

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Thursday, December 16, 2021 | 8 pages | Volume 6 • Issue 4



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Fun City ditches Pzazz



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Greater Burlington Partnership Executive Director Dustin Roth handles the Facebook live feed as Great River Entertainment CEO Gary Hoyer addresses a gathering at a ribbon-cutting celebrating the grand re-opening of the casino's hotel in Burlington Tuesday.

REBRAND: Fun City Resort Hotel supplants former Pzazz Hotel Burlington

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

BURLINGTON – A \$3 million rehabilitation of the former Pzazz Hotel Burlington was unveiled Tuesday afternoon with the Greater Burlington Partnership and Great River Entertainment officials on hand.

Gary Hoyer, CEO of Great River Entertainment, cut the ribbon on the new digs at a reception that was broadcast live on the Greater Burlington Partnership Facebook page with employees, community representatives, and GRE administrators celebrating the Grand re-opening.

“We took the former pzazz hotel and tore it to the core,” Hoyer said.

“Right down to the studs, and we even replaced some of those – all new electrical, plumbing, flooring, furniture. You name it.”

The refurbished hotel features 97 rooms, which reflects a reduction of 48 rooms from the previous footprint. Rooms vary from traditional double queen rooms to elaborate family suites complete with bunk beds and kitchen amenities.

Hoyer said there is still space to add on an additional 36

See **HOTEL**, page 8

APPOINTMENT

Interviews Monday for Judge Kruse's seat in District 8B

Assistant Lee County Attorney Jonathan Stensvaag throws name in for spot

LEE COUNTY - District Judge Mark Kruse submitted his letter of retirement, effective February 14, 2022. The 8th Judicial District was granted

approval to fill the vacancy. The application deadline closed at 4:30 p.m. on December 15, 2021.

The following 5 candidates have submitted their applications:

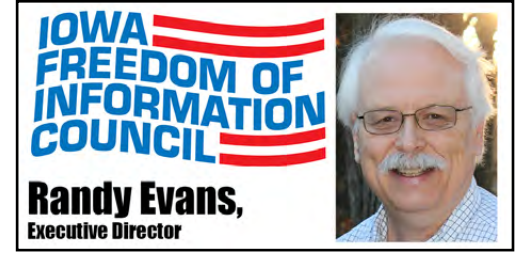
- Jennifer S. Bailey
- Adam D. Parsons
- Joshua P. Schier

- Jonathan M. Stensvaag
- Justin C. Stonerook

Interviews will be conducted on December 20, 2021, at the Des Moines County Courthouse, 513 North Main Street, Burlington, Iowa. The inter-

See **JUDGE**, page 7

OPINION



Linn-Mar wants \$604,000 for records request

The past couple of years have been challenging for Iowa's 327 public school districts.

Parents have become very engaged with their schools — and enraged, too, at times. This has revolved around masks and vaccines, what is being taught or not taught, the content of library books, and an assortment of other concerns.

But in some communities, school leaders have greatly misjudged the angst of parents, grandparents and other taxpayers.

Look at the aggressive campaigns for school board seats and the ouster of some incumbent board members. Remember the heated school board meetings around Iowa punctuated with shouting, threats and arguments. Take note of the sudden decisions by a handful of administrators and teachers to retire immediately or seek jobs elsewhere.

The experience last week of Jacob Hall, a prominent blogger from Sioux Center, suggests that some school officials are failing to recognize their culpability in the crossroads Iowa schools now face.

Don't be surprised if Hall's experience with the Linn-Mar School District becomes the motivation for lawmakers to make an important, and needed, change in the public records law when the Iowa Legislature convenes in January.

Lawmakers should act — because the Linn-Mar district's response to Hall's request for records is outrageous. And he is not the first Iowan to be chased away from obtaining government records by breath-taking costs quoted by government officials who completely miss the intent of the Legislature when it wrote the public records law.

Here is what is afoot in the Linn-Mar district:

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WEATHER

OpenWeatherMap
 THU 16 Dec.....Clear & Warm, 63° F/ 35° F
 FRI 17 Dec.....Cool with Light Rain, 38° F/ 29° F
 SAT 18 Dec.....Overcast & Cool, 36° F/ 25° F

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

JAMES F. MURPHY

James Francis Murphy, 89, of Keokuk, IA died Monday, December 13, 2021 at the Memorial Hospital in Carthage, IL. He was born on February 8, 1932 in St. Patrick, MO, the son of James Roy and Irene Uhlmeier Murphy.



MURPHY

He was a veteran of the United States Navy. James was united in marriage to Norma Lambert in June of 1958 at St. Patrick, MO.

She survives. He is also survived by one daughter, Cynthia Runge of Keokuk, two sons, James Murphy, Jr and Ron Murphy (Irene) all of Keokuk, six grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and one brother, John Murphy of St. Louis, MO..



He was preceded in death by his parents, two sisters, Ann Marie and Eleanor and one great-grandson, Teddy Murphy.

James was a member of All Saints Catholic Church in Keokuk. He was also a member of the Southside Boat Club.

He had been employed at Hubinger in Keokuk for twenty-three years and retired in 1991.

He enjoyed going fishing and hunting for rabbit and pheasant. He was an avid St. Louis Cardinal Baseball fan and never missed a game. His family was the most important part of his life. James was a devoted husband, dad and grandpa who leaves for his family a lifetime of wonderful memories.

A Mass of Christian burial will be held at 10 a.m. Friday at All Saints Catholic Church in Keokuk with Reverend David Brownfield Ph.D. Burial with Military Rites will be held at the Keokuk National Cemetery.

There will be no visitation.

Memorials may be made to All Saints Catholic Church. Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

Pen City Current obituary policy

Pen City Current runs obituaries one time at no charge to funeral homes and they run the day they are submitted in most cases. They are also run as submitted by the funeral homes. Reposting of obituaries due to changes can only be requested by the submitting funeral home and will be assessed a \$15 reposting fee.

OBITUARIES

PAMELA S. OLSEN

Pamela Sue Olsen, 64, of Keokuk, IA, died Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at Blessing Hospital in Quincy, IL.

She was born on October 14, 1957 in Keokuk the daughter of Kenneth, Jr. and Wilma Mae Nicol Lovell. On January 28, 1995, Pam was united in marriage to David Olsen in Argyle, IA. He survives.



OLSEN

She is also survived by one son, Jim Babka (Beth) of Cedar Rapids, IA, one step-son, Derek Olsen (Jessie) of Keokuk, several grandchildren and two sisters, Shirley Robinson (John) and Stacy Lovell.

She was preceded in death by her parents, three brothers, Kenneth "Butch" Lovell, John Lovell and Clarence Lovell and three sisters, Sandra Michale, Violet Cady and Betsy Sale.

Pam had been employed at Metzeler in Keokuk.

She enjoyed music, playing Bingo and going swimming. She had a great love for all animals. There will be no services. Memorials may be made to the St. Jude Children's Hospital. The Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk is assisting the family with arrangements.

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

BARBARA L. GRIMPE

Barbara Lynn Grimpe, 67, passed away Saturday, December 11, 2021 at the Montrose Health Center in Montrose, IA.

She was born on May 15, 1954 in Chicago, IL, the daughter of Harry E. and Dorothy J.



GRIMPE

Wustrow Grimpe. Barb, or Grimpe, as she was known by family and friends, was an accomplished athlete, elementary physical education teacher, certified occupational therapist assistant for children and adults and occasional sub for the pastor at Trinity United Methodist Church. A perennial planner, optimist and jokester, she devoted her life to caring for others (animals and people).

She will be so greatly missed. She is survived by her brother, Rusty Grimpe of Skiatook, OK, her uncle, Bob Wustrow of Keokuk and six infamous cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents and two brothers, Ronald and Robert. A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m., Tuesday, December 21, 2021 at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk with Pastor Dave Barrett officiating. Burial will be in the Oakland Cemetery in Keokuk. Visitation will be held prior to the service on Tuesday from 12 noon - 1 p.m. at the funeral home with the family meeting with friends at that time.

Memorials may be made to the Trinity United Methodist Church in Keokuk.

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

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Sports

HTC girls handle chaos of Danville system in win

Bendlage goes for 30 as Crusaders outlast Bears' wild scheme

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP
PCC SPORTS

FORT MADISON – Tony Johnson saw on video what was coming, and he tried to get his Holy Trinity girls basketball team to emulate it in practice preparing for Tuesday's game against Danville.

Johnson tried to simulate the Bears' swarming defense by putting more than five girls out on the court, just to try to recreate the undisciplined havoc that was coming.

But it's hard to recreate something that seemed to have no design to it, and for 20 minutes in the game

the Crusaders were caught up in all of the scurrying. Once they settled down though, they put on a show.

Holy Trinity won, 80-63, scoring 40 points in a nine-minute stretch of the second half as the chaos proved to be too much for the team creating it.

"We got down, got back up," Johnson said. "Nobody panicked. And won by whatever it was. That's the biggest takeaway from this game.

"I told the team the No. 1 thing from tonight was you got down, and you showed me a lot, for being as young as you are."

Danville's plan of a constant five-in-five-out rotation was exhausting and often confusing to the Crusaders (5-2), who let a 10-point second-quarter lead get away. They trailed 36-35 at halftime and then 46-39 in the third quarter before the Bears (2-4) started breaking down.

"When you're playing against chaos, sometimes

you get chaotic," Johnson said. "And that's what happened to us."

But the Crusaders would settle in as Danville imploded. They went on an 18-1 run, and Natalie Randolph's buzzer-beating 3-pointer gave them a 60-50 lead at the end of the third quarter.

The points kept adding up in the fourth quarter. And when Mary Kate Bendlage scored inside with five minutes to play, Holy Trinity was on a 33-7 run.

"That kind of offense is really hard to get," Johnson said. "But we got so many layups by not panicking."

Bendlage had 21 of her game-high 30 points in the second half. Brooke Mueller had 19 points, and Randolph finished with nine.

"There was no rhythm to this game, no half-court offense," Johnson said. "We stayed disciplined. I told them during one timeout, 'They want to be chaotic, we want to be in control.' And when we stayed in control, we made layups."

Nikes quick start subdues CL girls

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

BURLINGTON – If you could go magically pull the first quarter out of the mix, the Central Lee Lady Hawks played with the Class 1A 7th-ranked Nikes Tuesday night.

But you can't do that, and you can't force confidence, something that Central Lee Head Coach Jay Baldwin said was sorely needed as the Hawks fell 65-42 in a girls' Southeast Iowa Superconference matchup at Notre Dame.

The Nikes looked every bit a top-10 team in the state when they started on fire, racing to a 22-4 first-quarter lead as Central Lee couldn't get a ball to drop.

Notre Dame shot 50% from the field during the first quarter run, a stark contrast to Central Lee's 11% hitting on just one of nine attempts.

But Central Lee would keep things somewhat in-check during the next two periods, getting outpaced 12-15 in the second period and 10 to 18 in the third to trail 55-26. Without the huge first quarter disparity, it's a 10 to 12 point game.

"Part of this is confidence. We get this deer in the



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Central Lee's Maura Watkins (12) looks for a passing lane around Notre Dame's Abby Korschgen Tuesday night in Burlington.

headlights look and somebody has to get a little cocky and have some confidence. We believe in them, but they don't believe in themselves," Baldwin said.

"Against Winfield-Mt. Union we thought we had that going and things turned a bit, but tonight we were timid shooting."

Central Lee got 15 points each from Alivia Myhre, eight in the third period, and Mya Lampe.

Lampe hit three clean 3-balls that didn't touch the rim in the final three

minutes, but the game was clearly in the Nikes' hands. Baldwin said the girls need to have that kind of shooting confidence earlier in games and let other teams react.

He said Tuesday's plan was to play some tight man-to-man defense and force Notre Dame into some different offense rather than setting up outside and draining 3-pointers.

Makayla Morrison had nine points for Central Lee and Macy Watkins had three.

Holy Trinity comes to Donnellson on Friday night.

Hawks can't hang with BND

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

BURLINGTON – Head Coach Kritter Hayes had his team playing pretty good basketball for a quarter Tuesday night, and then the inexperience of the Central Lee Hawks showed up.

The last three quarters were more of what the young squad has encountered all year as Notre Dame downed Central Lee 75-42 in Southeast Iowa Superconference South boys basketball action.

A 3-ball from sophomore Corbin Pohren from the left wing cut the lead to two at 18-16 at the end of the first quarter. Pohren led Central Lee with 12 points on the night.

"I think Corbin comes off the bench and gives us a steady presence. He's got a little bit of experience although it's limited, but he's got a toughness to him that our other guys need to find," Hayes said.

Notre Dame would then go on a 16-0 run to take a 34-16 lead before freshman Brayden Wyrick broke the drought with a couple of freethrows when

he was fouled rebounding a Pohren miss. It was one of a very few offensive rebounds on the night for Central Lee.

Dante Merschman connected on a 3-pointer before the half, but Notre Dame put up five more for a 39-21 lead at the break.

The Hawks' shooting went cold in the third period as the Nikes raced to a 61-26 lead at the end of three, holding Central Lee to just two buckets and a freethrow in the period to put the game all but out of reach.

Hayes said the squad has been decent off the tip, but loses confidence fast after seeing a few mistakes.

"We hang in there at the beginning and make a few mistakes and our confidence level drops significantly. It can't drop to those levels. You have to be able to face a little adversity and they're not used to facing adversity. They're learning that, but they're not there yet," Hayes said.

The Hawks have three seniors in the starting rotation in Alex Sandoval, Bryce Finney, and Maddox Doty, but only Sandoval, and Pohren

coming off the bench, had any real floor time coming into this year.

"Our depth is needing to come along faster than I would have wanted. We need time to develop that depth and we're gonna start doing things," he said.

"We just don't have any experience. It's hard for them to face pressure and know how to handle it and not just get sped up. We go to fast and commit turnovers. I bet we had 20 turnovers today and, in reality, that can translate into 40 or 50 points."

Central Lee did have nine players get in the scoring led by Pohren. Cory Jones had eight on the night, followed by Wyrick's six. Ryan Wilbert had five, Finney, Sandoval, and Merschman all had three points for the Hawks. Aden Ross and Chase Johnson rounded out the scoring with a point each.

Wyrick and Sandoval each had four rebounds to lead Central Lee. Pohren had two blocks on the night.

The Hawks (0-5) take on cross-county Holy Trinity Catholic (1-5) on Friday night in Central Lee for a girls/boys doubleheader.

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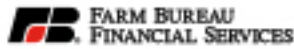


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Classifieds/Public Notices

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC NOTICE
ORDINANCE NO. D-80**

**AN ORDINANCE
AMENDING TITLE 10,
CHAPTER 18,
SECTION 3
OF THE FORT
MADISON MUNICIPAL
CODE CONCERNING
HOME OCCUPATION
AND COTTAGE
BUSINESS SIGNS**

Be it enacted by the City Council of the City of Fort Madison, Iowa:

Section 1. The City Council of the City of Fort Madison does hereby amend Title 10 "Zoning", Chapter 18 "Signs", Section 3 "Permitted Signs; Residential District" of the Fort Madison Municipal Code by deleting Subsection J in its entirety.

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Lee County IT Director

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Application forms, background check documents and the job description can be downloaded at www.leecounty.org or may be obtained at the Lee County Auditor's Office, 933 Avenue H Fort Madison Iowa or by calling the Auditor's Office at 319-372-3705.

Completed application and background check documents should be sent or delivered to Denise Fraise, Lee County Auditor, 933 Avenue H, P.O. Box 190, Fort Madison, Iowa, 52627 or emailed to dfraise@leecounty.org. IPERS and benefits available. All applications should be received by the Auditor's office by 4:30 PM on Wednesday, December 22, 2021.

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Section 2. The City Council of the City of Fort Madison does hereby amend Title 10 "Zoning", Chapter 18 "Signs", Section 3 "Permitted Signs; Residential District", of the Fort Madison Municipal Code by adding a new Subsection J as follows:

J. Home Occupation and Cottage Business Signs: Every permitted home occupation and cottage business will be allowed to have one sign, which must meet the following standards:

1. Sign can be no larger than 324 square inches.
2. Signs may not be longer than 36 inches in any direction.
3. Sign may be displayed through a window or can be attached to the side of a structure. Signs may not be roof mounted.
4. Sign will not be permitted in the city right of way.
5. Sign cannot be internally or externally lighted.

Section 3. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed.

Section 4. If any section, provision, or part of this ordinance shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of this ordinance as a whole, or any section, provision, or part thereof not judged invalid or unconstitutional.

Section 5. This ordinance shall be in effect after its final passage, approval, and publication as provided by law.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the City Council this 7th day of December, 2021.
/s/ Matt J. Mohrfeld,
Mayor
ATTEST:
/s/ Melinda L. Blind, City Clerk

**PUBLIC NOTICE
MEETING NOTICE
AGENDA
FORT MADISON
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Date: Thursday,
December 16, 2021
Time: 5:30 P.M.
Place: Sheaffer Meeting
Room and Online**

Electronic Meeting
(Pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.8)

An electronic meeting is being held because a meeting in person is impossible or impractical for the health and safety of Library Board members, library employees and the public presented by COVID-19. You can participate in the meeting via telephone and can comment on an agenda item by joining the Zoom meeting. Using your telephone, dial (312) 626 6799 and enter the meeting ID (896 2755 9290) when prompted. If you have trouble connecting to the meeting, please call (319) 372-5721.

- I. Excused absences
- II. Approval of Agenda –
- III. Public Comments
- IV. Approval of minutes
- V. Approval of the Bills

- a. Approval of December 2021 Bills
- VI. Correspondence
- VII. Director's Report - be sure to include trust fund end of year summaries

- a. Financial
- b. Personnel
- c. Programming
- d. Collection Development
- e. Operations
- f. Facilities - landscaping
- g. Professional
- h. Reports to City Council

- i. Aarin Guzman Update
- VIII. Unfinished Business

- a. Review Meeting Room Policy – addressing snow removal during winter months
- IX. New Business
 - a. Library Mission Statement
 - b. 2022/2023 Budget discussion
 - c. Discussion and possible action on adding

the Craftsy database to library services

- X. Trustee Education
 - a. Trustee Handbook Chapter 10 "Evaluating the Library Director"
 - XI. Upcoming Events and Information
 - a. January 2022 - Review Library Board By-Laws
- Next Meeting January 20, 2022

**PUBLIC NOTICE
FORT MADISON
COMMUNITY SCHOOL
DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
December 20, 2021
6:00 P.M.**

Note: To view this meeting please see the link on the FMCSO Website Calendar or click on the link below

<https://zoom.us/j/97798604282?pwd=ZHHyVGxtb1hJU-Vd6RjJ1RzQ0RW5VZz09>

Public Comments are welcome. They are limited to 3 minutes. Any member of the public who wishes to participate in public comments must be physically present at the meeting and follow the appropriate sign in procedures.

Finance: DiPrima/ Wykert

AGENDA

- I. Call meeting to order and determination of a quorum
- II. Recognition of guests
- III. Reading of Foundation documents
- IV. Monthly communications

- A. Student Rep Report: Breean Walston
- B. Curriculum Corner: C. "Did You Know?"
- D. Superintendent Goal Report
- E. District Presentations:
 - Food Service Update - Tiffany Fullhart

- V. Consent Agenda
 - A. Minutes
 1. November 15, 2021 Public Hearing
 2. November 15, 2021 Regular Meeting
 3. December 6, 2021 Special Meeting
 - B. Financial reports
 1. November Balance Sheet
 2. Revenue Summary Report
 3. Expenditure Report
 4. Student Activity Report
 - C. Accounts payable
 1. November General Account Board Bills for Approval

- VI. Action Items
 - A. Director of Curriculum and Student Services – Kim Harmon
 1. Approve Modified Supplemental Amount At-Risk Application
 2. Approve After School Program Parent/Student Handbook
 - B. Superintendent – Erin Slater
 1. Consider approval of HS Welding students to travel to Nevada, MO for competition on January 27 & 28, 2022
 2. Consider approval of HS Honor Choir students to travel to Decorah, Iowa for Dorian Honor Choir Festival at Luther College
 3. Consider approval of Superintendent's Recommendation to Terminate Teacher's Contract
 4. Policy changes:

2. December General Account Board Bills for Approval
3. Student Activity Account Board Bills for Approval
4. Nutrition Fund Board Bills for Approval
5. American Express Board Bills for Approval
- D. Consider personnel resignations
 1. Brandi Aguirre, Food Service
 2. Ashley Gelsthorpe, Clerical Associate
 3. Erin Sims, Food Service

- E. Consider employment of personnel
 1. Bailey Recommendation to Hire
 2. Boeding Recommendation to Hire
 3. Faingnaert Recommendation to Hire
 4. Helmick Recommendation to Hire
 5. Moyers Recommendation to Hire
 6. Peterson Recommendation to Hire
 7. Sawyer Recommendation to Hire
 8. Talley Recommendation to Hire
 9. Vincent Recommendation to Hire
 10. Wixom Recommendation to Hire
 11. Guiding Coalition personnel

- F. Consider contract modifications
- G. Consider leave of absence
- H. Consider open enrollment requests
 1. Activity and athletic fundraisers

- Director (blank) moved and director (blank) seconded the documents submitted in the consent section of the agenda be approved and/or filed as submitted.
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2. IASB Convention Report
- C. Board Secretary/ Business Manager – Sandy Elmore
- D. Board Member Attendance
- E. Staff Attendance
- VIII. Comments from the audience
- IX. Legislative update
- X. Announcements
 - A. Winter Break December 23, 2021 - January 2, 2022
 - B. Work Session January 3, 2022 Board Room, Central Office, 6:00 p.m.
 - C. Regular Meeting January 17, 2022 Board Room, Central Office, 6:00 p.m.
 - XI. Adjourn

- FOR DISCUSSION: IASB Quarterly
 - a. 303.6 Administrator/ Principal Evaluation - ADOPT
 - b. 401.14 Employee Expression - ADOPT
 - c. 502.3 OLD - Freedom of Expression - DELETE
 - d. 502.3 NEW - Student Expression and Student Publications - ADOPT
 - d. 502.3-R-1 Student Expression and Student Publications Code - ADOPT
 - e. 504.3 Student Publications - DELETE
 - f. 504.3-R-1 Student Publications Code - DELETE

- FOR REVIEW ONLY: IASB Quarterly
 - a. 209.6 Review and Revision of Policy
 - b. 501.14 Open Enrollment Transfers - Procedures as a Sending District
 - c. 501.15 Open Enrollment Transfers - Procedures as a Receiving District

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- Chronological
 - a. 206.1 President - ACCEPT CHANGES
 - b. 206.2 Vice-President - ACCEPT CHANGES
 - c. 213 Public Participation in Board Meetings (OLD) - DELETE
 - d. 213 Public Participation in Board Meetings (NEW) - ADOPT

- C. Board Secretary/ Business Manager – Sandy Elmore
 1. Consider approval of selling used bus
 2. Consider approval of bus purchase
- VII. Discussion Items
 - A. Director of Curriculum and Student Services – Kim Harmon
 1. Building Instructional Tour
 - B. Superintendent – Erin Slater
 1. Policies

- FOR REVIEW ONLY: IASB Quarterly
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From the Front

Legislature needs to cap records fees

EVANS - Continued from Page 1

Hall owns and edits the Iowa Standard. The online publication caters to conservative readers with its news coverage and commentary on public affairs and politics.

Using the public records law, Hall asked for emails and text messages exchanged by Linn-Mar administrators, teachers and other employees about a “Transgender Week” observance at Linn-Mar High School in Marion.

The public records law makes such communications available to anyone who asks, although certain confidential information is protected from disclosure, such as details about specific students.

The law speaks of the importance of free and open examination of records. The statute allows — but does not require — government officials to charge reasonable fees for retrieving and copying documents and for reviewing them for confidential information that needs to be blacked out.

You can imagine Hall’s surprise when the Linn-Mar communications coordinator informed him he would have to pay \$504 to receive the records he sought.

The official explained it would take two hours of a computer technology employee’s time to retrieve the emails and text messages and an hour and a half for an attorney to examine those communications for confidential details.

The IT worker’s time would be charged to Hall at the rate of \$57 per hour — meaning the worker makes \$118,000 annually. The attorney’s time would be charged at \$260 per hour.

At \$500, the Linn-Mar records would be out of reach financially for most people in Iowa. But Hall and the Iowa Standard were willing to pay the cost, and he asked the communications official how to make the payment. He also asked how many pages of emails and text messages he would receive.

Hall was not expecting what he heard next:

“In reviewing the information that I provided to you, the amount quoted is the rate to access each employee record,” the official wrote. “The total amount for staff time to retrieve the records and attorney time to review/redact confidential information for the entire district would come to approximately \$604,000.”

Read that again; it’s not a typo. \$604,000.

The costs Linn-Mar quoted to Hall mean, in effect, it would take 2,400 hours to retrieve the emails and text messages containing the keywords “Trans Week.” That is 60 weeks of full-time work by the school’s information technology employee. And it would require 45 weeks of a \$260-an-hour attorney working full-time looking for confidential information in those emails and text messages.

The Iowa Freedom of Information Council, the non-profit organization I lead, believes the cost for records is one of the biggest obstacles standing between the public and the records they seek from state and local governments.

It is obvious the Linn-Mar district does not want to share its internal communications about “Trans Week” — potentially a source of criticism from Iowans at a time when there already is intense scrutiny of public schools.

It is immaterial whether Jacob Hall’s publication is liberal, conservative or somewhere in between. It is immaterial whether school officials or students or anyone else thinks his request was unimportant. It doesn’t matter what motive the Iowa Standard has for writing about Transgender Week and the discord that occurred at the school.

The Legislature needs to make it a priority to place a cap on the amount government can charge for its records. \$600,000 does not meet most people’s definition of reasonable.

Randy Evans is Executive Director of Iowa Freedom of Information Council and can be reached at DMRevans2810@gmail.com. Pen City Current is a member of the IFOIC.

Public can submit judicial comments prior to Monday

JUDGE - Continued from Page 1

views will be open for public observation and listening. The public shall not be allowed to ask questions or make comments. Applicant submissions and materials will be open to the public.

Prior to December 20, 2021, the public will be permitted to submit comments or recommendations regarding the qualifications of an applicant by email to cathy.reck@iowacourts.gov.

The Commission will submit the names of two nominees to Governor Reynolds, who will then appoint one within 30 days.

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Do you have time - to help stop crime?

Visit any of these Facebook pages to learn more about what the Neighborhood Watch Program is & how to start your own group or join an existing group!





CAUTION

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

There's Snow
Place Like Home
for the Holidays.



Pen City Current will not publish an e-Edition Friday, December 24 through Friday, January 1.
Our special 2021 Year In Review editions will publish
Monday, January 3 through Wednesday, January 5.
Breaking news will continue to be published on our website 24/7.



As we take time for our family this holiday, we thank you for your support and patronage
and wish you all a very Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD HAS A *Naturehood*

DiscoverTheForest.org

Sports/From the Front

Danville doubles up HTC boys

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP
PCC SPORTS

FORT MADISON – The outcome had been decided, so much so that the running clock after a 35-point deficit had been employed.

But there in the final seconds of Holy Trinity’s 72-35 loss to Danville on Tuesday night was Crusaders guard Maddox Rung diving for a loose ball.

The effort, Holy Trinity coach John Hellige said, is there.

It’s all about execution for the young Crusaders, who are going through December growing pains.

“You’ve got freshmen out there, sophomores out there, juniors who haven’t been through a lot of playing time,” Hellige said. “I just told them before the game that we needed effort and execution. To me, the effort was there all night long. The kids hustled, gave everything they can. But the execution, it’s just not there yet.”

Danville (6-0) provided the latest lesson to the Crusaders (1-5). The Bears scored the first eight points and led 20-8 at the end of the first quarter.

“The game’s still a little too fast for these guys,” Hellige said. “And we saw in Danville what a tough and aggressive team can do to an inexperienced team like we are. We’re not there yet, execution-wise, but we will get there. These bumps in the road, these road rashes we’re experiencing, are paying off down the road.”

Holy Trinity got 15 points from sophomore Conner Gehling.

“He’s a pretty solid player,” Hellige said. “If he keeps doing what he’s doing, we just need to get some guys around him to get going. On offense, we were just not able to do what we wanted to do tonight.”

Adam Sobczak and Luke Hellige each had six points.

Drake Johnson had 17 points to lead Danville. Caiden Gourley had 16.

“Courts” announcement could come next month

HOTEL - Continued from Page 1

rooms if demand dictates further expansion, but he said they wanted to do a complete remodel.

Leaitenne Robinson, the general manager of the Resort Hotel, said some of the family suites provide the ultimate of fun for Fun City.

All hot tubs have been removed from the rooms and replaced with tub/showers for the family suites.

Hoyer said the property needed a refresh so they decided to do a comprehensive overhaul as a proposed “Courts” project continues.

“It needed a refresh and rather than putting lipstick on it, we decided to grind it down to the core and do it right,” Hoyer said. “We’re committed to this community and this region. We want to bring more tourism and more sports tourism and just more people to visit our community,” Hoyer said.

The Courts project is a plan to bring another indoor facility with basketball courts to the Fun City property. Hoyer said there could be an announcement on that project as soon as next month.

“We should be to a point of making an official decision followed by an announcement on that in January.

The project is being ushered in by the Greater Burlington Area Sports Board with Southeastern Community College President Dr. Michael Ash heading up that board.

Hoyer said SCC, Great River Entertainment, Greater Burlington Partnership, and other community groups are represented in the project.

Fun City Hotel also has plans to relocate Ballocity and introduce a “Ninja Extreme” for older children and “young-minded adults”, according to Hoyer.

“That will all be developed as part of the Courts project, but those renovations will take place regardless of the progress of the Courts project.”

Hoyer said plans are also in the works to renovate the outdoor pool area, but that will also be determined by the progress and possible construction of the Courts project.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

The inside of one of the new hotel family suites showcases a living quarters, a children’s bedroom with bunk beds that sleep four, and a full bath.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

We are grateful to be trusted to care for your family’s oral health. We wish each & every one a very Merry Christmas & a Happy, Healthy New Year!

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Happy Holidays!

We wish you and your family comfort & joy during this beautiful Christmas season. May you always have your loved ones surrounding you in a home that’s comfy & warm.



Karen Hope
(319) 372-4040