source
		Type	Value & (Range)			
Total Trihalomethanes (ppb) [TTHM]	80 (N/A)	1.RAA	11.00 (11 - 11)	09/30/2020	No	By-products of drinking water chlorination
Copper (ppm)	AL=1.3 (1.3)	90th	0.03 (ND - 0.06)	2018	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives
Lead (ppb)	AL=15 (0)	90th	ND	2018	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits
950 - DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM						
Chlorine (ppm)	MRDL=4.0 (MRDLG 4.0)	RAA	1.4 (1 - 1.6)	12/31/2020	No	Water additive used to control microbes

Note: Contaminants with dates indicate results from the most recent testing done in accordance with regulations.

DEFINITIONS

- Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) - The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
- Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) - The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
- ppb - parts per billion.
- ppm - parts per million.
- pCVL - picocuries per liter
- N/A - Not applicable
- ND - Not detected
- RAA - Running Annual Average
- Treatment Technique (TT) - A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.
- Action Level (AL) - The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
- Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG) - The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.
- Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL) - The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.
- SGL - Single Sample Result
- RTCR - Revised Total Coliform Rule
- NTU - Nephelometric Turbidity Units

GENERAL INFORMATION

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water posed a health risk. More information about contaminants or potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

March 11, 2021

CCR 2020 WEST POINT MUNI WATER SYSTEM PWSID: 5691012

Page 1

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. WEST POINT MUNI WATER SYSTEM is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

This water supply obtains some or all of its water from another public water supply. It is a consecutive water supply, where an originating parent supply provides drinking water to one or more downstream supplies.

Original Supply ID	Original Supply Name
IA5625062	Ft Madison Muni Water Works

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions regarding this information or how you can get involved in decisions regarding the water system, please contact WEST POINT MUNI WATER SYSTEM at 319-837-6313.

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PEN CITY CURRENT

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Classifieds

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

HELP WANTED

ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY

JOB DESCRIPTION:

The Lee County Attorney is accepting applications for a full-time Assistant County Attorney. Primary duties involve all aspects of trial work including daily court appearances, assistance with investigations; charging of criminal cases; interaction and training with law enforcement, victim and witness contact, representing the State at hearings, trials, and in other legal proceedings; and other duties as assigned. The duties of this position may change as determined by the County Attorney.

REQUIREMENTS:

Graduation from an accredited law school and admission to practice law in the State of Iowa with a law license in good standing and no history of discipline.

Must be able to simultaneously handle multiple areas of responsibility with minimal supervision, properly prioritizing tasks and duties as dictated by changing demands. Must be able to simultaneously advance all assigned cases in a large trial caseload.

Prior trial experience and prosecution experience is preferred but not required.

SALARY:

Salary range to start at \$71,300.00 per year commensurate with experience, as well as a competitive benefits package.

Applicants should submit, by email or mail, a cover letter, resume, writing sample, and three references to:

Ross J. Braden
Lee County Attorney
710 Avenue F
Fort Madison, Iowa 52627
rbraden@leecounty.org

Applications must be received by March 19, 2021 at 4:30 PM.

Lee County is an equal opportunity employer



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Call Lee
(319) 371.4125

HELP WANTED

NOW HIRING seasonal employees for the greenhouse and delivery route drivers (CDL & non-CDL positions available). Looking for motivated, happy people that enjoy working with plants and don't mind a little dirt. Are you ready to work and be a part of our team?

For application stop by
2094 303rd Avenue
Fort Madison, IA 52627



Human Service Position

Opportunities Available

Optimae LifeServices, a progressive mental health provider in Iowa, is seeking qualified individuals to fill a variety of roles working with individuals to achieve life goals in their daily living.

Opportunities include Service Coordinator out of our Burlington office, Site Team Leader out of our Keokuk office, and Direct Support Professionals out of our Keokuk, Fort Madison, and Burlington office.

Applicants can apply in office or online at www.optimaeliveservices.com

For questions, please reach out to HR at 319-237-1730 (Burlington) or 319-372-3566 (Lee Co.)

509 Ave. F, Fort Madison
208 Bank St., Keokuk
825 Nth 6th St., Burlington

LEE COUNTY SECONDARY ROADS

ASSISTANT TO ENGINEER

Lee County is taking applications for an Assistant to Engineer to work out of our Fort Madison, Iowa office. Duties will include conducting National Bridge Inspection Standards inspections of in-service bridges, preparing engineering plans and specifications for road-related construction or maintenance projects and serving as project lead inspector on construction projects, including directing and supervising contractors and County employees. Wage based on experience and qualifications.

Lee County provides equal opportunity in employment to all persons regardless of age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion or disability.

To apply, download an application from our county website, www.leecounty.org or request one from the Engineer office, and return your completed application, along with a resume to: Lee County Engineer, P.O. Box 158, Fort Madison, IA 52627, or email it to engineer@leecounty.org Applications will be accepted until 4:30 p.m., Monday, March 22, 2021.

If you have any questions please contact Lee County Engineer, Ben Hull, at (319) 372-2541 or email him at engineer@leecounty.org.



LEE COUNTY SECONDARY ROADS

ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN SUPERVISOR

Lee County is taking applications for an Engineering Technician Supervisor to work out of our Fort Madison, Iowa office. Duties will include: to direct and oversee the work of a small crew of engineering technicians, perform research and fieldwork for land surveys, engineering surveys, and construction surveys; drawing plans and preparing specifications, conduct inspections of work performed by contractors, and preparing right-of-way descriptions and drawings for the purchase of land to improve and construct roadways and operate survey equipment.

Lee County provides equal opportunity in employment to all persons regardless of age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion or disability.

To apply, download an application from our county website, www.leecounty.org or request one from the Engineer office, and return your completed application, along with a resume to: Lee County Engineer, P.O. Box 158, Fort Madison, IA 52627, or email it to engineer@leecounty.org Applications will be accepted until 4:30 p.m., Monday, March 22, 2021.

If you have any questions please contact Lee County Engineer, Ben Hull, at (319) 372-2541 or email him at engineer@leecounty.org.



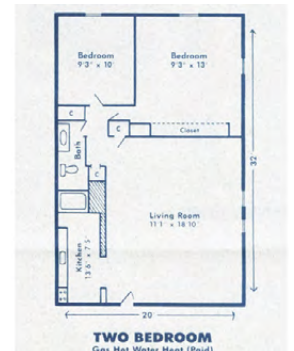
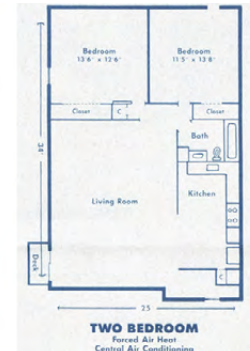
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Business News/Scene Around the Area

Clean air groups oppose Iowa bill on natural gas hook-ups

By **KAREN UHLENHUTH**
Energy News Network

DES MOINES - The sponsor of an Iowa bill that would prohibit cities or counties from regulating the sale of natural gas or propane said he is confident the legislation will make it to the governor's desk after recently clearing committee votes in both chambers.

State Sen. Jason Schultz, a Republican from southwest Iowa, said his bill (SF 455) is meant to counter the "radical left environmental agenda" in Des Moines, where the City Council recently adopted a goal of transitioning to carbon-free electricity citywide by 2035.

The Iowa House Commerce Committee approved the measure on Feb. 15 by a 16-4 vote, and the Senate Commerce Committee approved similar language 13-4 on Feb. 24. Schultz expects votes soon on the House and Senate floors.

The proposal is part of a flurry of Republican bills nationwide aimed at stopping local governments from following the lead of Berkeley, California, which in 2019 approved the nation's first ban on natural gas hookups in newly constructed buildings. No such proposal has been introduced or discussed in Des Moines.

"I'd like to leave that problem in California," Schultz told the Energy News Network. "Picking and choos-

ing energy sources is best left to citizens at their own home."

Schultz's campaign has received contributions from Koch Industries' political action committee, as well as those representing the state's major natural gas utilities, MidAmerican Energy and Alliant Energy.

Building heat has emerged as a frontline in the fight against climate change, with many clean energy groups lobbying for a transition from natural gas to electric heat pumps and other alternatives. In Iowa, buildings account for more than a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, second only behind agriculture.

Kerri Johannsen, who lobbies for clean energy for the Iowa Environmental Council, said the proposal has economic implications as well.

"We don't have methane and propane gas resources here, and there is no reason for our legislature to be protecting imported fossil fuels over cheaper, cleaner, Iowa renewable energy resources," Johannsen wrote in an email. "Iowa communities should have the flexibility to use resources that Iowa can produce to meet their energy needs."

Similar legislation is advancing in other states, including Kansas, where the state Senate has already approved a bill on a party-line vote and a committee hearing is scheduled next week in the House.

Kansas Sierra Club lobbyist Zack Pistora, noting the

state's substantial Republican majority, gave the legislation a "good chance" of passing but said it would be a mistake, and that last month's Arctic blast demonstrated the risk of relying too heavily on natural gas.

"Our dependence on natural gas is what put us in a pretty dire place," he said. "If we had an opportunity for cities to consider ways to ... explore alternatives like all-electric homes, conservation practices and building codes, potentially we could have lessened the severity of that event."

A bill in Indiana that includes a prohibition on building electrification requirements passed the House there on a 66-28 vote. Jesse Kharbanda, executive director of the Hoosier Environmental Council, expects it to be heard in the Senate Utilities Committee in the next couple of weeks. A floor vote is likely, he said, "based on the fact that the sponsor of the bill is the chairman of the Senate Utilities Committee and he holds sway on utility issues."

The bill's language goes far beyond outlawing bans of natural gas appliances in new buildings. It also disallows municipalities from regulating sales of gas stoves and furnaces, and forbids them from imposing any energy-related requirement in structures.

The Energy News Network is a nonprofit news organization that covers the energy industry. Iowa Watch periodically republishes stories by ENN.

Montrose Fire & Rescue and Donnellson Fire & Rescue worked for nearly four hours putting out a structure fire near Montrose just off of Hwy. 218 Tuesday morning. No one was reported in the building at the time of the blaze.



Photo courtesy of Lee County Deputy Wade Johnson

Denning makes Barrons' top advisor list

FORT MADISON - Joshua Denning, CRPC®, CLTC® a Private Wealth Advisor with Ameriprise Financial in Fort Madison, has been named to the list of "Barron's Top 1,200 Financial Advisors" published by Barron's Magazine, a publication covering business and finance. The annual Barron's list recognizes the most outstanding financial advisors who represent the highest levels of ethical standards, professionalism and success in the business.

The rankings are based on data provided by thousands of the nation's most productive advisors. Denning was chosen based on assets under management, revenue produced for the firm, regulatory record and quality of practice. Denning is part of Joshua Denning & Associates, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.

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From the Front

Iowans should support HF 456

EVANS - Continued from Page 1

concern. It is not unusual for such cases to move at a snail's pace in court, even when the issue has little merit. That delay translates into higher costs for the defendant.

Under House File 456, if such a freedom-of-expression case is decided in favor of the defendant, the plaintiff would be responsible for the defendant's reasonable attorney fees.

Two Iowa cases illustrate what is at stake with "SLAPP" suits.

In 2018, a Carroll police officer sued the Carroll Times Herald for reporting on his sexual relationships with two teenagers, including a high school senior who moved in with him after a fight with her parents. The newspaper also reported the officer was hired in Carroll after being fired in Sumner, in part for inappropriate Facebook messages to a 16-year-old girl in that town.

The officer accused the newspaper of libel, though he admitted having sex with the high school girl and knew his actions were wrong. But it still took nearly a year, and tens of thousands of dollars in legal expenses, before the judge dismissed the lawsuit.

Doug Burns, the newspaper's co-owner, said while the paper was victorious, the case was still devastating financially. "There's a lot at stake when you're facing something like this," he told the Washington Post.

There's a lot at stake in a case now before the Iowa Supreme Court. It involves Richard Bauer, a businessman in the Woodbury County town of Sloan, who sued an area resident, Bradley Brinkman.

Bauer manages an apartment building owned by a family trust. He first sued Sloan city officials for not stopping the owner of a dog grooming and boarding business from erecting an exercise area on a lot next to his building.

The owner of the dog business went onto Facebook to comment about the dispute. Brinkman joined the discussion and compared Bauer to feces and said he



was "nothing more than a slum lord."

Bauer sued Brinkman for libel, but the judge granted summary judgment in Brinkman's favor. The Iowa Court of Appeals upheld the ruling.

"Brinkman's comments may have been vulgar, offensive, insulting, and just plain rude," the appeals court said, "but they did not rise to the level of defamatory statements because they were expressions of opinion protected by the First Amendment."

Bauer has asked the Supreme Court to overturn the appeals court decision.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa, in a legal brief to the Supreme Court, explained the importance of the case: "To allow the litigation against Brinkman to proceed to the jury based on these figurative epithets would chill free speech and debate on matters of public concern on social media in Iowa."

Winning is not necessarily the top goal of SLAPP lawsuits, the ACLU said. Instead, the motive is to silence and harass critics by forcing them to spend time and money defending themselves against meritless claims.

Iowans should use their First Amendment rights and tell senators to support House File 456.

Randy Evans is executive director of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council and can be reached at DMRevans@gmail.com. Pen City Current is member of the IFOIC.

Reynolds orders flags at half staff after fatal attacks

PRISON - Continued from Page 1

and subject to change pending verification and additional details.

This incident remains under joint investigation by the Iowa Department of Corrections and the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, part of the Iowa Department of Public Safety.

Names are being withheld at this time pending family notifications and investigation.

The department will release additional details via press release as they become available in coordination with the Iowa Department of Public safety.

Governor Kim Reynolds issued a statement this afternoon.

"Today, our state grieves the loss of two public servants who were attacked while on duty at the Anamosa State Penitentiary," said Gov. Reynolds. "My prayers and deepest condolences are with their families, friends, and colleagues as they begin to cope with this senseless tragedy. We will exhaust every available resource to deliver justice to those who committed this act and bring a sense of closure and peace to the victims' families."

Reynolds will order all flags at half-staff during the day or days of internment in honor the fallen public servants.

AFSCME President Danny Homan issued a statement at about 2:15 p.m.

"The members of AFSCME Council 61 stand with the staff and officers of the Anamosa State Penitentiary today as they mourn the loss of two of their own. No one should ever have to go to work and worry about whether they will come home or not. Unfortunately for two Iowans who had committed their lives to keeping our communities safe, they won't be going home tonight. Our prayers are with their families, co-workers and loved ones during this time, and we will do everything we can to honor their memory.

"We don't have all the information yet about what happened this morning, but as more information becomes available, we will have more to say about how we can ensure this never, ever, ever happens again."



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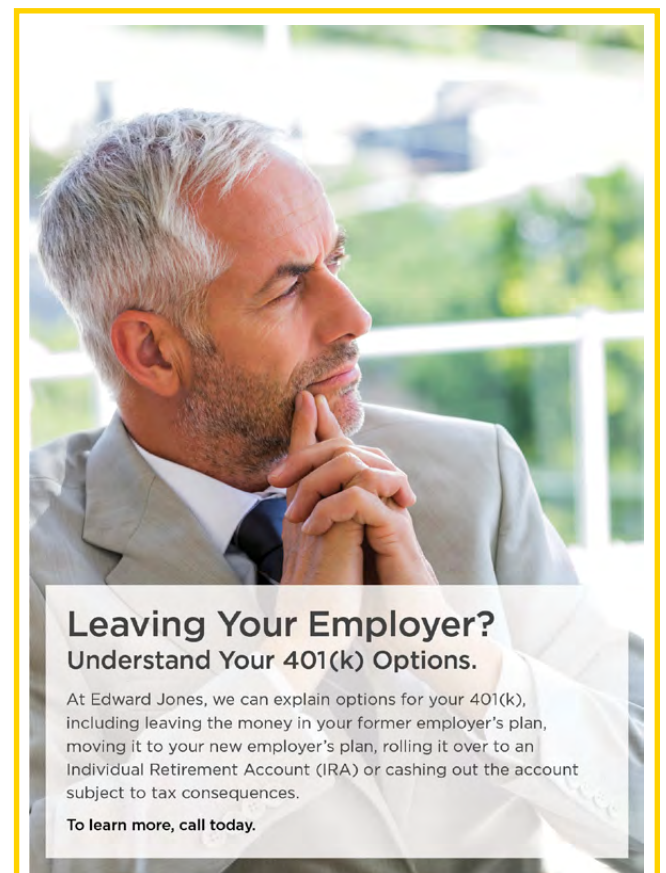
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