

# PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Thursday, January 7, 2020 | 14 pages | Volume 5 • Issue 13



www.pencitycurrent.com

## TOP STORY: Chad R. Davis charged in connection with Horns' deaths Area couple killed in crash



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Emergency crews work on clean up at the site of an accident involving a construction dump truck, a pickup and a motorcycle that claimed the lives of the cyclist and a passenger.

**AUG. 4, 2020 - 11,222 website views - 5,757 Facebook views**

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

DONNELLSON – A Donnellson man has been charged with two counts of vehicular homicide in connection with an Aug. 4 accident east of Donnellson.

According to Lee County Attorney Ross Braden, Chad R. Davis, 54, of Donnellson was arrested by the Iowa State Patrol at Casey's in Donnellson and charged with two counts of vehicular homicide by operating a vehicle while intoxicated.

The accident occurred in a construction zone eastbound on Highway 2. Michael Dean Horn, 67, of Donnellson and Linda Sue Horn, 66, of Donnellson, were both killed when the mo-



2005 Nissan Frontier pickup driven by Davis struck the motorcycle from behind pinning the couple between the two trucks.

torcycle they were riding on was struck in the construction zone near mile marker 250 at about 5:30 p.m Aug. 4.

According to the state patrol report, the Horns were on a motorcycle facing east bound stopped in a string of vehicles waiting in the construction zone. They were behind a 2021 Mack construction dump truck, when a

## LOOKING BACK ON 2020

### Rodeo cancels; RiverFest stays the course

Editor's Note:  
See ya 2020.

There was little to smile about in 2020 and the loss of our beautiful Kelsey made this past year at times insurmountable, unbearable, and improbable - often all at the same time.

But pressing on we managed to continue to provide local coverage of the events that matter most to you.

From crime, politics and business, to sports, obituaries, and yes, health, we put together 224 E-editions, while maintaining 24/7 website traffic and social media channels.



VANDENBERG

Each year as we start the new year we look back at the news and events that shaped the lives of those in north Lee County.

The coronavirus will carry a heavy presence editorially this year. With daily reports on 14-day positivity rates, and the actions taken at all levels of government to help the public stay clear of the virus that is being connected to almost 4,000 deaths in Iowa alone in 2020 took up a lot of column inches this year.

We've lost loved ones, watched others suffer from afar, and heard the heroic tales of the front line health care professionals.

We've written about schools scrambling to serve the interests of not just students and staff, but families across Lee County.

And we've seen the gaping holes the virus has uncovered in our ability to stay connected in and between our rural communities.

The criteria for selecting the stories is based on Google analytics and social media traction on a month-to-month basis. We will combine two months per issue for the next six issues.

Current news will continue to be posted on our website and social media channels.

We hope you enjoy looking back on the year with us as we usher in a new year with a glance to regressing coronavirus and the peace that should follow along.

We thank you for your patronage and wish you a wonderful new year.

## RIVERFEST 2020

**AUG. 5, 2020 - 9,723 views - 2,681 engagements**

RiverFest 2020 is in full swing on Fort Madison's riverfront. Cole Hollow, out of Peoria, plays in an evening set before Wednesday headliner Adelita's Way takes the Mohrfeld Electric Main Stage. Riverfest was one of the few events to go on as planned in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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## WEATHER

OpenWeatherMap  
THU 07 Jan.....Overcast, 33° F/ 27° F  
FRI 08 Jan .....Overcast, 32° F/ 27° F  
SAT 09 Jan .....Overcast, 39° F/ 24° F

## IOWA LOTTERY

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PICK 3 01/05 MIDDAY .....5 3 9  
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## 2020 – A Year in Review: July & August

# We Remember Our Loved Ones Lost in 2020

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as they make their minds up to be.”**

– Abraham Lincoln

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**JULY 5, 2020 - 6,400 views - 2,634 engagements**

## Wever man killed in fiery DM crash

BY PCC STAFF

DES MOINES – The Polk County Medical Examiner's Office has released the name of a Wever man killed in a car crash on the city of Des Moines' south side. Zachary McBride, 23, of Wever, was identified as the fourth fatality as a result of the single-vehicle car accident that occurred about 2:25 a.m. Sunday, July 5th on George Flagg Parkway southwest of the Des Moines International Airport. Preliminary examination of evidence at the scene indicates that the 2013 Volkswagen Golf was being driven westbound on George Flagg Parkway when it left the roadway to the north. The vehicle returned to the roadway, crossing the eastbound lanes and then leaving the roadway to the south. It stopped as it struck a tree. The vehicle then caught fire. The identities of three of the other four crash victims were also released. They are 22-year-old Des Moines resident Ross Jacob Welsher (driver), 22-year-old Des Moines resident Jordan Van Gundy (passenger), and 24-year-old Des Moines resident Jacob Lee Van Gundy (passenger). A fourth passenger rescued from the vehicle by a Des Moines Police Department patrol officer has been identified as 22-year-old West Des Moines resident Rheanne Elise Ames. She has been released from the hospital. Excessive speed and failure to maintain control appear to be significant contributing factors to the crash.



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**PEN CITY CURRENT**

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# 2020 – A Year in Review: July & August

**JULY 5, 2020 - 7,525 views - 4,812 engagements**

## Donnellson man's body recovered from river

SANDUSKY – The 4th of July holiday turned tragic for a Lee County man Saturday, when his body was discovered in the waters of the Mississippi River Saturday evening.

According to a report from Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weberr, Devyn Michael Broeker, age 24 of Donnellson, Iowa, was recovered by emergency divers in the area of Sandusky.

Mr. Broeker was last seen by witnesses as he was riding seated on a pull-behind flotation device on the Mississippi River near the Sandusky sand bar near the 3400 Block River Road at about 5:45 p.m. when a call was made for help.

State Department of Natural Resources officers were called to the area, along with deputies of the Lee County Sheriff's Office Dive Team after DNR officers located a suspected body using side scanning sonar.

With the assistance of the Fort Madison Fire & Rescue, Keokuk Fire & Rescue, and the Keokuk Volunteer Emergency Corps, a search was successful in the discovery and recovery of Mr. Broeker's body.

**AUG. 20, 2020 - 11,236 views - 1,404 engagements**

## FM man turns himself in in connection with stabbing

At 4 pm Thursday evening, Fort Madison police arrested Joseph Howard Orr, 39, of FM, who turned himself in to authorities in connection with a Wednesday night stabbing of Chance Colyer, 24, on the city's east side.

Orr is being held on a \$20,000 bond and is set to be arraigned Friday morning on charges of willful injury, carrying weapons, harassment and criminal mischief. Colyer remains hospitalized in serious condition with non-life threatening injuries, according to police. The charges are accusations and Orr is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

**JULY 12, 2020 - 26,162 views - 2,912 engagements**



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

## 'Plane' through

Keokuk Police and Fire crews were at the Elks Lodge Fairview Golf Club on July 12 where a single engine crop duster landed on Hole 4 after experiencing engine trouble. The pilot, whose name has not been released by KPD, was unharmed and no players were injured. Several golfers competing in the City Tournament at the time of the crash, about 11:45 a.m. said the plane landed safely but jumped a small embankment in the middle of the fairway and spun to a stop. FAA officials investigated the incident.

**AUG. 21, 2020 - 4,200 views - 832 engagements**

## ISP releases name of FM man killed in cycle crash

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – Iowa State Patrol officials released the name of a Fort Madison man killed in a motorcycle accident Wednesday evening.

According to the ISP's crash report site, Chad B. Krugle, 30, of Fort Madison, was airlifted by AirEvac to University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics just after 10 p.m. where he was pronounced dead.

The report said Krugle was traveling eastbound on Avenue O and lost control leaving the roadway and entering the south ditch. The 2018 Harley Davidson motorcycle came to rest in the south side of the road and Krugle was discovered unresponsive nearby.

Assisting at the scene were Lee County Sheriff's Office, Fort Madison Police Department, Fort Madison Fire & Rescue, Lee County EMS and AirEvac.

**AUG. 28, 2020 - 6,577 views - 1,698 engagements**

## Tri-State Rodeo cancels 2020 due to pandemic

(Released by Tri-State Rodeo Committee)

The health and safety of the Tri-State Rodeo's patrons, volunteers, performers, and our community is the single most important thing to us. Since we first began evaluating and implementing protective measures against the COVID-19 pandemic, our home county has seen a significant increase in the rate of COVID positive cases. Upon thorough review of the most recent data available and careful consideration of the community's input, we have made the unfortunate but ultimately necessary decision to cancel the 2020 Tri-State Rodeo. We genuinely believe this to be the safest and most responsible course of action. We understand that this will doubtlessly be a disappointment to many, but we are also confident that everyone will recognize that our highest priority always is the well-being of everyone involved. Rest assured, the Tri-State Rodeo will be back in 2021 bigger, better, and more thrilling than ever! For those who have already purchased tickets, please be patient. As soon as determine how to most efficiently issue timely refunds to our loyal patrons, we will be emailing all ticket holders as well as posting information regarding refunds on all our social networks and on our website.



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# 2020 – A Year in Review: July & August

**AUG. 3, 2020 - 7,487 views - 2,855 engagements**

## Mayor leaves Holy Trinity graduation over mask request

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld missed his son’s graduation on Sunday as he left in protest of students and families not being given the choice to wear a facemask at the event.

Mohrfeld said Monday that his decision was made as a father and not as the Mayor. And he said he was adamant that the move had nothing to do with masks.

Students offered face masks to anyone in attendance who did not have one out of Holy Trinity Catholic’s administration’s concern for the spread of the novel coronavirus during the pandemic.

“I know this might sound weird to you, but this is not an issue of just face masks,” Mohrfeld said.

“I respect everyone that wants to wear a mask and I would never discredit the research used by people to wear a mask, but it’s absolutely and positively up to the people and businesses that want to do that.”

Mohrfeld said his decision to leave and not see his senior son receive his diploma at Sunday’s ceremony was based on what he saw as hypocrisy in the system.

“On the day we’re trying to tell our children it’s time to be an adult, we should have put the information in front of them and allowed them to make a decision,” he said.

“They should have been able to decide. It was their decision on what was appropriate. As a parent, given that the person you’re talking to was raised in the 60s – I had a real problem with that.”

Mohrfeld said he was told by HTC Principal Michael Sheerin that to stay he would have to put on a face mask. Mohrfeld captured video of part of the entrance procession without wearing a face mask and then left the building in protest of the mandate.

**JULY 10, 2020 - 15,520 views - 4,196 engagements**



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Emergency crews are on the scene of a single vehicle accident on West Point about three miles north of Hwy. 2 AirEvac was also on location for transport.

**AUG. 30, 2020 - 5,887 views - 1,580 engagements**

## Letter from LCHD advises against Tri-State Rodeo during pandemic

EDITOR;

Lee County Board of Health has a responsibility to address the health concerns of Lee County citizens and is taking the position that large scale events planned in 2020, such as the Tri-State Rodeo, and rodeo parade, are ill-advised. Based on known evidence of how COVID-19 spreads among mass gatherings of people, along with the high risks associated with community spread of COVID-19 from travelers coming in from highly infectious areas across the United States, the board believes that the harmful health impact on our county citizens attending these events could be substantial. Increases in COVID-19 related illnesses and even death could result and affect our population health for months to come.

The Board of Health recommends canceling of these events out of concern for the health and safety of all community members. Should these events move forward, the Board of Health strongly encourages citizens to protect themselves and others and avoid mass gatherings and crowds while this virus is still highly active and spreading across the United States.

Signed,

Dr. David Wenger-Keller, Lee County Board of Health Medical Director

Dr. Phil Caropreso, Lee County Board of Health Member

Judy Bartachek, Lee County Board of Health Chair

Paula Spiekermeier, Lee County Board of Health Member

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# 2020 – A Year in Review: July & August

**AUG. 30, 2020 - 11,650 views - 1,110 engagements**

## Central Lee officials move young students to POD learning system

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

**DONNELSON** – With the state of Iowa now reporting more than 1 in 10 people tested for coronavirus are positive, a clever move to create safer learning in classrooms is holding up well at Central Lee.

When the Iowa Department of Education required a Return to Learn plan from all public and private schools in the state in July, Superintendent Dr. Andy Crozier and the administrators in the district came up with a unique strategy for the K-8 students.

The district reached out to community stakeholders to find remote pod locations to hold elementary classes. That move put students in more than a dozen locations around Montrose and Donnellson, creating valuable social distancing space for students.

As of Sunday morning, Lee County's positivity percent-

age was 18.1%. According to DOE protocols, districts with rates higher than 15% combined with an absentee rate of at least 10% for staff and students not enrolled in online-learning, can request of waiver from the state to go to strictly online learning.

No school in the district has announced they are seeking that waiver as of Friday.

Central Lee Elementary principal Heather Fuger said the move has been received extremely well by parents and the community.

She said when the district rolled out the pod-oriented elementary plan and went to mandated masks in class-

rooms, families felt safer putting their children back in classrooms.

"Our survey data over the summer had showed us that parents were ready to come back to school," Fuger said. "But what we're hearing from people is that went we rolled out this program and went to mandated masks they were more comfortable coming back."

She said now the district is under 10%, or about 100 students, taking the on-line-only option for learning during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Students started class on Monday and finished their first full week on Friday without any early dismiss-



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Central Lee administrators and volunteers deliver meals Wednesday to students in learning pods around Montrose. The district is teaching in 13 pods in Donnellson and Montrose during the current COVID-19 outbreak.

als. Fuger said each day was smoother than the previous one.

"Every day has gotten better. Every day is smoother. We did all the planning we

could do and until we actually did it, we really didn't know how well it was going to work," she said.

With classes in community centers, churches, and

business spaces, the only ask was for the district to cover utilities. But in many of the locations the property owners are not asking for any compensation.

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# 2020 – A Year in Review: July & August

**AUGUST 5, 2020 - 5,368 views - 1,187 engagements**

## Kempker family rolls past 50 years

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Fifty years and five communities later, Kempker’s True Value and Rental Inc., is still helping fix Fort Madison.

The company started in the early part of February in 1970 by Bob and Barb Kempker at 725 Avenue G, has sustained as a not-so-prototypical neighborhood hardware store even as the country’s big boxes have changed the landscape of Main Street America.

A strong belief in customer and community service has made the Kempker family brand a storied retail operation in Fort Madison.

“Being a family business, being customer oriented is the top priority. If you take that away your just another number.” said Chuck Kempker, who owns and operates the Fort Madison location along with his wife Dawn.

From the early beginnings downtown, the family and business outgrew the 3,000 square foot location they purchase from Stibbens Hardware in 1969 in about a decade. In 1979 they moved operations to 1904 Avenue H, next to Greenwald’s grocery store and

into a much larger 7,500 square foot space.

In about another 10 years they would purchase the grocery store and add that space to the create the current location in 1990 adding another 9,000 square feet.

While all that was going on, Bob added the franchise tag True Value in 1982, to the Kempker name. In 1994, rentals became part of the business model, with the unique name “Just Ask Rental.” The Radio Shack franchise was then added in 1998 and a floral and gift department was added in 2000.

That department is now called, “The Girls Side at Kempker’s True Value & Rental, when Dawn renamed it in 2019, and it was moved into it’s own building on the property.

But the business started out very much as the family affair with all of the Kempker children, Sherry, Debbie, Sandy, Chuck, and Peggy, growing up working in the store doing odd jobs.

Now Chuck and Dawn, now own and operate the 16,500 square foot “store within a store”, and have since 2003 when it was passed to them.

Kempker said back when the big boxes boomed it was a challenge. He said staying focused on customer service won the war, but he took hits during the battle.



Chuck and Dawn Kempker

**JULY 1, 2020 - 5,050 views - 747 engagements**

## Schools start to roll out Return to Learn plans

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

DONNELSON – Area school officials won’t be requiring students or staff to wear masks at the start of the fall school year, but they will be taking additional safety measures as Iowa schools look to reopen.

Central Lee Superintendent Dr. Andy Crozier released a video today talking about what the district may look

like going into the fall in dealing with the coronavirus, but said things are still very preliminary and a lot of details still need hashed out.

Central Lee’s plan can be found at the following link: <https://sites.google.com/centrallee.org/central-lee-covid-19/return-to-learn/continuous-learn-ing>

Some schools in Iowa are already announcing that masks will be required when school

opens in the fall, but Iowa Department of Education guidelines do not recommend requiring masks to be worn.

For example, Iowa City has made the decision to require all staff and students to wear masks at the start of the school year.

As of July 1, Central Lee and Fort Madison school officials are letting parents make that decision.

As part of the face-to-face learning options,

personal protective equipment including face masks or face guards will not be required, but will be allowed and encouraged during transition time and while in hallways, as part of Central Lee’s plan.

Staff there will also be temping students and staff as they enter district buildings or buses. Any students or staff with a temperature of 100.3 or above will be sent home immediately.

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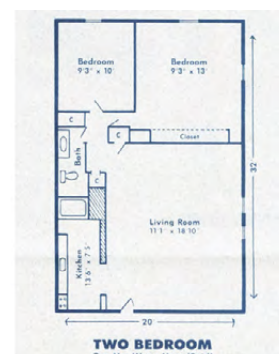
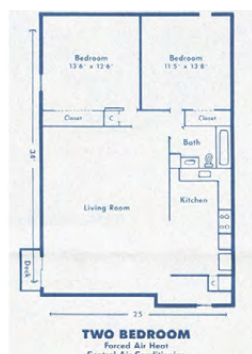
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**JULY 1, 2020 - 5,050 views - 747 engagements**

## Sheriff K9 helps track down sex offender suspect

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – Authorities chased down a 42-year-old Fort Madison man with an outstanding sex offender warrant early Tuesday morning in Riverview Park.

According to Fort Madison Police Chief Mark Rohloff, Nathan Eric Washburne ran from an officer after he was approached at the northern side of the foot bridge over the railroad tracks in the park.

The Fort Madison officer attempted to place Washburne, who was with an unidentified female at the time, under arrest.

Washburne took off up the stairs, over the bridge and back down into the park with the officer in pursuit. The suspect was chased into the wooded area on the west end of the park where other officers joined in and formed a perimeter. They then called for K9 assistance from the Lee County Sheriff.

Deputy Jordan Maag brought K9 Kion to the scene and the dog sniffed out Washburne laying on the ground in the dark next to a tree.

During a search of Washburne, police recovered a small quantity of marijuana and methamphetamines. He was subsequently charged with “Interference with Official Acts”, a sex offender registration violation warrant, and drug possession charges.



## 2020 – A Year in Review: July & August

# Barkers open FM Marina for food, fun, and fill-ups

**JULY 8, 2020 - 5,825 views - 974 engagements**

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Barker Financial has taken another step to help Fort Madison's economy.

The property management company out of Iowa City has already picked up and completed an abandoned historic upper apartment restoration, rehabbed a library, and taken over operations of an historic hotel. Now they want to provide a little summer fun.

The group has negotiated a lease agreement with the city to use the part of the Riverview Marina for food and beverage service, and is renovating the boater services area as well.

Kyle Galloway, the Chief Financial Officer of Barker said one of the first things he remembers of Fort Madison is the marina and the beautiful vista of the riverfront in the city.

"I remember the first time I went down there to Fort Madison with the whole apartment renovation. I stopped down and thought it would be really cool if there was something out there," he said. "The river is so beautiful down there."

Barker Financial owns the Kingsley Inn, the Old Lee County Bank building, the former Cattermole Library, the Sears Building and the building where the YMCA will be soon be offering services. They also now own the River Rocks Bar and Grille inside the Kingsley Inn.

**AUGUST 14, 2020 - 4,862 views - 448 engagements**

## Dinwiddie takes over LCEMA duties

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – He's no stranger to first responder work and now has a job that seems to be right up his alley.

Montrose Volunteer Fire Chief and Lee County EMS staffer Jason Dinwiddie took over as Lee County Emergency Management Agency Coordinator Monday replacing Steve Cirinna, who retired after 17 years.

Dinwiddie said Tuesday most of the transition into the position has been made easier due to the connections he has with area first responders.

"I know almost all the players there," Dinwiddie said. "It's gonna be getting to know the leaders of the industries and their safety officers that's going to take

some time. That's huge for the emergency services side of this job. I already knew everybody, so there wasn't a lot of introductions locally needed."

He said the real work will be in getting to know people in the private sector and navigating the grants that keep funding streams active.

"There's quite a bit of red tape in any government work and a lot of our funding comes from grants passed through from the state that are passed down from the federal level," he said.

"You wanna talk about red tape, there's all kinds of double and triple checking. But the folks at the state are awesome," Dinwiddie said.

Dinwiddie began his career at 19 as a medical staffer on Catfish Bend Casino until Lee County

EMS hired him when he could be legally run on ambulances. He's also been a reserve police officer and a reserve sheriff's deputy.

He said the state's emergency management operations are likely going to be changed permanently due to the response to the coronavirus, but some of the lessons of pandemic can and should be applied going forward regardless of the COVID-19 outbreak.

**JULY 1, 2020 - 9,902 views - 1,508 engagements**



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Rescue workers use the Jaws of Life to try to extricate a motorist from a PT Cruiser Tuesday afternoon at the scene of a two-vehicle accident.

## Huebner named newest principal at Holy Trinity High School

**AUGUST 11, 2020 - 4,948 views - 923 engagements**

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – Michael Sheerin, Chief Administrative Officer of Holy Trinity Catholic Schools, and its Board of Directors are pleased to announce the appointment of Craig Huebner as the new Principal of Holy Trinity Catholic High School.

Craig Huebner has dedicated himself over the past 22 years as an educator in southeast Iowa. He earned a Master of Arts Education degree from Viterbo University(2019) and a Bachelor's degree from Western Illinois University (1998). Mr. Huebner is a proud graduate of Aquinas High School and looks forward to his return.

Mr. Huebner has served as a classroom teacher, PBIS facilitator, teacher mentor and cooperating teacher for future educators. He was recognized as an outstanding educator in Iowa for his implementation of Positive Behavior Supports in Danville Community School District where he served as k-12 instructional coach. Mr. Huebner is committed to serving as a life-long educator and learner and strives to instill a similar desire in the students with whom he works. He resides in New London with his wife Bobbi, who is also an educator. Together they have three sons, daughters-in-law and a precious granddaughter.

Mr. Huebner will be dedicated to the high standards of education and Catholic Christian values at Holy Trinity Catholic.



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# 2020 – A Year in Review: July & August

**JULY 23, 2020 - 5,546 views - 665 engagements**



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Senior TJ Stutes takes a knee after the Central Lee Hawks' season ended in July with the bases loaded in the bottom of the 7th in Mediapolis in Class 2A substate baseball.

**JULY 23, 2020 - 4,074 views - 401 engagements**

## HPC wants to rehab City Cemetery

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – The fence is gapped and rickety, gravestones are toppled and even buried, and weeds are consuming plots – but the history is there and the city's Historic Preservation Commission wants to ramp up efforts to clean up the historical City Cemetery.

The 3.6 acre cemetery located on the south side of the 1400 block of Business 61, holds the remains of some of Fort Madison's most important founding figures, as well as prominent military figures from the Civil War.

Chris Sorrentino, the HPC chairman brought historian Karen Kester out to meet with volunteers, commission members and the media to give a brief history of the cemetery on Tuesday morning.

Sorrentino said it's time to get the cemetery back in respectable shape and make it an integral part of historical tours through the city.

Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld said he's challenged city staff to get the decorative iron fencing at the cemetery repaired and cleaned up by the end of the calendar year, Sorrentino said.

The southeast corner of the lot is missing close to one hundred feet of fencing. Sorrentino said he'd like to have the fence repaired to hold the historical value, but some areas are going to have to be replaced.

**JULY 11, 2020 - 4,492 views - 547 engagements**

## Pipeline ordered emptied

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – A U.S District court ordered this week, that the company that owns and operates the Dakota Access Pipeline that runs, in part, through Lee County, to stop flow and empty the line.

The long running legal battle between property owners, carried legally by two Sioux Indian tribes, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribes, and the company and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has had more than 10 legal opinions from the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

That Court ordered the flow of oil from the pipeline but shut down, and the pipeline be emptied within 30 days, by Aug. 5 and that the easement given by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, specifically to build the pipeline under Lake Oahe in North Dakota, is vacated.

The court said the Corp of Engineers did not sufficiently conduct an environmental analysis of the impact of the pipelines' construction and operation on the land and populations around the pipeline.

In the opinion, the U.S. District Court Judge James E. Boasberg wrote, "given the seriousness of the Corps' NEPA error, the impossibility of a simple fix, the fact that Dakota Access did assume much of its economic risk knowingly, and the potential harm each day the pipeline operates, the Court is forced to conclude that the flow of oil must cease."

Lee County Supervisor Chairman Ron Fedler said he heard of the potential of the ruling two weeks ago, but said the decision will not have an impact on Lee County.

**JULY 23, 2020 - 3,936 views - 369 engagements**

## Kingsley looking at second camera

BY KATIE SCOVILLE  
Pen City Current

FORT MADISON – A camera, mounted on a local inn, has captured the attention of locals and people from around the globe. Railroad enthusiasts are on the edge of their seats as they watch Fort Madison trains pass along the riverfront.

The Railroad Cam has been capturing river and

railroad traffic since late June and started streaming on July 7, has found great success among viewers.

Installed at the Kingsley Inn, the camera is placed in a premium spot for documenting trains rolling by and barges floating up and down the Mississippi.

Chi Eastin, manager of the Kingsley Inn, said that the most shocking element of installing the camera is the number of views that the feed receives.

"Out of all 57 locations of these cameras, we're num-

ber one in views," she said.

The live feed can be found on YouTube by searching Fort Madison Railcam or at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9Zz9z92TKQ>

Just recently, 1,700 viewers watched as wind blades were being transported by train to Siemens-Gamesa, a large manufacturer on the southwestern outskirts of Fort Madison. A month into installation YouTube statistics projected an astonishing 2 million viewers of the feed.

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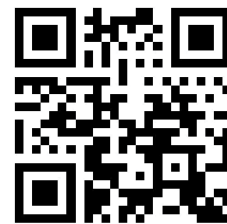


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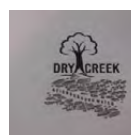


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## 2020 – A Year in Review: July & August

# Craft keeps RiverFest rolling despite pandemic hurdles

**JULY 29, 2020 - 4,849 views - 809 engagements**

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – RiverFest founder Charles Craft said this year’s event has been “very difficult”.

But he said the easiest thing would have been to give up.



CRAFT

“We didn’t want to do that. We didn’t want to give up.”

So a scaled down version of RiverFest presented by Frank Millard and Company, Inc, which has gained national attention as a growing venue with large national acts, will kick off on Wednesday Aug. 5 on the Fort Madison riverfront. The event is in its fifth year of a resurgence, born of a festival of the same name that took place in the 80s and 90s on the riverfront.

This year’s event will go on without the traditional carnival. Craft said that was out of his hands as no traveling carnival provider was operating in Iowa or Illinois this year due to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The outbreak has also had its impact locally. A statement made two weeks ago by the Lee County Board of Health, said large scale gatherings are “ill-advised” as the coronavirus is surging in Lee County.

Craft said he’s been working, and in contact, with the Lee County Health Department’s Environmental Health Services Director Mike Shelangoski, regularly to make sure everything that can be done to protect festival goers, is being done.

A link to the website and the festival health and safety measures can be found by clicking here: <http://riverfestfm.com/health-and-safety>

In addition to taking the temperatures of everyone entering the festival, Craft said you’ll see hand sanitizers and wash stations throughout festival grounds that were expanded this year.

“We increased our grounds by more than 200% to allow plenty of room for people to social distance, while reducing our capacity by 50%,” Craft said Wednesday.

“We are exceeding (World Health Organization) WHO, (Centers for Disease Control) CDC, and state health guidelines. There have been some keyboard cops out there blasting us for having this, but we’re doing everything we’re required to do, and then some, to make this a safe and fun event for everyone.”

Food vendors will still be on hand for concert goers to grab a bite, and Craft said most of the games will still be available for people to play, but there will be no tournaments this year.

**JULY 2, 2020 - 5,444 views - 1,462 engagements**



Courtesy photo

Firefighters arrive on the scene of a structure fire on the morning of July 2 at about 3:15 a.m. in the 900 block of 15th Street.

# Another abandoned home burns in city limits

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – Another abandoned home has been destroyed by fire in Fort Madison.

Fort Madison firefighters were called to the scene of the structure fully engulfed in flames at about 3:10 a.m. Thursday morning. Fort Madison firefighters and city workers were on the scene for several hours and the home was considered a loss.

The cause of the fire is remains under investigation. Fire Chief Joey Herron was unavailable for comment on the fire. It’s the latest in a string of homes in the city that have been abandoned and have caught fire.

The home was sold in March by Paul Peterson to Mehrdad Tabatabaian for \$7,500, according to the Lee County Recorder’s office listings. The home had changed ownership five times in the last six years.

**JULY 2, 2020 - 5,444 views - 1,462 engagements**

# Bagcraft announces closure

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Officials at the Bagcraft Packaging facility in Fort Madison have announced the facility will cease operations and decommission the plant on Oct. 22.

Novolex, which acquired Bagcraft in 2015, released a statement Thursday afternoon saying all 104 positions the plant will be impacted and those employees were notified Thursday.

Novolex Director of Communications Katie Hendrix said demand for products over the last several months during the COVID pandemic is the root of the closure.

“Our product demand has really changed over the last several months,” Hendrix said. “Efficiencies we will gain after the drop in demand was necessary.”

Hendrix said the company has more than 60 other operations in North America and has positions available for employees at the Fort Madison facility.

She said some employees will be retained after production ceases to shut down the plant, but couldn’t elaborate on how the shutdown will proceed, or how long employees will stay on payroll.

The statement released said other support efforts are underway for current employees.

“We have immediate needs at all levels within many of our other Novolex facilities and we will offer relocation to our Ft. Madison employees where there is a fit.

“We are also working to connect our employees with companies in the area and are providing additional support through our outplacement

program which will begin immediately.”

Hendrix said she didn’t have information on what efforts, if any, were made in conjunction with local economic development officials to keep the plant operational.

Lee County Economic Development Group President Dennis Fraise said these situations are always difficult, but the group’s efforts now turn to helping the employees. He said the Iowa Workforce Development’s Rapid Response team has been activated.

“We have been in touch with Bagcraft and we’re working with them. Our goal now is the employees and to take that long-term approach,” Fraise said

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# PAW kicks off capital building campaign

**AUGUST 27, 2020 - 3,604 views - 313 engagements**

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

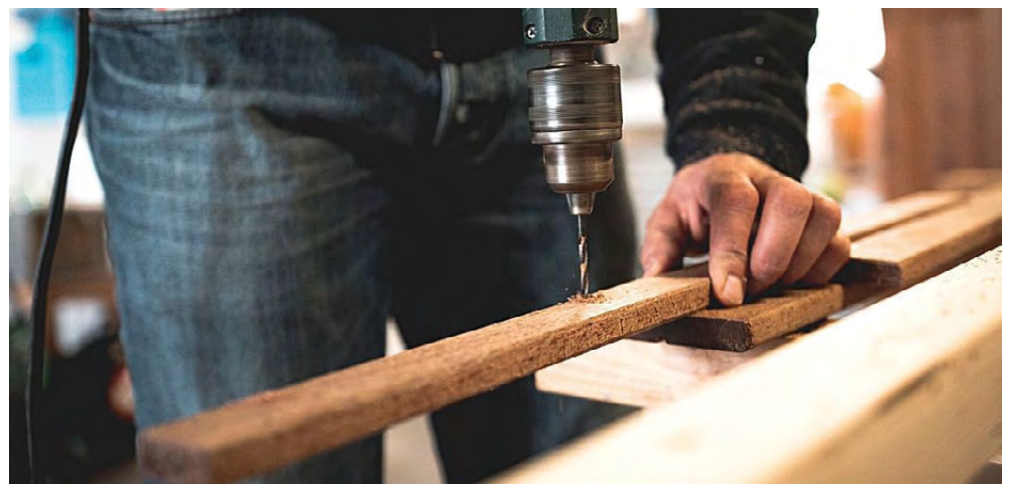
FORT MADISON – Officials with the P.A.W. animal shelter in Fort Madison kicked off a capital campaign to raise more than \$5 million to build a new, more efficient facility on Wednesday.

Brad Walker, president the board for the Protector of Animal Welfare shelter, located on 48th Street, said the project could cost in excess of \$5 million, but the group is willing to take on the project bit by bit.

“We have to figure out what our budget’s going to be and get a few people together to work on the campaign. We’re looking at price tag so far of close to \$5M or \$6 million.

Walker said the funds will be all private donations.

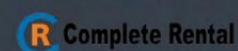
A recent private memorial donation of close to \$150,000 finished paying off the land for the new facility and covered design costs. The board financed the land in 2018. The current facility sits on about two acres, but with the new land, the footprint is expanded to close to six acres.



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# 2020 – A Year in Review: July & August

**AUGUST 7, 2020 - 4,476views - 469 engagements**



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Former WWF Superstar Chris Jericho led the band Fozzy onto the Mohrfeld Electric Main Stage Thursday night at RiverFest.

**JULY 13, 2020 - 3,927 views - 392 engagements**

## SCC finishes up rehab on FM CarSmart property

BY KATIE SCOVILLE  
Pen City Current

FORT MADISON – As you cruise down Avenue G, you see familiar buildings such as Fox Theater, The Colony Shop, and Under the Sun. But near the end of downtown, something unfamiliar has finally unveiled itself: the former Car Smart building has been transformed and the SCC logo now adorns the building.

Plans to transform the former CarSmart building began about a year ago. Due to multiple grants and the Shottenkirk family gifting the building, the plan to transform the building was put in motion and Southeastern Community College committed \$500,000 to the renovation.

Flash forward to present day and the remodeling is complete and currently awaiting furnishing.

SCC President Dr. Michael Ash anticipates operations beginning after August 1st and perhaps an official ribbon-cutting ceremony during September or early October (COVID-19 conditions allowing).

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## 2020 – A Year in Review: July & August

**AUGUST 3, 2020 - 4,224 views - 220 engagements**



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Holy Trinity seniors gathered around the flag pole Sunday for the annual tossing of the caps after 26 graduates received their diplomas following a pandemic-riddled 2020 senior year.

**JULY 15, 2020 - 4,023 views - 375 engagements**

## IHSAA director says state's fall sports will go on

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

DONNELSON – Iowa was the only state in the country to open up high school sports this summer and the head of the Iowa High School Athletic Association said it's been a summer to remember.

Tom Keating, Executive Director of the IHSAA, was in town for the Central Lee -Van Buren Class 2A District 10 semifinal game Tuesday night in Donnellson and said, looking around the crowd of people gathered for the event... "This is Iowa."

With very few people wearing masks, bleachers full yet slightly spaced, and lawn chairs spread around the baseball field, Keating said Iowans needed to get out.

"The first thing I see is kids connected back to something they love as well as connected back to their schools," Keating said.

"They've been away from that community since April and to get reconnected and be back in touch with teammates and classmates – I think is a great thing.

"The other thing I see is – this is Iowa, right? It's summer. There's baseball, people in camping chairs and just out for a great night. And you know, I think people are being responsible. I don't think anyone is really out of line here. It's a nice crowd and they are doing their best to stay apart."

Keating spent the day Tuesday looking at district facilities with Central Lee Superintendent Dr. Andy Crozier. Crozier serves on the IHSAA Board of Control. Keating says he likes to get around to see the board member's school districts.

"I spent the day with him and learned a lot of about this district. We saw the construction project here, and I think that really shows what this community thinks about its kids," Keating said.

With Iowa taking the much-debated position of opening summer sports under some recommendations from the IHSAA in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Public Health, Keating said he's been pleased with the vigilance of the high school programs.

## Avenue F residents want properties addressed by city

**JULY 22, 2020 - 4,103 views - 910 engagements**

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

*(Editor's Note: It was the decision of the Pen City Current to withhold the names of residents in the 1400 block of Avenue F voicing concerns at Tuesday's City Council meeting.)*

FORT MADISON – Several residents living in the 1400 block of Avenue F spoke out about the occupants of a home on the block that are creating an alleged harassing and unsafe environment.

During the public comment period of Tuesday's regular Fort Madison City Council meeting, three residents spoke up about the environment in the neighborhood, and pleaded with city officials to take action.

Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld told the group that although the council couldn't speak to the issue because the discussion wasn't an agenda item, it wasn't falling on deaf ears.

"I want to say again, that even though we can't discuss these issues because they aren't on the agenda, the information you're giving us will be forwarded to city staff," Mohrfeld said.

One resident who lives on the block said the city has been responsive to the issue, but the issue requires more attention.

"The police, (Building Director) Doug Krogmeier and the city have been more than willing to help out. Every time there's been a complaint they've taking care of it," the resident said.

"We're just requesting the city work with us as much as possible and do what we can to clean up this neighborhood. Sometimes there's as many as six adults living in that house and people living in a pop-up camper in the back. We just ask the city council to help us take care of this."

Another resident broke down in tears recalling alleged regular harassment and harassment toward the resident's child including name calling and threats.

Fort Madison Police Chief Mark Rohloff said the department is aware of the situation and has made repeated stops at the property

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## 2020 – A Year in Review: July & August

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Cindy Steflik	Fort Madison Family YMCA	Katie's Cuts	Old Fort Players	The Madison
City of Fort Madison	Fort Madison Housing Authority	Kempker's True Value Rental	Palms Restaurant	The Samuel Hayes Show
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Darlene Kraus	Geoff Shields	Lee County Democratic Party	Rebecca Bowker	West Point Fireworks Committee
Darrell Allman	George Shields	Lee County Conservation Board	Relay for Life of North Lee County	West Point Sweet Corn Festival Committee
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David Courtney	Great River Hospice	Lee County	Rich Harlow	Wondra Chiropractic & Acupuncture
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Dawn Helling	Green Acres Bar & Grill	Lee County Fair Board	River City Motors Plus, Inc.	Your Heat & Air Guy
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Denmark God's Portion Day Committee	Green Oak Development	Lee County IT/GIS Department	Ron Davoo	
	Griffin Muffler & Brake Center	Lee County Mutual Insurance	RSVP of Lee County	
	Group Benefit Partners	Lee County Sheriff	Russell "Skip" Young	
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