

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Tuesday, February 2, 2021 | 8 pages | Volume 5 • Issue 31



www.pencitycurrent.com

SMOKIN' the sewers



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Crews with Veenstra and Kimm out of West Des Moines run smoke through the city's sewer system Monday morning. The procedure is a precursor to the city's eventual sewer separation project, a mandate from the Environmental Protection Agency to eventually have separate storm and waste sewer lines.

SUPERVISORS

County OKs combining emergency services posts

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – Lee County Supervisors approved combining the county's Emergency Management Coordinator position, and the Director of Operations of the new county ambulance service, into one job.

Jason Dinwiddie, the Lee County Emergency Management Agency coordinator will now serve at the coordinator for LCEMA and as the Director of Operations for the new county-run ambulance service, under Director Dennis Cosby.

At Monday's regular Board of Supervisors meeting, still being held with a virtual option, Board Chair Matt Pflug said Dinwiddie had a separate position as DoO of the ambulance and had indicated he could handle both positions.

"I'm confident that he can do both positions and it will save the county some money," Pflug said.

"I will tell you that we talked about it and if it didn't work out he would be the first to tell us. Or (Lee County Sheriff) Stacy Weber said he would keep a close eye on that as well."

Weber said the idea was also vetted through the LCEMA.

"We brought it up to the commission and either way we would have lost Jason in April. But I'm as confident as you are that Jason should be able to handle both jobs and we're here to help him if he needs anything."

Pflug said he asked Dinwiddie if the county found itself in a disaster situation would he be able to pivot and do both roles.

"And he indicated he could," Pflug said.

The new salary or cost savings to the county weren't addressed at the board meeting. Questions posed to the supervisors through the virtual chat regarding the combined new salary and cost savings to

See **DINWIDDIE**, page 8

COVID-19

IDPH finds three cases of UK COVID-19 strain

DES MOINES – Today, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) has confirmed three cases of the COVID-19 variant, SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.7, in Iowa. The virus variant is often referred to as the U.K. variant because it was first detected in the United Kingdom. Based on epidemiologic and modeling data, researchers believe that the B.1.1.7 strain can be spread more easily than the original strain of SARS-CoV-2. Current COVID-19 vaccines are considered to be effective against the variant strain.

Two of the three B.1.1.7 cases were detected in Johnson County, an adult (18 to 40) and a middle aged adult (41 to 60) and an adult

See **VARIANT**, page 8



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Health officials with Lee County Health Department set up Monday for Tuesday's start of Phase 1b COVID vaccinations at the former Iowa State Penitentiary south parking lot. Officials reiterated Monday that those 65 and older currently on the list for vaccinations will be called for appointments and should not just show up or call the LCHD for a time.

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WEATHER

TUE 02 Feb..... Scattered Clouds, 29° F/16° F
WED 03 Feb..... Clear Skies, 39° F/22° F
THU 04 Feb..... Wintry Mix, 42° F/19° F

IOWA LOTTERY

PICK 3 01/31 MIDDAY.....984
PICK 3 01/31 EVENING.....038
PICK 4 01/31 MIDDAY.....8832
PICK 4 01/31 EVENING.....1894

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

DARLENE S. KINYOUN

Darlene S. Kinyoun, 92 of Ft. Madison, IA passed away on Thursday, January 28, 2021 in Ft. Madison. She was born September 23, 1928 at the family farm in Lee County, Iowa. She was the daughter of Raymond and Lillie Schreiner Schoene. On June 25, 1949 she married Floyd Kinyoun in Ft. Madison and he passed away in May of 1989. Darlene was an operator at Northwestern Bell. She was an excellent cook, seamstress and gardener. Darlene enjoyed bird-watching, attending auctions, attending the Iowa State Fair, traveling and especially time with her grandchildren. She was an avid fan of the Iowa Hawkeyes and the St. Louis Cardinals.

Darlene is survived by her son, Kevin Kinyoun of Ft. Madison and her daughter, Kathy Kinyoun of Phoenix, AZ; three grandchildren, Casey Ehlers of Wisconsin, Kammy Kinyoun of Wisconsin and Kurtis Kinyoun of Washington; two great grandchildren, Ben Krambs and Henry Mora; one brother, Robert Schoene of Burlington; one brother in law, Richard Wehrle of Burlington; and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband Floyd, three brothers, Leonard, Everett and Ivan Schoene and three sisters, Maxine Smith, Elaine Wehrle and Eleanor Timmerman.

Per her wishes, cremation has been entrusted to King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. There will be no services at this time. A Celebration of Life and Graveside service will be held at a later date and burial will be in Oakland Cemetery.

A memorial has been established for PAW Animal Shelter and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.



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OBITUARIES

PAUL W. CURFMAN

Paul William Curfman, 87, of Keokuk, IA died Saturday, January 30, 2021 at the Great River Medical Center, West Burlington, IA.

Paul was born on November 21, 1933 in Keokuk, IA the son of Clarence and Marie Azinger Curfman.



CURFMAN

He graduated from the St. Peters High School in Keokuk with the Class of 1953.

On November 27, 1954 Paul was united in marriage to Wanda Dockum in St. Patrick, MO. She preceded him in death on May 23, 2018.

He was a veteran of the U.S. Army and proudly served his country from 1955 to 1957.

Paul was a member of the St. Patrick Catholic Church in St. Patrick, MO and the Eagles Club in Cedar Rapids, IA.



He was employed as a shift supervisor for the Cargill Corn Plant in Cedar Rapids for thirty years before his retirement in 1995.

Paul enjoyed camping, going on cruises, traveling throughout the country, spending winters in Texas and bowling.

He is survived by his children, Diana North (Joe), David Curfman (Christine), Ronald Curfman (Kathy) and Becky Sherbon (John) all of Cedar Rapids, IA. 12 grandchildren, Joseph North, Katherine North, David Curfman, Danny Curfman, Laney Curfman, Miranda Ellis, Amber Curfman, Cole Curfman, Carleigh Curfman, Allie Sherbon, Kelsie Sherbon and Seth Sherbon, 10 great-grandchildren, two sisters, Darlene Mondon and Kathleen Keppel (Albert) of both of Keokuk, one brother, Donnie Curfman (Carla) of Bolivar, MO, brother and sister-in-law, Oren and Lila Dockum of Keokuk

Paul was also preceded in death by his father Clarence Curfman in 1969, his mother, Marie Azinger Curfman in 1972, four brothers, Herman in 2000, Clarence in 1999, John in 1993 and Anthony at birth and one sister, Theresa at birth.

Graveside services with military rites will be held 10 a.m. Saturday at the St. Patrick Cemetery, St. Patrick, MO. with Father Rob Fields officiating.

There will be no visitation.

Memorials may be made to the Great River Medical Center Intensive Care Unit, West Burlington, IA.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

The Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk is assisting the family with arrangements.

OBITUARIES

EVELYN M. BOGERT-SMITH

Evelyn Marie Bogert - Smith, 89, of Donnellson, Iowa, passed away at 4:13 p.m. Sunday, January 31, 2021, at Great River Medical Center in West Burlington, Iowa.



BOGERT-SMITH

She was born on October 10, 1931, in Burlington, Iowa, the daughter of Samuel I. and Pearl (Hanson) Peel. On June 22, 1952, she married Clifford M. Bogert in Franklin, Iowa. He preceded her in death on December 16, 2001. On June 12, 2004, she married Wayne W. Smith in Donnellson, Iowa. He preceded her in death on September 5, 2009.

Survivors include one son: John K. Bogert; one daughter: Janice L. (Greg) Gobble; one brother: Raymond (Ann) Peel; six grandchildren: Vanessa, Shaye and Derek Bogert, Erinne (Colten) Kensett, Emma and Garrett (Elizabeth) Gobble; two great grandchildren: Everlee and Carter Kensett; AFS student from Norway: Marit (Kjell - Otto) Hermansen; step-daughter; Sheryl George; step-son: Steve Smith; several step grandchildren and step-great grandchildren. Also surviving are several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husbands and one sister: Virginia Riddle.

Evelyn was a 1949 graduate of Denmark High School. She graduated from Burlington Junior College in 1951 and Iowa Wesleyan College in 1972. She was an elementary teacher for twenty-nine years at Central Lee Community Schools. Evelyn was a member of St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Donnellson, the Naomi Circle and Lee County Retired Teachers. Her family and faith were of utmost importance to her.

Friends may call after 12:00 noon Friday, February 5, 2021, at Schmitz Funeral Home in Donnellson, where the family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Attendees will be required to wear masks and social distance.

A private family service will be held Saturday, February 6, 2021, at Schmitz Funeral Home in Donnellson with Reverend Robert Molsberry officiating. Following her funeral, the service will be posted on her obituary page under her "Tribute Wall" at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com.

Burial will be at Evangelical Cemetery in Donnellson.

A memorial has been established in her memory for St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Donnellson or the Central Lee Foundation.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com. The Schmitz Funeral Home of Donnellson is assisting the family with arrangements.

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For the Record/Iowa News

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

01/28/21 – 8:02 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 500 block of 48th Street.
 01/28/21 – 11:10 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1100 block of 48th Street.
 01/28/21 – 2:45 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Vanessa Diaz, 18, of Fort Madison in the 2900 block of Avenue O, on charges of assault with intent to inflict serious injury and 2nd-degree burglary. She was released on a promise to appear.
 01/28/21 – 3:13 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft on Sunnyside Drive.
 01/29/21 – 2:50 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited James Peter Inghram, 51, of Fort Madison on a charge of no pet tags.
 01/29/21 – 4:19 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 200 block of Crescent Lane.
 01/29/21 – 11:01 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Jeffrey George Sniegowski, Jr., listed at homeless in the 2500 block of Avenue L, on a warrant for violation of a no-contact order. He was taken to the Lee County Jail.
 01/29/21 – 11:01 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Kimmi J. Nelson, 22, of Fort Madison, in the 2500 block of Avenue L, on a warrant for violation of a no contact order. She was taken to the Lee County Jail.
 01/30/21 – 3:14 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 2600 block of Avenue L.
 01/30/21 – 10:01 p.m. – Fort Madison Police

responded to a report of a burglary in the 1400 block of 33rd Street.
 01/30/21 – 10:49 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Kyle Max Ray, 32, of Fort Madison in the 3400 block of Avenue L, on charges of public intoxication, harassment, disorderly conduct, interference, assault. He was taken to the Lee County Jail.
 01/31/21 – 4:49 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 900 block of Old Denmark Hill.
 01/31/21 – 6:36 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 2200 block of Avenue G.
 01/31/21 – 6:45 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2700 block of Avenue N.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

01/28/21 – 8:19 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested William Lee Alvis, II, 32, of Fairfield, at the sheriff's office on a warrant for contempt. He was taken to Lee County Jail and released on bond.
 01/28/21 – 9:05 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Robert Bruce Caldwell, 34, of Dallas City, in the 2400 block of 263rd Avenue in Fort Madison, on a charge of 3rd-degree burglary. He was taken to Lee County Jail.
 01/28/21 – 2:49 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Dereck Franklin Kent Harwood, 39, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on warrants for parole violation and failure to appear. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
 01/28/21 – 5:10 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested James Ryan

Sizemore, 39, of Roanoke, Ill., at the sheriff's office, on a judgment hold. He was taken to Lee County Jail.
 01/28/21 – 7:30 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies cited Bryce Nathaniel Baxter, 25, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on a charges of possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia.
 02/01/21 – 6:17 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident on White Plains Road. According to the report, a vehicle driven by Patricia Dale Bunnell, 56, of Montrose, slid off the road into the ditch. No injuries or citations were reported.

Hancock County Sheriff's Report

01/25/21 – Joseph A Akers, age 36, of Carthage, IL was arrested on a Hancock County, IL Warrant charging him with Failure to Appear/Failure to Pay on original charges of Driving While License Suspended and Unlawful Possession of Methamphetamine. Akers was released after posting the required bond and given a future court date.
 01/27/21 – Octavius D Whitaker, age 25, of Carthage, IL was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging him with Aggravated Battery and Domestic Battery. Whitaker was also arrested on a Department of Corrections Warrant charging him with a Parole Violation. Whitaker remains lodged in the Hancock County Jail awaiting his next court date.
 01/27/21 – Shayna M Gibson, age 38, of Burlington, IA was arrested and charged with Possession of Methamphetamine, Possession of a Controlled

Substance, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia and Possession of Synthetic Urine. Gibson was released after posting the required bond and given a future court date.
 01/27/21 -Derek F Y Harwood, age 39, of Keokuk, IA was arrested on a Lee County, IA Warrant charging him with a Parole Violation. Harwood was released to the Lee County, IA authorities.
Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

01/29/21 – Fort Madison Firefighters responded to one false alarm
 01/30/21 – Fort Madison Firefighters responded to three medical calls and one smoke detector malfunction
 01/31/21 – Fort Madison Firefighters responded to three medical calls and one false alarm.

Burlington's Open 4 Business looking for your ideas

BURLINGTON - Do you have a great business idea? Have you always wanted to own a business in downtown Burlington? Is your current business planning to expand services or add a new product line? Do you have a piece of equipment you wish you could purchase for your business?

Downtown Partners, Inc. is looking for interested entrepreneurs who could use dollars to expand and grow their business idea within the Burlington Main Street district. The Open 4 Business contest, launched in 2015, is an opportunity for businesses located within a state-designated Main Street district, to compete for a chance to win up to \$28,000 in grant funds to assist with a business development or expansion project that will help them grow their business. Businesses must complete an online application and submit a short video outlining their business idea and how it will benefit the local economic climate in their community. A 25% cash match is required. Businesses must have been in operation for at least 1 year to apply. The grant funds are administered by the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Downtown Resource Center and Main Street Iowa program.

The deadline to apply locally is March 1, 2021. Each designated Main Street community may submit one local business applicant that could represent Burlington at the state competition held in Iowa City on August 2, 2021.

For complete details about this program, please contact Amy Moyner Executive Director Downtown Partners, Inc. at 319.208.0056 or amoyner@greaterburlington.com, or Robin Bostrom, Business Specialist, Iowa Downtown Resource Center/Main Street Iowa at 515.348.6176 or robin.bostrom@iowaEDA.com.

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Weekend Sports

HTC girls break out for 61 points in Saturday win

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP
PCC SPORTS

FORT MADISON - There was a point late in the fourth quarter of Saturday's game against Danville when Holy Trinity's girls basketball team could have slowed down to try to take away the seconds ticking away to the end of a long losing streak.

Instead, the Crusaders kept getting to the basket.

The result was a season-high in points in a 61-44 triumph.

Holy Trinity (5-15 overall, 4-11 SEI Superconference South Division) snapped a seven-game losing streak, a win that can do good things for a team that has been struggling lately. With the postseason looming, and a chance to play in next week's Superconference Shootout, momentum is critical.

"You start losing, it turns into a snowball," Holy Trinity coach Tony Johnson said. "And then you wonder if any-



thing's going to happen for you."

What happened was the team's best offensive performance of the season.

Natalie Randolph had 18 points, Kassi Randolph had 17, Brooke Mueller had 10, and Mary Kate Bendlage had nine.

"I thought everybody who played in the game played well tonight," Johnson said. "We had balanced scoring, and we needed that."

Holy Trinity had a 12-2 run in the first half to take a 23-

16 halftime lead, then pulled away in the second half for its biggest lead, 45-26, with seven minutes to play in the game.

Danville (6-11, 5-8) made a late run to get within single digits before the Crusaders attacked again.

"I think sometimes when you sit on the ball, it takes the wind out of them," Johnson said. "And then you feel like, if they get a couple of easy baskets, you're struggling to score again. When you get on attack mode, leave them in attack mode. As long as we're not getting hurt by it, I'm good with it."

Holy Trinity had a strong defensive effort, holding the Bears to just six second-quarter points.

"I thought we rebounded better today, too," Johnson said. "Reward yourself, I keep telling them, for playing good defense and holding them to one shot."

It was a young lineup that Johnson started — juniors Kassi Randolph and Raquel Schneider, sophomore Kayla Box and freshmen Bendlage and Natalie Randolph. That lineup produced all but 14 of the Crusaders' points.

Crusader boys fall short to Danville after energetic win over Central Lee Friday

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP
PCC SPORTS

FORT MADISON - There wasn't much left in the tank for the Holy Trinity boys basketball team, and it showed in Saturday's 49-44 loss to Danville.

The Crusaders (9-9 overall, 7-7 SEI Superconference South Division) had a 22-point fourth quarter for a 60-55 win at Central Lee on Friday night.

Less than 24 hours later, they were playing another division rival, and were a step slow all night.

"The kids expelled a lot of energy last night," Holy Trinity coach John Hellige said. "I was worried about a letdown game. And sure enough, we had a letdown game."

"There wasn't anything we did terribly wrong. Our kids were very fatigued today, and I think you kind of saw that just a little bit."

Holy Trinity led, 21-20, at halftime, but Danville (8-7, 6-6) took control of the game in the third quarter, outscoring the Crusaders 15-10. The Bears led by as much as nine points in the fourth quarter before

Holy Trinity began to rally.

Jason Thurman's 3-pointer cut the Danville lead to 45-39 with 2:19 left, then 30 seconds later Chandler Rung came up with a steal and fed a pass ahead to Mikey DiPrima, whose layup cut the lead to four points. And when Kadin Medland buried a 3-pointer 24 seconds later, Holy Trinity was within 47-44.

The two teams combined for three turnovers on the next three possessions, giving the Crusaders a chance to tie the game. But Thurman's 3-point attempt

hit the front of the rim, rolling around the basket before falling off.

The Bears then finished off the game at the free-throw line.

Jason Thurman and Vasin Thurman each had 11 points. Rung had nine. DiPrima came off the

bench for six second-half points.

"I thought Mike came off the bench and really gave us a lot of energy," Hellige said. "He played within himself, didn't try to do too much. I think if we can continue to get those contributions out of him, it

will be good for us."

The Crusaders get a day to rest before preparing for Tuesday's game against Notre Dame.

"The boys were just a step slow, pretty fatigued," Hellige said. "We were playing on tired legs to-night."

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Sports/Classifieds

Lady Hounds still unranked at 14-1

Ross goes for 25 as FM takes solid hold of conference lead

PCC SPORTS

FORT MADISON – At 14-1 the Fort Madison Lady Hounds may not be getting the respect they deserve by the state, but they certainly have it in the conference.

As of Thursday, the Hounds still were not ranked in the top 17 teams in Class 4A, according to the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union, but they certainly have the notice of the Southeast Conference.

The lack of wins of Fort Madison's opponents is figuring into the equation. BCMoore Rankings which include offensive and defensive rankings as well as a strength of schedule rating, has Fort Madison ranked just 31st in the class.

Behind 25 points from Malarie Ross, the Hounds took a solid hold on the Southeast Iowa conference title with a 57-31 win over Fairfield (6-3, 4-1) Friday night to take a two-game lead for the title.

The Trojans had a plan for Ross in the first half holding the junior guard to just three points. Senior Brandy Walker, who signed with John Wood Community College in Quincy

to play basketball and soccer last week, had seven of Fort Madison's 18 first half points.

Fortunately the Hound defense was stellar in the first half as well holding Fairfield to just 15, seven in the first quarter.

Ross would get loose in transition in the second half after adjustments from Head Coach Tony Sargent. Ross would hit for three 3-balls and went 9-of-9 from the free throw line for 22 points in the half. Ross led all scorers with 25 on the night.

Fairfield outscored the Hounds 5-0 over the last three minutes of the first half to cut the lead to three at 18-15. The Hounds would crack the game open in third with an 11-point lead with two minutes left in the 3rd and pushed the lead to 20 from there.

Walker finished with nine points on the night. Irelynd Sargent had eight, Camille Kruse had six, Nadia Boeding had an early bucket and Delanee Seay added a free throw to round out Fort Madison's scoring.

Delanee Breen had seven for Fairfield.

The Hounds take on Iowa City Liberty in an early 3 p.m. start time due to impending weather concerns.

Fairfield won the junior varsity contest 39-31. Isabella Boeding had eight to lead the Hounds. Madelyn Gobble had 17 for Fort Madison in a 50-23 freshman loss.

Central Lee gives up 4th quarter lead to HTC boys

PCC SPORTS

DONNELLSON – The Central Lee boys gave up a five-point 4th quarter lead Friday night and fell to visiting Holy Trinity Catholic 60-55 in yet another close game for both teams.

The Hawks had trouble contending with HTC's leading scorer Vasin Thurman who had 26 on the night to lead all scorers.

Thurman had 11 in the first half, but it was Tyler Snaadt who kept game close in the first half with nine points all from beyond the 3-point arc. Snaadt averages just under four points per game.

Thurman went over 300 points on the season in the win.

The two teams played even ball through the first period ending the quarter at 18 all. But Central Lee held the Crusaders to just eight in the second quarter pulling away for a 30-26 halftime lead.

The Hawks would extend that lead to seven at 37-30 with four minutes to go and would hold a five-point advantage to start the final period.

Thurman would go to work in the fourth scoring 12 points as HTC began chipping away at the senior-heavy Hawk squad. Holy Trinity (9-8, 7-6 SEISC South) would get within a two at 50-48 with five minutes left and would take one of it's first leads at 54-52 with four minutes left.

Kadin Medland would be part of the comeback as he connected on three 3-pointers down the stretch and Jason Thurman added a couple as the Crusaders built a 5-point cushion with just three minutes left.

Central would cut it to three at 57-54 as they hit 5 of 9 free throws late, but Vasin Thurman would add three of his own to seal with win.

Chandler Rung finished with 10 points on the night for Holy Trinity, while Medland and Snaadt each had nine, Jason Thurman pitched in with eight to round out the Crusader scoring.

Central Lee was paced by Jaxon Betker with 19. Derrick Denning had 11 points, Dylan Stuecker had eight, Kaleb Sanders scored seven, Bronson Sargent scored six, Jaedon Betker had three and Seth Mayes added a point for the Hawks.

Merschman puts 32 on HTC as Central Lee girls roll

BY PCC STAFF

DONNELLSON – Holy Trinity just had no answer for the state's second leading scorer as Central Lee downed the Crusaders 64-41 in girls SEISC South division action Friday night.

Senior Mya Merschman scored 32, 22 in the first half as Central Lee took command two minutes into the game

and didn't look back.

Alivia Myhre was also in double figures for Central with 16, 14 coming in the second half as the Crusaders tried to contain Merschman.

Makayla Morrison had seven for Central Lee, while Macy Watkins had four, Maura Watkins had three and Mya Lampe added a bucket to round

out the Hawks' scoring.

For Holy Trinity, Bailey Hellweg had eight points and Mary Kate Bendlage had six. Natalie Randolph and Brooke Mueller had five points, while Raquel Schneider scored four, Kassi Randolph and Kayla Box had three, and Marie Rauenbuehler and Reagan Holvoet each added two.

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

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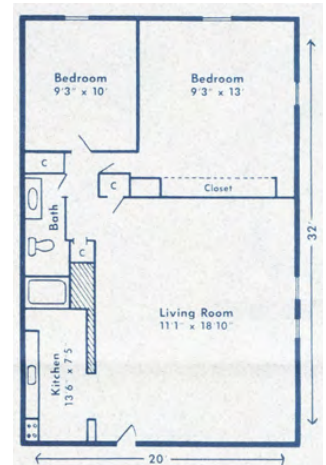
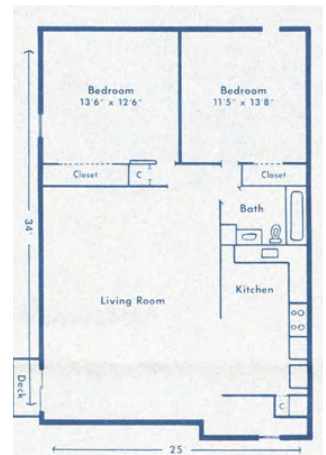


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From the Front

New COVID strain hits state

VARIANT - Continued from Page 1

individual in Bremer County. IDPH and local public health have already initiated contact with these cases to understand their exposures and initiate the health monitoring process. The process will include notifying anyone with whom these individuals have been in close contact. The individuals will be advised to isolate in accordance with IDPH and CDC guidance.

The positive cases were identified by the State Hygienic Lab (SHL). SHL has been participating in the CDC's SARS-CoV-2 Strain Surveillance Program by sending COVID-19 test samples to be sequenced for the B.1.1.7 variant since early December. SHL recently began doing their

own internal sequencing to look specifically for the variant. Routine analysis of genetic sequence data assisted in identifying the new variant strain in Iowa.

"Viruses constantly change through mutation, and new variants of a virus are expected to occur over time. Sometimes new variants emerge and disappear. Other times, new variants emerge and persist. Multiple variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 have been documented in the United States and globally during this pandemic. Public health will continue to work with our partners at SHL to monitor these trends and it is very important that we all keep practicing good public

health protective measures," shared Dr. Caitlin Pedati, State Medical Director and Epidemiologist.

The emergence of new variants underscores that it remains critical for Iowans to continue the mitigation efforts that we know work to slow the spread of COVID-19:

- Wear a mask or face covering
- Practice social distancing with those outside your household
- Clean your hands frequently with soap and water
- Stay home if you feel sick
- Get tested if you are exposed to, or have symptoms of COVID-19
- Consider getting a COVID-19 vaccine when it's available to you

Updates to Iowa's B.1.1.7 cases will be shared on the CDC's website here. These case counts only represent the variant strains that are confirmed through genomic sequencing, and may not accurately reflect the true number of variant cases.

Combining jobs saves county about \$24K per year

DINWIDDIE - Continued from Page 1

the county weren't addressed.

However, Dinwiddie provided data after the meeting confirming a \$14,000 annual salary as LCEMA coordinator in the next fiscal year starting July 1, and a salary of \$66,560 per year with the ambulance service on the same date. The EMA salary had been budgeted at \$38,716 prior to establishing the combined position.

Because of the reduced salary, the county/city revenues in the 2022 fiscal year budget were reduced from \$49,946 to \$26,052, which represents a projected savings to the county of about \$24,000 per year.

Dinwiddie also said the county will see additional savings in equipment purchases that won't be duplicated.

Dinwiddie told the board that he contacted several other county EMA commissioners who serve in similar dual roles and doesn't see there being a problem.

"I'm very confident that we can combine these two positions and make both of them thrive," he said.

"Like I said, we can save county taxpayer money by doing this. I did a lot of research and contacted other coordinators throughout Iowa that are already doing this. I didn't want to get myself into a position that wouldn't work."

Supervisor Ron Fedler said it was a "perfect match" for the county.

"Jason has done a lot of ambulance work with Lee County EMS and because of that I'd make the motion to combine the EMS director and Director of Operations positions."

Pflug said it was critical that the county launch the new ambulance service correctly.

"It's very important that we get this thing off the ground, and we get it right the first time. It's so critical for the people of Lee County that we get this thing done right and with these two guys, we're gonna achieve that."

Dinwiddie was hired as the Director of Operations after Dennis Cosby was hired as overall director of the county-run operation.

In other action, the county

- approved a request from Lee County Engineer Ben Hull to purchase two new tractors for the county at a combined cost of just over \$238,000

- approved the first reading of an ordinance creating a nine-member commission to oversee and manage the county's pioneer cemeteries.

- approved priorities for granting historic property rehabilitation tax exemptions for properties listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, or historical properties/sites as defined by Iowa Code 303.2



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