

# PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Friday, January 14, 2022 | 7 pages | Volume 6 • Issue 18



www.pencitycurrent.com

## Mellers to donate property to county

**7.7 ACRES:** Glen Meller family to donate land for new health department

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Details were released Wednesday on an agreement between Lee County and the owners of property where the former Iowan hotel was located.

The county and Circle M Inc., owned by the Glen Meller family, had been in talks since November about the property. The county is interested in possibly building a new Lee County Health Department on the site.

The county released details of the tentative agreement indicating that the Meller family has agreed to donate the property to the county for the new facility.

The county would be acquiring 7.76 acres of land valued at

about \$117,000 from the family.

Becky Carlsen, a spokeswoman for the family, said the decision was easy for Glen Meller and his family.

“They are happy to have this property go to such an important entity of the county. The property was once a thriving business in our community and they look forward to it being a vital part of the area again,” Carlsen said Wednesday.

The county is currently considering using \$2 million of American Rescue Plan Act funding to build the facility. The county is also investigating a state Community Development Block Grant and a potential non-voted bond to help pay for the facility.

See MELLERS, page 5

### BUSINESS

## GBP acquired by national insurance group

FORT MADISON – Group Benefit Partners (GBP) is excited to announce effective January 1, 2022, they have officially become an AssuredPartners Agency. Founded in 2009 in Fort Madison with statewide expansion over a decade resulting in 6 offices and 35 employees, GBP gained the reputation as a premier regional employee benefits and health insurance agency.

AssuredPartners (AP) was founded in 2011 and has experienced explosive growth over their 11 year existence by acquiring many of the nation’s most successful independent insurance agencies. Today, AP represents nearly \$2 Billion in annual revenue and more than 7,500 employees. With resources available in every sector and specialty in the expansive

See AGENCY, page 4

## Central Lee senior takes seat next to Governor at address

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

DES MOINES – Anyone from Central Lee paying attention to Gov. Kim Reynolds Condition of the State speech Tuesday night may have caught a glimpse of a familiar face.

Central Lee senior Trey Wellman had a seat to the right of the Governor Tuesday night as the page to Speaker of the House Pat Grassley.

Wellman sat motionless for the entire address without standing or clapping. He said that’s because pages are supposed to remain neutral in their duties.

But he said the evening was something he will never forget.

“For me the coolest thing, aside from being right there for the governor’s speech, was seeing people from all sides standing up and being grateful she was there,” Wellman said Wednesday night.

“It was just very cool to see the

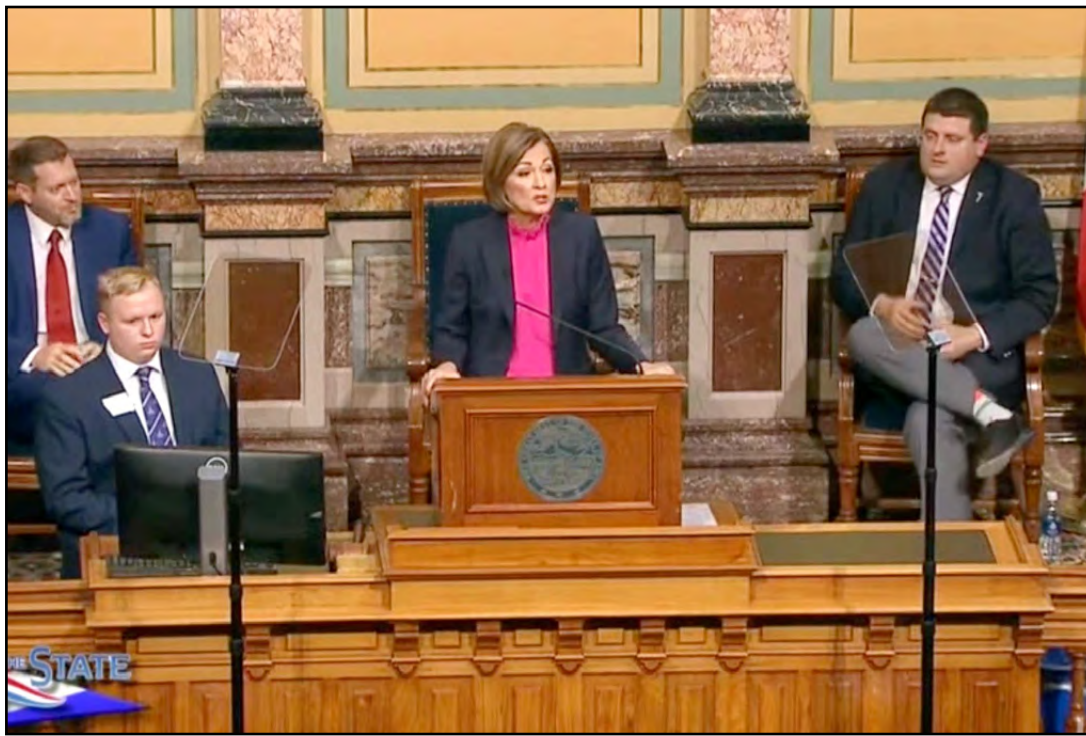


Image courtesy of Iowa PBS

Central Lee senior Trey Wellman took a seat next to Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds as page to the Speaker of the House Tuesday night in Des Moines during Reynolds’ Condition of the State address.

whole thing in action – people in the gallery, people behind the desks of legislators – just being able to witness something like that at the beginning of a session will be something I always remember.”

Wellman applied to be a 2022 legislative page last year. He obtained a letter of recommendation from current State Rep. Joe Mitchell (R-84th District) and was accepted into the program. During orientation pages are given an opportunity to interview to be a page for someone in the majority and minority lead-

ership, or for the Chief Clerk.

“Our first page orientation, everybody had a chance to do an interview with the speaker’s office, the majority leader’s office and the minority leader’s office and one page is selected for each,” Wellman said.

He was asked if he would like to page for Speaker Grassley’s office and he accepted the job.

He said his first duty was to put each state representative’s name with a face because he has the job of turning on and off microphones during sessions at the direction of the leadership.

“The computer that I sit at runs all the microphones in the house. So before the Governor came out Tuesday night, I was working those microphones. Once she came into the chamber I stood and then sat back down and that was it.”

Wellman had a full day prior to the address with a morning session in the House chamber and then filling other page duties throughout the day. There was a call to order at about 5:30 p.m. and the House began filling up

See SENIOR, page 5

### STATE NEWS

## Iowans to benefit from Navient loan settlement

DES MOINES — Attorney General Tom Miller announced today that Navient, known as one of the nation’s largest student loan servicers, will provide relief totaling \$1.7 billion to resolve allegations of widespread unfair and deceptive student loan servicing practices and abuses in originating predatory student loans.

This settlement, joined by a coalition of 39 attorneys general, resolves claims against Navient since 2009. Despite representing that it would help borrowers find the best repayment options, Navient steered struggling student loan borrowers into costly long-term forbearances instead of counseling them about the benefits of more affordable income-driv-

See DEBT, page 4

### INDEX

Business Directory.....P.6  
BUSINESS NEWS.....P.4  
CLASSIFIEDS.....Ps.5-6  
Complete Rental.....P.2  
CURRENT-LEE.....P.2  
FOR THE RECORD.....P.2  
FROM THE FRONT.....Ps.4-5  
Fort Madison Family YMCA.....P.4

Fullenkamp Insurance.....P.2  
IOWA NEWS.....Ps.4,7  
Lee County Health Department.....P.5  
LEE COUNTY NEWS.....Ps.5,7  
LOCAL NEWS.....Ps.3-5  
OBITUARIES.....P.2  
• Roy W. Gehle, II, 64  
Pen City Current.....Ps.3-4,6

Pilot Grove Savings Bank.....P.4  
Pothitakis Dentistry.....P.3  
SaferCar.gov/TheRightSeat.....P.7  
Sonny’s Super Market.....P.7  
Southeast Iowa Regional Airport.....P.4  
StopTextsStopWrecks.org.....P.5

### WEATHER

OpenWeatherMap  
FRI 14 Jan ..... Snow, 36° F/ 28° F  
SAT 15 Jan ..... Snow, 28° F/ 9° F  
SUN 16 Jan ..... Broken Clouds, 23° F/ 1° F

### IOWA LOTTERY

LOTTO AMERICA 01/12.....12 19 27 37 45, Star Ball: 9, All Star Bonus: 2  
LUCKY FOR LIFE 01/12.....3 27 29 33 48, Lucky Ball: 7  
PICK 3 01/12 MIDDAY.....720  
PICK 3 01/12 EVENING.....771  
PICK 4 01/12 MIDDAY.....3160  
PICK 4 01/12 EVENING.....3006  
POWERBALL 01/12.....12 21 22 30 33, Powerball: 24, Power Play: 4

### SUBSCRIBE

Scan the code to subscribe today  
Paid & Free Options Available!



# Obituaries/For the Record

## OBITUARIES

### ROY W. GEHLE II

Roy William Gehle II, 64, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 6:03 p.m. on Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center in West Burlington, IA. He was born on September 30, 1957 in Fort Madison, IA to Richard & Magdalen Cooper Gehle. He retired as a lieutenant with Iowa State Penitentiary in 2013 with 32 years of service. He enjoyed farming, racing, commercial fishing, ford trucks, his Harley Davidson and anything to do with his kids and grandkids.



GEHLE

Roy is survived by: 3-daughters: Chrissy (Ryan) Ball of Donnellson, IA, Brandy (Rick) Lichtenberger of Fort Madison, IA & Jessica (Jason Breashears) Gehle of Fort Madison, IA; 1-son: Brandon Gehle of Overland Park, KS; 10-grandchildren: Jessica (Cody), Regan (Dustin), Devon, Zachary (Kelsey), Carly, Jonathan, Andrew, Logan, Jade & Jinta; 4-great grandchildren: Mattie, Maleah, Wade and 1 due in March; 2-brothers: Mike (Sharon) Gehle of Fort Madison, IA & Mark (Michelle) Gehle of Humble, TX; 3-sisters: Becky (Richard) Eaves of Fort Madison, IA, Mary (Bill) Shively of Menifee, CA, Rose (Dave Nelson) Siegfried of Fort Madison, IA and a number of nieces & nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and 2-brothers: Richard & Peter Gehle.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A celebration of Roy's life will be held in the spring. Online condolences to Roy's family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: [www.kinglynk.com](http://www.kinglynk.com).

## For the Record

### Fort Madison Police Report

01/12/22 – 9:04 a.m. – Fort Madison police cited Stewart Benton Spindlow II, 35, of Fort Madison, in the 1300 block of 21st Street, on a charge of driving under suspension.  
 01/12/22 – 10:42 a.m. – Fort Madison police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 2200 block of Avenue L.  
 01/12/22 – 12:02 p.m. – Fort Madison police arrested Donald O'Rien Bell, 20, of Fort Madison, in the 2800 block of Avenue O, on a warrant for probation violation. He was taken to Lee County Jail.  
 01/12/22 – 3:15 p.m. – Fort Madison police arrested Jason Edward Haynes, 45, of Fort Madison, in the 3400 block of Avenue N, on a warrant for voluntary absence from custody. He was taken to Lee County Jail.  
 01/12/22 – 5:25 p.m. – Fort Mad-

ison police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 3400 block of Avenue L.  
 01/13/22 – 12:53 a.m. – Fort Madison police arrested Sheldon Lee Saltzgaver, 62, of Fort Madison, in the 2800 block of Avenue N, on charges of 1st offense OWI and driving under suspension. He was taken to Lee County Jail.  
 01/13/22 – 5:31 a.m. – Fort Madison police cited Shaun Michael Scott, 42, of Danville, location not reported, on a charge of driving under suspension.

### Lee County Sheriff's Report

01/12/22 – 7:54 p.m. – Lee County sheriff deputies responded to a two-vehicle accident on Hwy. 61 N. According to the report, a vehicle driven by James L. Johnson, 38, of Plymouth, Ill., was following a vehicle driven by Jeraine E. Hofer, 83, of Fort Madison. Both vehicles

were traveling north on Hwy. 61. Hofer's vehicle signaled and braked for an eastbound turn onto 263rd Avenue, when it was struck from behind by Johnson's vehicle. Both vehicles sustained minor damage, but were able to be driven from the scene. Hofer sustained minor injuries, but refused medical attention at the scene. Johnson was cited for no driver's license, no insurance, and following too close. Hofer was cited for no insurance. *Those listed above are arrested or cited on a suspicion of a crime and are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.*

### Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

01/10/22 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to four medical calls.  
 01/11/22 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to six medical calls.  
 01/12/22 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to four medical calls.

## CURRENT-LEE

**Elk's Trivia Night** – Friday, January 14, 2022. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. with dinner at 6 and Trivia starting at 6:30 proceeds go to Mississippi Valley Boy Scouts of America. Go to [www.mississippivalleybsa.org/events/2022-fort-madison-trivia-night-485/](http://www.mississippivalleybsa.org/events/2022-fort-madison-trivia-night-485/).

**Iowa Dignity Project Transportation and Infrastructure Forum** – Thursday, January 27, 2022. Southeastern Community College Student Lobby, 335 Messenger Road, Keokuk. Please join us to hear from working class families about the struggles and needs they face in Lee County. Sponsored by the Iowa Federation of Labor, Iowa State Building Trades, & Teamsters Community Action Network.

**Great Gatsby Adult Prom Party** – January 29th, 8pm – midnight. LULAC Club, 1424 36th Street. DJ and Grazing Table. \$50/couple; \$25/single. Purchase tickets from Danyl at 319-371-9821. Proceeds will be donated to Elliott Test Kitchen.

**The Savannah Sipping Society** – Old Fort Players presents this Jones Hope Wooten comedy Feb. 4-6 & 11-13. Friday & Saturday shows start at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday shows start at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are available online at [OldFortPlayers.com](http://OldFortPlayers.com) or send them a Facebook message at <https://www.facebook.com/oldfortplayers/> to reserve tickets at the door to be purchased with cash or credit card.

**Central Lee Community School District Meeting** – Held the second Tuesday of every month at the Educational Services Center starting at 6:00 p.m.

**Donnellson City Council Meeting** – Held the first Monday of every month at Donnellson City Hall starting at 7:00 p.m.

**Fort Madison City Council Meeting** – Held the first and third Tuesday of every month at Fort Madison City Hall starting at 5:30 p.m.

**Fort Madison Community School District Meeting** – Held the first and third Mondays of every month at the District Office starting at 6:00 p.m.

**Fort Madison Public Library Meeting** – Held the third Thursday of every month at the Sheaffer Meeting Room starting at 5:30 p.m.

**Keokuk City Council Meeting** – Held the first and third Thursday of every month at Keokuk City Hall starting at 6:30 p.m.

**Lee County Board of Supervisors Meeting** – Held first through fourth Mondays each week at Lee County Board of Supervisors' Fort Madison office starting at 9:00 a.m.

**West Point City Council Meeting** – Held the second Monday of every month at West Point Public Library starting at 6:30 p.m.

**West Point Utility Board Meeting** – Held the second Tuesday of every month at the West Point City Hall starting at 6:00 p.m.

Pen City Current makes every effort to publish all school district, city and county government public notices, meeting notices, meeting minutes, and more, and to publish them in a timely manner. These are published at no charge to the organization and include all information submitted by the organization for publication. Public notices can be viewed in their entirety here. Notices appear for at least one week each. If you have any questions regarding this information, please email [lee.v@pencity-current.com](mailto:lee.v@pencity-current.com).

**Proud to Provide Exceptional Service and Professional Excellence Since 1963**



**Home • Auto • Commercial • Bonds • Farm • Crop Health • Life • Disability**

**FULLENKAMP INSURANCE**

307 5th Street West Point | 319-837-6178 or 800-292-2208

Monday through Friday 7:30-5 & Saturday 8:30-11 or by appointment

[www.FullenkampIns.com](http://www.FullenkampIns.com)

**Complete Rental Price Beat Guarantee**

Show us an advertised price or quote  
**We'll beat it by 15%**

5636 Avenue O, Fort Madison, IA  
**319-372-8105**

Located right across the road from Jim Baier in Fort Madison

\*Not valid with any other discounts

**Charles Vandenberg, Editor**

(319).371.1670  
[charles.v@pencitycurrent.com](mailto:charles.v@pencitycurrent.com)

**Lee K. Vandenberg, Sales Manager**

(319).371.4125  
[lee.v@pencitycurrent.com](mailto:lee.v@pencitycurrent.com)

**Copyright © 2022 by Pen City Current**

All published materials are property of Pen City Current and cannot be used without express written permission.

**PEN CITY CURRENT**

It's Black & White and Read all over

Member **LION Publishers**

[www.lionpublishers.com](http://www.lionpublishers.com)



Pen City Current, [www.PenCityCurrent.com](http://www.PenCityCurrent.com), and Pen e-Saver are products of Market Street Publishing, LLC. Pen City Current is published Monday through Friday mornings by 6AM.

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

## Local News

# OFF sets cast for February's 'Savannah Sipping Society'

BY DOROTHY SCHULTE  
OFF Director

FORT MADISON – In the delightful, laugh-a-minute comedy, “The Savannah Sipping Society,” four unique Southern women, all needing to escape the sameness of their day-to-day routines, are drawn together by Fate—and an impromptu happy hour—and decide it’s high time to reclaim the enthusiasm for life they’ve lost.

Earthy and boisterous Marlafaye, a good ol’ Texas gal, has blasted into Savannah in the wake of losing her tom-cattin’ husband to a twenty-three-year-old dental hygienist. The strength of her desire to establish a new life is equaled only by her desire to wreak a righteous revenge on her ex. The brash and feisty Marlafaye Mosley will be portrayed by veteran actor, Karen Schumaker. Karen is an OFF favorite, recognizable from her roles in “Harvey,” “Drinking Habits,” and several Opal plays.

Also new to Savannah is Jinx, a spunky ball of fire. She offers her services as a much-needed life coach for these women. However, blinded by her determination and efforts to get their lives on track, she overlooks the fact that she’s the one most in need of advice. Never one to rest, Richar Abel tackles the role of Jinx Jenkins, the always helpful party crasher. Richar recently appeared in “The Queen of Bingo” and “Leaving Iowa,” is Vice President of the Board of Directors and in charge of the Youth Summer Theater Program.

Randa, a perfectionist and workaholic, is struggling to cope with a surprise career derailment that, unfortunately, reveals that she has no life and no idea how to get one. Suzanne Overberg skillfully uses her comedic acting experience to bring the bold and sassy Randa Covington to life. Suzanne previously appeared in OFF productions of “The Dixie Swim Club” and “You Can’t Get There From Here.”

Last on the Sipping Society’s membership list, but not least, is Dot. She is still reeling from her husband’s recent demise and the loss of their plans for an idyllic retirement and faces the unsettling prospect of starting a new life from scratch—all alone. After being away from the stage for several years, Cheryl Hardin is ready for a comeback as the quiet and endearing Dot Haigler. Cheryl previously acted in “Ten Little Indians” for OFF.

“Cheryl showed up to the third rehearsal with all of Act I memorized! And then had Act II memorized shortly after that. It really set the tone for the production. What a great group of women they all are to work with! There are a lot of costume changes and props to deal with. Suzanne Overberg has been absolutely essential when it comes to dressing the set. There’s very little on stage that didn’t come from her house or garage,” Director Dorothy Schulte said. “I’m also thrilled to be directing two veteran actors, Richar Abel and Karen Schumaker. I’ve been onstage with them before, but this is my first time directing them. It’s great to have their input and expertise. They give it 100% in every rehearsal and are so much fun to watch.” This is Schulte’s first directing gig since 2015’s “Barefoot In The Park.”

Stage managing the production is devoted volunteer, Kim Albers. Kim left behind her usual job behind the concessions counter to take the stage in 2021’s “Leaving Iowa” and “It’s A Wonderful Life: A LIVE Radio Play” and now steps behind the curtain to supervise the many quick costume changes and prop placements for the cast.

Handling the sound and lights is Matt Abel. Matt recently appeared in “Leaving Iowa” and “It’s A Wonderful Life.” Ty Clute has provided the set, a very convincing depiction of a vine covered verandah in downtown Savannah. Also playing a small but vital part in the show is Rita Schneider. This will be her first appearance on stage and it’s guaranteed to be drop-dead funny!

Over the course of six months, filled with laughter, hilarious misadventures, and the occasional liquid refreshment, these middle-aged women successfully bond and find the



Photo courtesy of OFF

Karen Schumaker, Richar Abel, Suzanne Overberg, and Cheryl Hardin rehearse for OFF’s February production of “The Savannah Sipping Society”. The show takes the stage in February.

confidence to jumpstart their new lives. Together, they discover lasting friendships and a renewed determination to live in the moment—and most importantly, realize it’s never too late to make new old friends. So, raise your glass to these strong Southern women and their fierce embrace of life and say “Cheers!” to this joyful and surprisingly touching comedy!

“The Savannah Sipping Society,” a Jones, Hope, Wooten comedy, is Produced by Special Arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc. and runs February 4-6 & 11-13, 2022. Evening shows begin at 7:30 and Sundays at 2:00 pm. Tickets are available online at [www.oldfortplayers.com](http://www.oldfortplayers.com) or [www.purplepass.com/ofpfeb2022](http://www.purplepass.com/ofpfeb2022) and at the door. Adult: \$15, Senior/Military/Vet: \$12, Student (Age 5-17): \$10. Masks are recommended. We will provide socially distanced seating, so capacity is limited. Make your reservations or purchase your tickets now!

Leading sponsors for the season are Jim Baier Ford and Lee County Bank. Our partners include the Fort Madison Daily Democrat and Scotts. Additional funds have been provided by Connections Bank.

Last season would have been Old Fort Players’ 40th anniversary but the celebration was postponed due to Covid. So, this is the “40+1 Anniversary Season.” The theater is located in downtown Fort Madison at 725 Avenue G. Send a Facebook message, send an email to [oldfortplayersfm@gmail.com](mailto:oldfortplayersfm@gmail.com) or call 319-372-9559 for more information. Like them on Facebook (Fb@oldfortplayers) to keep up with everything that’s going on at the theater.

The average person is on their device 3+ hours per day.

**Reach your customers  
wherever they are  
with digital ads.**

**Call Lee (319)371.4125**

**PEN CITY CURRENT**

It's Black & White and Red all over

# THANK YOU

We are grateful for the opportunity to care  
for your family’s oral health  
& appreciate the trust you put in us to do so.

**We are now accepting  
new patients.**

[www.DrMarkDDS.com](http://www.DrMarkDDS.com)

**POTHITAKIS DENTAL GROUP**

Ft. Madison East  
(319) 372-3614

Ft. Madison West  
(319) 372-4882

West Burlington  
(319) 753-2515

New London  
(319) 367-2311

Mediapolis  
(319) 394-3255

Burlington  
(319) 752-7993



## From the Front

# Settlement gives Iowan borrowers \$10.2 million in canceled student debt

**DEBT** - Continued from Page 1

en repayment plans, the AGs alleged

“Today’s settlement finally holds Navient accountable for the harm it caused students and families for more than a decade. This long-overdue relief will help borrowers move forward and set an example for student loan servicers in the future,” Miller said.

Attorney General Miller filed the settlement as a proposed Consent Judgment today in Polk County District Court. The settlement will require court approval.

Under the terms of the settlement, Navient will cancel the remaining balance on more than \$1.6 billion in subprime private student loan balances owed by approximately 62,000 borrowers nationwide. In addition, a total of \$95 million in restitution payments of about \$260 each will be distributed to approximately 350,000 federal loan borrowers who were placed in certain types of long-term forbearances.

As part of the settlement, Iowa will receive a total of \$411,851 in restitution payments for more than 1,545 federal loan borrowers. Additionally, Iowa borrowers will receive a total of \$10.2 million in private loan debt cancellation.

According to the attorneys general, the interest that accrued because of Navient’s forbearance steering practices was added to the borrowers’ loan balances, pushing borrowers further in debt. Had the company instead provided borrowers with the help it promised, income-driven repayment plans could have potentially reduced payments to as low as \$0 per month, provided interest subsidies, and/or helped attain forgiveness of any remaining balance after 20-25 years of qualifying payments (or 10 years for borrowers qualified under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program).

Navient also allegedly originated predatory subprime private loans to students attending for-profit schools and colleges with low graduation rates, even though it knew that a very high percentage of such borrowers would be unable to repay the loans. Navient allegedly made these risky subprime loans as “an inducement to get schools to use Navient as a preferred lender” for highly profitable federal and “prime” private loans, without regard for borrowers and their families, many of whom were knowingly

ensnared in debts they could never repay.

Borrowers who will receive restitution or debt cancellation span all generations: Navient’s harmful conduct affected everyone from students who enrolled in colleges and universities immediately after high school to mid-career students who dropped out after enrolling in a for-profit school in the early to mid-2000s.

The settlement includes conduct reforms that require Navient to explain the benefits of income-driven repayment plans and to offer to estimate income-driven payment amounts before placing borrowers into optional forbearances. Additionally, Navient must train specialists who will advise distressed borrowers concerning alternative repayment options and counsel public service workers concerning Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) and related programs. The conduct reforms imposed by the settlement include prohibitions on compensating customer service agents in a manner that incentivizes them to minimize time spent counseling borrowers.

The settlement also requires Navient to notify borrowers about the U.S. Department of Education’s recently announced PSLF limited waiver opportunity, which temporarily offers millions of qualifying public service workers the chance to have previously non-qualifying repayment periods counted toward loan forgiveness — provided that they consolidate into the Direct Loan Program and file employment certifications by October 31, 2022.

As a result of today’s settlement, borrowers receiving private loan debt cancellation will receive a notice from Navient, along with refunds of any payments made on the cancelled private loans after June 30, 2021. Federal loan borrowers who are eligible for a restitution payment of approximately \$250 will receive a postcard in the mail from the settlement administrator later this spring.

Federal loan borrowers who qualify for relief under this settlement do not need to take any action except update or create their [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov) account to ensure U.S. Department of Education has their current address. For more information, visit [www.NavientAGSettlement.com](http://www.NavientAGSettlement.com).

# Move gives Group Benefit Partners more resources for future

**AGENCY** - Continued from Page 1

world of insurance and risk mitigation, AP will provide many new tools to GBP clients and the communities they serve.

“We’re thrilled to have found a partner that will give us the ability to further accelerate the value we are able to provide our clients,” says GBP Co-Founder Justin Pieper.

“While AP has certainly proven growth at an extremely high level, our founding principals are aligned in extraordinary ways, right down to the fact that we both value our client relationships so highly to use the word ‘Partners’ as we chose the names of our businesses,” continues Pieper.

AssuredPartners Regional President, Greg LaMair, stated, “We are delighted to have the talented team of Group Benefit Partners join AssuredPartners and will continue to work towards the same goals of being a valued resource to our clients.” “This partnership will strengthen our Iowa operations as we continue to expand our services and footprint throughout that part of the region,”

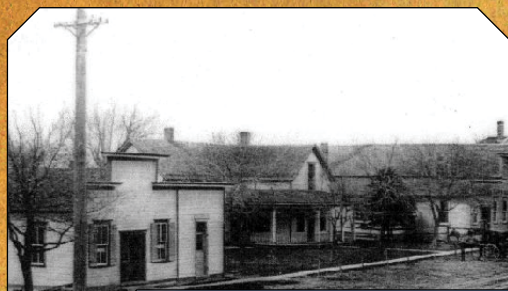
said Randy Larsen, President of AssuredPartners. “We welcome the talented team and clients of GBP to AssuredPartners.”

While GBP will continue to focus on delivering the highest quality employee benefits and health insurance programs to their clients, they will look forward to being able to introduce additional resources and tools to both individual and business customers.

“In addition to providing the resources of a multi-billion dollar firm to our valued customers, we’re excited about the vast opportunities this partnership will create for our wonderful group of employees,” says GBP Co-Founder Jerry Koering. “While we’ll certainly continue to operate like the small-town Iowa business we’ve proudly built, these additional resources will help keep us in the forefront of our industry for years to come,” concludes Koering.

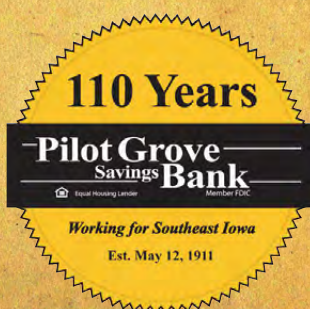
Group Benefit Partners can be reached locally at 914 Avenue G in Fort Madison, or by calling 372-0088.

## Past. Present. Future.



*Pilot Grove Savings Bank was established on May 12, 1911 when 23 investors pooled \$10,000 to meet the banking needs of the local community. Since that day, the Bank has continued to grow and prosper, serving customers in Southeast Iowa and the tri-state area as well as many other locations across the country. With customer loyalty on its side, Pilot Grove Savings Bank has prospered throughout the years. Now, with 14 offices, more than 100 employees, over \$760 million in assets and some of the most technologically advanced banking systems available, Pilot Grove Savings Bank’s main goal remains as it was in 1911 – to serve the customer well.*

Donnellson Fairfield Fort Madison  
Houghton Keokuk Mt. Pleasant  
Packwood Pilot Grove West Burlington  
West Point Winfield



**319-469-3951**

[www.PilotGroveSavingsBank.com](http://www.PilotGroveSavingsBank.com)

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

**THE MIDWEST MADE EASY.**

Traveling from Burlington just got easier with daily flights to St. Louis & Chicago O’Hare. For seamless connections, book both your Cape Air flight and your connecting flight directly on [aa.com](http://aa.com) or [united.com](http://united.com).

Cape Air



SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL AIRPORT

DAILY FLIGHTS  
Chicago and St. Louis  
[capeair.com](http://capeair.com) / 800-CAPE-AIR

## BasketballHead Training

Learn beyond the basics or enhance your skills on the court with Tj Jones’ BasketballHead Training

**Private Instruction:**

4 Sessions - \$60  
8 Sessions - \$110  
12 Sessions - \$160  
Unlimited sessions (two week period) - \$200

• Open to 2nd through 12th Graders  
• 4 kids max per session  
• Dates/Times determined following registration

Online registration available at [fortmadisony.org](http://fortmadisony.org)

**FORT MADISON FAMILY YMCA**

220 26th St. Fort Madison, Iowa  
319-372-2403  
[fortmadisony.org](http://fortmadisony.org)



**From the Front/Classifieds**

# New facility will carry the Meller name to honor donation

**MELLERS** - Continued from Page 1

According to county ARPA fund administrator Chuck Vandenberg, the Meller family was willing to take the structure down that is still standing on the property in the 5000 block of Avenue O in Fort Madison. But the county has asked to hold off until the property can be inspected to see if the current structure could be used as part of the new facility.

“The Meller family has been with us in this conversation about 10 minutes in. When Mr. Meller heard we were wanting to build a health care facility and that property seemed to be the best location for it, he suggested donating the property to the project,” Vandenberg said.

“When Glen offered to donate the property, the county indicated it would be willing to attach the family’s name to the property in the deed. So as long as the property is publicly owned, any structure would carry the Meller name, and the county is honored to be able to do that.”

Vandenberg said final rules for ARPA funding were handed down by the U.S. Dept. of Treasury last week and in that is an additional written justification requirement for any capital expenditure projects funding with more than \$1 million of a county’s ARPA allocation.

That report has to outline why the new construction is a better option than others including leasing. It also requires a comparative report looking at at least two other options for the county’s health department. Details on those justifications are still being outlined by the county advocates including the Iowa State Association of



Google image

The property outlined in green is the section being donated as part of an agreement between Lee County and the Glen Meller family.

Counties.

The new facility will house the Lee County Health Department and the Fort Madison bay of the Lee County Ambulance service. A design prepared in 2016 priced the structure at \$2.6 million without the ambulance bay. That project was slated for county-owned property in

Montrose.

The ambulance bay can’t be located at the Montrose location due to response time requirements for the ambulance service to the county’s northeast side.

Lee County has received \$3.25 million and will receive another \$3.25 million in May this year.

# Central Lee senior page says politics is probably in his future

**SENIOR** - Continued from Page 1

and the Senate joined the chamber.

The Chamber then moves to appoint a committee to retrieve the dignitaries including judges and the governor and then he turns the microphone on from his seat. The only microphone he doesn’t control is the Sergeant at Arms.

Getting to serve as a page gives Wellman a unique glimpse at the political process at a very young age, but he said he does have political aspirations after college. He stops short at declaring a party of choice.

“I want to get in the political scene myself. I can’t say any political representation being a page and that’s why I didn’t stand at all during the governor’s speech. I have to stay very neutral.”

Wellman is still taking classes at Central Lee and SCC online. He returns to school on Friday after four days of sessions in Des Moines. He stays at a hotel at the capitol Monday night through Wednesday night and then returns home on Thursday evenings.

He attends school on Friday where he takes an agriculture class and then discusses the week’s events in Des Moines with his government teacher, Chuck Banks.

Pages are paid \$9.28 an hour for a 40 hour work week, but all other expenses are incurred by the page.

**TEXT AND WHATEVER JUST DON'T TEXT AND**

**STOPTEXTSSTOPWRECKS.ORG**

ad COUNCIL NHTSA

# SHOP Classifieds

PLACE YOUR AD ONLINE AT [WWW.PENCITYCURRENT.COM](http://WWW.PENCITYCURRENT.COM) OR CALL (319)371.4125

## HELP WANTED

*We're Not Southeast Iowa's Favorite Dental Office Without Our Great Team*

**APPLY TODAY TO JOIN US!**

Pothitakis Dentistry currently needs a Full-Time Hygienist.

Complete an application at or mail your resume to  
1223 S. Gear Avenue,  
Eastman Plaza, Suite 302  
West Burlington, IA 52655  
or email [burldentist@gmail.com](mailto:burldentist@gmail.com)  
EOE

**POTHITAKIS DENTISTRY**  
Burlington • West Burlington • Ft. Madison West • Ft. Madison East • New London • Macgregor

**LEE CHD** **Certified Nurse's Aide**

Lee County Health Department is seeking a full-time Certified Nurse's Aide to work in the agency's Homecare and Hospice programs. This position requires travel to client homes in the agency's service area. If interested please mail resume to LCHD, Attn: Becky Fader, PO Box 1426, Fort Madison, IA 52627 or email [bfader@leecountyhd.org](mailto:bfader@leecountyhd.org). LCHD is EOE.

# Classifieds

# PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

**DIP-N-JOE**  
 Candy Matter  
 Sales Affiliate  
 Dip-n-Joe mattercandy25@gmail.com  
<https://dip-n-joe.myshopify.com/#Cmatter1021>  
 Coffee, Tea, Dip Mixes and More



**Don't Let Your Business Slip Away**

If someone is hurt on your property, is your business protected?

Umbrella coverage can help reduce the risk of paying claim costs beyond where your business insurance liability limits stop. Schedule a SuperCheck® today because when your world is protected - it's business as usual.

**Larry Holtkamp**  
 1301 37th St  
 Fort Madison  
 (319) 372-9145  
 (319) 470-1927 Cell  
 LARRYHOLTkamp.COM

**FARM BUREAU FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Auto | Home | Life | Annuities | Business | Farm & Ranch

Farm Bureau Property & Casualty Insurance Company, Western Agricultural Insurance Company, Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company, West Des Moines, IA. \*Company providers of Farm Bureau Financial Services PC109 (4-17)

How can chiropractic therapy help you?

**BENEFITS OF CHIROPRACTIC**

- Improved joint mobility, function, and health
- Decreased degeneration of joints and connective tissues
- Improved circulation
- Increased energy, vitality, and improved sleep
- and many, many more

**DR. ROBERT BROCKMAN**  
 Brockman Chiropractic  
 2311 Avenue L, Suite 3, Fort Madison • 319-372-3800  
<http://brockmanchiropracticdrbob.com/>

Extremity Adjustment      Cranial Adjustment  
 Myofascial Relaxation      Muscle Facilitation

Nursing Rehabilitation Long-Term Care

**Montrose HEALTH CENTER**

319-463-5438

WHERE COMPASSION & QUALITY COME FIRST

General Insects Termites      Mice Bed Bugs

**Cullen PEST CONTROL**

(319) 372-1060

Toll Free 1-888-818-7378  
 Email: cullenpest@hotmail.com  
[www.cullenpest.com](http://www.cullenpest.com)

Residential Commercial      "Cause who needs bugs?"

**ADVERTISE YOUR SERVICE BUSINESS**

1 month • Only \$50<sup>00</sup>

2x2 Business Card Size Ad plus Social Media

Place your ad online 24/7 [www.pencitycurrent.com](http://www.pencitycurrent.com)  
 Email your ad [classifieds@pencitycurrent.com](mailto:classifieds@pencitycurrent.com)  
 Call Lee at 319.371.4125

**Never Shiver. Don't Sweat.**



Just call

**YOUR Heat & Air guy**

Ft. Madison: 319-372-4328  
 Burlington: 319-752-4328  
 All Areas: 877-380-4328

24 Hour Service • Never An Overtime Charge  
 FREE Estimates • Servicing All Makes

[www.YourHeatAndAirGuy.com](http://www.YourHeatAndAirGuy.com)

**DODD PRINTING & STATIONERY**  
 Est. 1877

Coffee Mugs  
 Posters Art Supplies  
 Printing  
 Office Furniture  
 Trifold Brochures

621 Avenue G  
 Fort Madison, IA      319.372.2721  
[doddprinting.com](http://doddprinting.com)

ENJOY FREE DELIVERY TO FORT MADISON, KEOKUK, BURLINGTON & THE SURROUNDING AREAS!

**KEMPKER'S TrueValue RENTAL**

Treating our customers like family since 1970

Fort Madison • Burlington • Mount Pleasant

[www.kempkerstruevalue.com](http://www.kempkerstruevalue.com)

Patrick Profeta  
 General Manager

**Keokuk Auto Credit**  
 We Tote the Note

No Credit Check Low Weekly Payments

[www.keokukautocredit.com](http://www.keokukautocredit.com)

1728 Main Keokuk, IA 52632      Office: 319-524-2334  
 Fax: 319-524-2373

Auto Detailing • Car Wash • Sign Rental

**Turbo Wash**

(319) 372-WASH (9274)  
 Fort Madison

Gift certificates available

Locally owned & operated

**Life insurance can be life-changing**

Jess Sutcliffe, Agent  
 2623 Avenue L  
 Fort Madison, IA 52627  
 Bus: 319-372-5982  
[www.fortmadisoninsurance.com](http://www.fortmadisoninsurance.com)

Life won't always go as planned. That's why there's life insurance. It can help you protect your family's future, no matter what happens. Call me today.

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.®

Individual premiums will vary by customer. All applicants subject to State Farm's underwriting requirements.

State Farm Life Insurance Company (Not licensed in MA, NY or WI)  
 State Farm Life and Accident Assurance Company (Licensed in NY and WI)  
 Bloomington, IL  
 2001574

**State Farm**

**Dirty Dog Detailing & Boarding**

Grooming by appointment  
 Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday  
 319-371-9044

Over 51 Years Combined Professional Animal Experience

2090 250th St  
 Donnellson, IA 52625      Owners Barb Ball & Natalie Dauma  
 Family owned & operated

**Buying or Selling? Call Karen first!**

• Real Knowledge  
 • Real Experience  
 • Real Dedication

**HOPE ASSOCIATES REAL ESTATE**

Real Results!  
**Karen Hope**  
 (319) 372-4040

Short-Term Rehabilitation  
 Long-Term Care  
 Memory Care  
 Ventilator Care

**The Madison senior living**  
 kind • compassionate • care

NOW HIRING RN, LPN, & CNA POSITIONS

**Advertise in a brand new way.**

Reach thousands of potential customers each day & grow your business. Call today!

Lee (319)371.4125 • Chuck (319)371.1670

**PEN CITY CURRENT**  
 It's Black & White and Read all over

## Lee County News/Iowa News

# UWGRR opens eighth year of free tax preparation

LEE COUNTY - United Way of the Great River Region will begin its 8th year offering the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) as a service to the tristate community. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is a nationwide service that offers free tax help to people who generally make \$59,000 or less. The program also helps the elderly and persons with disabilities who need to file returns. IRS certified volunteers provide free income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals. United Way of the Great River Region will operate by appointment only as a curbside drop off site from January 28 through April 11, 2022. An intake and interview checklist will help determine if a taxpayer qualifies for assistance. Federal and state returns will go through a quality review process and be submitted electronically. "We are excited to partner with the IRS and the Iowa Center for Economic Success to offer VITA as a service to the area" says Executive Director, Karen Siefken. "The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) will offer appointments in Keokuk and Fort Madison." To make an appointment, individuals can call the dedicated VITA program cell phone at 319-520-6859 to leave a message to request an appointment. Staff and/or volunteers will review a list of what to bring to the appointment. For more information about this program or to learn about volunteer opportunities, contact Sue Prochazka at 319-524-4504 or [vc@unitedwaygrr.org](mailto:vc@unitedwaygrr.org).

# State Treasurer opens Robert D. Blue scholarship window

DES MOINES, Iowa – State Treasurer Michael L. Fitzgerald recently opened the 2022 Robert D. Blue Scholarship for applications. Applicants must be a current senior or former graduate of any Iowa high school who plans to attend a college or university within the state. Awards are based on financial need, an original essay, academic achievement and recommendations.

Fitzgerald is a member of the Iowa Centennial Memorial Foundation, which funds the scholarship. "We're looking for students who exemplify greatness," he said. "Aaron Eilerts is a notable example. He spent his time volunteering and giving back to those in his community before tragically losing his life when a tornado struck the Little Sioux Boy Scout Camp on June 11, 2008. People like Aaron, who dedicate themselves to serve others, are strongly encouraged to apply."

Since established in 1949 by Governor Robert D. Blue, the scholarship has helped hundreds of Iowa students fulfill their higher education dreams at one of Iowa's 65 colleges and universities. In the last five years, 25 outstanding students were awarded the scholarship, totaling \$16,000. All recipients went to various colleges and universities across the state.

Robert D. Blue Scholarship applications are only accepted online and must be submitted by May 10. Visit [rdblue.org](http://rdblue.org) to apply and learn more.

# Iowa DHS announces \$30M child care bonus program

DES MOINES – Today the Iowa Department of Human Services announced a \$30 million recruitment and retention bonus program to help Iowa's child care providers attract and retain workers. To date the state has invested \$480 million dollars to support child care since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Governor's Child Care Task Force report recommended the establishment of a recruitment and retention bonus program in their report released in November. Governor Kim Reynolds convened the task force to improve the child care system in Iowa. In recent years, parents have struggled to find to quality, safe, and affordable child care. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges. Additionally, nearly every economic sector in the state has struggled to find qualified employees.

"Child care providers are a critical piece of the workforce shortage solution, providing the care and resources so many families rely on daily," said Reynolds. "Because of their work, parents are able to return to or remain in the workforce. Their hard work and dedication deserves recognition and appreciation."

"Child care is the backbone of our economy," said DHS Director Kelly Garcia. "This recruitment and retention program will help bolster Iowa's child care workforce and help support the families that rely on it. This is a significant investment in our state and in our future."

"Professionalizing the state's child care workforce starts with investing in providers," said task force chair Emily Schmitt of Mason City. "That's going to encourage those employees to see there's a viable future in the profession. Every business is struggling with labor. Supporting child care will not only enable those Iowans but ultimately help the workforce."

Current child development home operators, licensed child care center staff, and newly hired employees are eligible for the bonus. Each new hire or newly registered child development home meeting eligibility requirements will be eligible for a sign-on bonus 90 days after the date of hire. Six months from the date of sign-on bonus and every six months thereafter, any person meeting eligibility requirements that remains employed at the same child care facility will be eligible for a retention bonus until the funding runs out.

Additional details on eligibility and the application process will be published in February on the Department's website at <https://dhs.iowa.gov/childcare/funding-opportunities> as well as communicated directly to providers through our partnership with Child Care Resource and Referral - <https://iowaccrr.org/>.

**CHOOSE CAR SEAT:  
BY AGE & SIZE** 

**THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY HAVE THEIR CHILD IN THE RIGHT SEAT.**




**THE ONES WHO ACTUALLY DO.**

**KNOW FOR SURE  
IF YOUR CHILD IS IN THE RIGHT CAR SEAT.**




VISIT [SAFERCAR.GOV/THERIGHTSEAT](http://SAFERCAR.GOV/THERIGHTSEAT)



## CURBSIDE PICKUP

*At this time we are offering curbside pick-up for orders over \$20. Orders can be placed via phone (319-837-6126), email ([sonnymarket@hotmail.com](mailto:sonnymarket@hotmail.com)) or Facebook messenger (@[sonnyssupermarket](https://www.facebook.com/sonnyssupermarket)). Immediate reaction to Social Media is not guaranteed.*



**Call for curbside pickup  
319.837.6126**

327 5<sup>th</sup> Street, West Point, IA

