

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Wednesday, March 16, 2022 | 11 pages | Volume 6 • Issue 57



www.pencitycurrent.com

Argyle animals rescued

The Animal Rescue League of Iowa was back in Argyle Tuesday to load up a trailer full of more animals seized from a property there. Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber is looking for county officials and breeders to help curb illegal breeding in the county. Two residents were arrested in the seizure.



Courtesy photo

CITY COUNCIL

Bowker pushes for sidewalk plan

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Fort Madison Councilwoman Rebecca Bowker wants downtown sidewalks a priority as the city looks at future efforts and possible federal funding under a new infrastructure law.

At Tuesday's regular meeting of the Fort Madison City Council, Bowker gave an impassioned plea for the city leaders to not keep the project on the back burner.

"If we can raise \$9 million for a new marina, we can raise some money for this project, too," Bowker said.

A program about four years ago to redo the curbing and sidewalks with semipermeable pavers was abandoned when costs for the project came in at about 200% of

See DOWNTOWN, page 7

SHERIFF: Ordinance needed to curb illegal breeding in county

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

ARGYLE – A seizure of animals several weeks ago from a home in Argyle has resulted in the arrest of an Argyle couple running illegal breeding out of the home.

Deputies arrested David and Gina Sams Tuesday and charged them with seven counts of animal neglect. They were taken to Lee County Jail and are being held on \$1,000 cash only bonds.

Weber said the charges stem from seven poorly cared-

for animals that were in the home when 40 dogs were taken by the Animal Rescue League of Iowa on Feb. 23. As a result of that investigation, the Sams were instructed to clean up and organize the property and to begin to reduce the amount of animals on the property to assure proper care. The animals at that time were also examined by a licensed veterinarian.

Staff from the league were back on scene Tuesday loading animals up to be taken to the rescue.

See RESCUE, page 5

ELECTION 2022

Redistricting won't change Supervisor ballot

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – County officials and supervisors thought about scrambling to get another two elections on the primary ballot this spring, but a deeper dive shows that is not the case.

Lee County Auditor Denise Fraise informed both District 5 Supervisor Matt Pflug, a Democrat from Keokuk, and District 4 Supervisor Garry Seyb, Jr., a Republican from Jackson Township, Monday night that they may need to start collecting signatures two years early due to redistricting.

Fraise said election staff with the county looked at a four-block shift from

See BALLOT, page 7

WEST POINT

McGregor to step down as WP City Administrator

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

WEST POINT – West Point will soon be looking for a new city administrator.

Current Administrator Dennis McGregor announced Monday night at West Point's City Council meeting that he was submitting his retirement due to his wife's battle with Parkinson's Disease.

"It's me running back and forth about every two hours of the day. It's not good for her and it's not good for the city either one so I've decided to retire."

McGregor said he'd like to get an ad



MCGREGOR

running to fill the position as soon as possible. Mayor Paul Walker said McGregor has agreed to stay on until the city gets a new administrator hired.

McGregor replaced former city administrator Gary Menke in August of 2018 and has served just under four years as not only administrator for the city, but head of the city's municipal utility.

He also served on the West Point City Council for four years and was president

of the West Point Community Club for four years where he oversaw the annual Sweet Corn Festival for two years.

McGregor retired as controller of Frank Millard after close to 25 years.

In other action, the council:

- approved, 5-0, an \$2.50 increase to residents utility bills per month to offset increased costs of the city's contract with Great River Regional Waste Authority. The city has been paying that contracted amount prior to the change, but when GRWWA officials increased the rate, the council decided to pass those increased charges on to the residents.

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WEATHER

WED Mar 16 Clear Skies, 68° F / 47° F
 THU Mar 17 Broken Clouds, 66° F / 49° F
 FRI Mar 18 Heavy Rain, 50° F / 36° F

IOWA LOTTERY

LUCKY FOR LIFE 03/14 3 10 12 22 47, Lucky Ball: 14
 PICK 3 03/14 MIDDAY 9 4 4
 PICK 3 03/14 EVENING 8 8 2
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 POWERBALL 03/14 21 28 32 44 49, Powerball: 6 Power Play: 3

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

CARL E. SHIRTS

Carl Elmer Shirts, 80, of Burlington, went to be with the Lord at 1:14 AM Saturday, March 12, 2022, at the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics in Iowa City.



SHIRTS

Born November 9, 1941, in Burlington, IA, he was the son of Elmer Edwin and Evelyn Pearl Peterson Shirts. On October 24, 1964, he married Norma J Wheatley in Burlington, IA. She died July 25, 1984.

Carl worked for the City of Burlington as a heavy equipment Operator and a subcontractor for Alliant Energy until his retirement. He later worked for Foster Tree Service.

He was a self motivated man that never asked for anything. If he couldn't get it himself, he did without. When it came to his sons there was nothing he wouldn't sacrifice to make sure their lives were a little better. He loved his wife of 20 years with every ounce of his heart. He loved to hunt arrowheads, and he sure loved to show them to his friends and family. He was an avid fisherman, hunter and gardener. He loved to watch Golf on TV on the weekends in the comfort of his own home. He also loved to cruise around the local parks and look for deer. He would always light up the room with his smile and his ornery charisma. He took up metal detecting later on in his life and he would bring joy to our hearts with his stories of his adventures. He selflessly gave of himself for his grandchildren. He loved each and every person in his life. He didn't complain about life's problems he had to face. I hope we can all learn a little from what this man showed us during his time here.

Survivors include his sons, Edwin (Josie) Shirts of Burlington, Robert (Kimberly) Shirts of Fort Madison, and Carl (Shannon McGregor) Shirts II, of Burlington; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; fifteen step-grandchildren and one sister, Patricia Bryden of California.

Besides his wife, he was preceded in death by his parents and three brothers, Norman, Burllyn and Robert Shirts.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of Prugh Crematory.

The Celebration of Life for Mr. Shirts will be 7:00 PM Thursday, March 17, 2022, at First Church of the Nazarene.

Prugh Funeral Service is in care of the arrangements.

Condolences can be sent to the family by visiting Carl's obituary at www.prughfuneral.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

ROLLAND E. WAGNER

Rolland Eugene Wagner, 87, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 10:40 AM on Sunday, March 13, 2022 at the SEIRMC in Ft. Madison.

He was born on June 22, 1934 in Primrose, IA to John H. and Elizabeth O. Trump Wagner. On June 3, 1955 he married Anita Mae Fuget in Quincy, IL and she passed away on December 6, 2018. Rolland worked at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant and also at the Iowa State Penitentiary. Rolland served in the US Army and drove truck for them all throughout Europe. He enjoyed being outdoors, gardening and all tractors. Most of all he loved his family, especially spending time with his grandchildren.



WAGNER

Survivors include, one daughter, Amy (Lee) Thomas of Dallas City, IL; four sons, Walter (Marilyn) Wagner of Suffolk, VA, Kevin Wagner of Donnellson, Darrell (Ronda Hall) Wagner of Ft. Madison and Jay (Jody) Wagner of New London; eight grandchildren; two great grandchildren; one sister, Cora Pollmeier of St. Port Lucie, FL; one brother, Larry Wagner of New London; several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, wife; a daughter, Veva Lea in infancy; three brothers and three sisters.



A graveside service will be held on Friday, March 25, 2022 at 11 AM at Circle, Oakland Cemetery with Rev. Les Featheringill officiating. Military rites will be conducted by the Ft. Madison Veterans Honor Guard. There will be a celebration of life immediately following the graveside service at the Ft. Madison Eagles Club.

A memorial has been established for the Keokuk Animal Services and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

OBITUARIES

JEROME STOLTZ

Jerome "Jerry" Stoltz, 89, formerly of Stockport, Iowa, passed away at 5:48 p.m. Saturday, March 5, 2022, at Aspire Health Care Center in Donnellson, Iowa.

He was born on August 18, 1932, in Curlew, Iowa. The son of Clyde and Velma (Weller) Stoltz. On August 10, 1958, he married Melba Jean Hough, she preceded him in death in 2012.



STOLTZ

He is survived by his son: Jeffrey Allan Stoltz; four grandsons: Caleb (Julia) Stoltz, Spencer (fiancé Hailey) Stoltz, Tyler Stoltz, and Cameron Stoltz; one sister: Jeanette Duff and one brother: Keith (Jackie) Stoltz.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife: Melba; two daughters: Sheila and Shirley; two brothers: Ronald and Stanley Stoltz.

Jerry was a United States Army veteran serving during the Korean War. He worked as an implement dealer for forty years at S&R Equipment Company, he also farmed. He was a member of Stockport United Methodist Church, the Anderson, Eckert, Hersom American Legion Post #345 in Mallard, Iowa for sixty-one years and the Masonic Lodge #15 in Clinton, Iowa for fifty-three years.




His body has been entrusted to the crematory of Schmitz Funeral Home for cremation.

Burial will be held at a later date at Rush Lake Cemetery in Curlew, Iowa.

A memorial has been established in his memory.


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

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Local News/Health News

FMPD reminds motorists to drive sober on St. Patty's Day

FORT MADISON — St. Patrick's Day is one of the biggest drinking nights of the year, and this, unfortunately, means more drunk drivers on the roads. If you plan to drink, make sure you refrain from driving. Review these facts and share the word about the dangers of drunk driving so you can continue merry making for all the St. Paddy's Days to come.

- St. Patrick's Day is one of the deadliest times on our nation's roads. During the 2015-2019 St. Patrick's Day period (6 p.m. March 16 to 5:59 a.m. March 18), 280 lives were lost in drunk-driving crashes. In 2019, drunk driving killed more than 10,000 people in our country, and every single one of those deaths was preventable. Do your part this St. Patrick's Day: Arrange for a sober driver to ensure you get home safely.

- Walking home after a night out drinking alcohol? In 2019, 31 of the pedestrians killed in traffic crashes had blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) at or above .08.

Arrange for a sober ride or for a sober friend to walk you home.

- Remember that Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving. It is illegal and deadly to drink and drive. For some, even one drink may be one drink too many.

The Cost of Drunk Driving

- On average, a DUI can set you back \$10,000 in attorney's fees, fines, court costs, lost time at work, higher insurance rates, and more.

- The financial impact from impaired-driving crashes is devastating. Based on 2010 numbers (the most recent year for which cost data is available), impaired-driving crashes cost the United States \$44 billion annually.

- If you're caught drinking and driving, you can face jail time. Imagine trying to explain that to your friends and family or your place of employment.

- Drinking and driving can cause you to lose your driver's

license and your vehicle. This could inhibit you from getting to work, resulting in lost wages and, potentially, job loss.

Celebrate with a Plan

Always remember to plan ahead if you will be celebrating. If you plan to drink, plan for a sober driver to take you home. Is it your turn to be the designated driver? Take that role seriously and do not consume alcohol, not even one drink.

- Remember that it is never okay to drink and drive. Even if you've had only one alcoholic beverage, designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.

- If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact the Fort Madison Police Dept. 319-372-2525 X:1

- Do you have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take the keys away and make arrangements to get your friend home safely.



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SEIRMC gets care compliance designation

WEST BURLINGTON – Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center has been reaccruited by the Center for Improvement in Healthcare Quality (CIHQ). In an unannounced rigorous onsite assessment, the hospital demonstrated compliance with CIHQ standards and the conditions of participation by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

This recognition reflects the hospital's continuous commitment to safety and quality patient care. Over three days, the CIHQ team toured hospital campuses in Fort Madison and West Burlington, reviewed medical records, observed care practices, and interviewed staff and patients. The accreditation period is three years.

"Our continuous readiness philosophy means our staff is always prepared for these unannounced surveys," said Shelby Dickens, chief quality officer, Great River Health. "Although being surveyed is stressful, we regard it as an educational experience that helps up make adjustments as necessary to improve patient care."

The CIHQ surveyors wrote these comments about Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center:

"We are impressed with the quality program. From board members to staff at the bedside, all were able to speak to the goals of the organization and how they contribute."

"All staff interviewed have been welcoming and knowledgeable."

"The facilities at both campuses are well maintained and spacious."

CIHQ Chief Executive Richard Curtis said: "CIHQ's goal is to partner with hospitals to improve the care provided in our communities. CIHQ is proud to recognize Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center for achieving accreditation."

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From the Front/Classifieds

Argyle couple arrested on animal neglect charges

RESCUE - Continued from Page 1

Weber said the investigation has lead him to believe that the county needs to work up an ordinance to address what he called "black market" breeders. He said charges for crimes in this area are based on state statute and punishment isn't strong enough to deter the conditions.

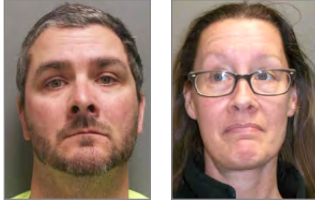
"We often wait for the state on these types of issues. But the state code is very weak and we don't have anything locally," he said.

"There's just too much money in this and people just take the risk and continue to do it unchecked."

Weber said he's spoken with Lee County Attorney Ross Braden about the situation. He also wants to speak with legitimate breeders in the area to get their input on the situation.

"I want to talk with the lawful breeders in our county. I want to sit with them and pick their brains about this. These black market breeders become competition and the legit breeders abide by the law.

"Americans - we sometimes cut our own throats by wanting the cheapest stuff and this is what we



D. SAMS G. SAMS

get. People raising animals in their living room."

He said the arrests will gain the attention of those that are breeding

illegally.

According to a release from the sheriff's department Tuesday afternoon, deputies conducted a second search on the property Tuesday to assure the welfare of the animals was being protected per previous discussions with the Sams.

The remaining animals were then surrendered cooperatively by the Sams. Those included dogs, cats, goats, horses, donkeys, ducks, chickens, geese, a peacock, turkeys, rabbits, pigs, a hedgehog, lizards and a chinchilla.

Several ducks were removed from the Sams' property in Argyle Tuesday afternoon. The animals were taken by the Animal Rescue League of Iowa. Photo courtesy of Lee County Sheriff's Dept.

Weber said his department has been assisted by PAW Animal Shelter, Animal Rescue League of

Iowa, Keokuk Animal Services and the Lee County Attorney's office.

"I don't know where we'd be if we didn't have the Animal Rescue League and PAW helping us out," Weber said.

Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber said Tuesday that the deputies were on site for several hours at the home in the 1800 block of 340th Street in rural Argyle helping load the other animals.

He said last year's problem with loose cattle roaming the county showed how a collaborative effort can yield productive results.

"This is something that just keeps coming up, but people forget. Our collaborative efforts to deal with the loose cattle benefited everyone. Others got involved and then that got to the point where it wasn't just law enforcement trying to solve the problem. Many hands make light work," Weber said.

"I think I'm going to have support of other dog breeders to do this. The cattlemen's association was hesitant because cows get out. But when it comes to this kind of stuff it keeps popping up due to weak laws."

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From the Front

Pflug, Seyb to hold seats through 2024

BALLOT - Continued from Page 1

District 4 to District 5 and thought the affect on the voter block in Keokuk would force an new election in the two districts.

But Molly Widen, legal counsel for Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate told Pen City Current Tuesday afternoon that it was her opinion, based on information received from Fraise and Pflug, that the move wasn't necessary.

"My assessment is based solely on those statements. I haven't received the addresses of the supervisors and I haven't plotted them," Widen said.

"But based on the information from the auditor and the supervisor that was given to me, there is no supervisors now living in the same district to force that election. The redistricting didn't take in a census block that would include both supervisors' residences."

Widen said the only way that would have forced an election was if any of the district changes would have resulted in two incumbent supervisors living in the same district.

"Then that district goes back into the cycle," she said.

Iowa Code governing the redistricting is at 331.209 and 331.210. The Legislative Services Agency reset the districts and made the announcements late as dates.

Fraise confirmed Tuesday afternoon, that she has plotted the residence and there is no need for the election that officials thought might be needed Monday night.

As it stands now, Districts 2 and 3 are the only supervisor seats up for election this year. Those seats are currently held by Rick Larkin - District 2, and Rich Harlow - District 3. Both Harlow and Larkin have announced they are retiring from the board at the end of this year.

Only Peter Seyb has announced that he wanted to seek the District 3 spot, but redistricting moved his residence into District 4, and he won't challenge his brother Garry in the Republican primary for that seat.

Donna Amandus (D-Fort Madison) and Tom Schulz (R-Fort Madison), both current Fort Madison City Council members, both have announced their candidacies for the District 2 spot.

Candidates have until March 25 to turn in signatures and candidacy affidavits to the County Auditor's office.

City may look to IJA for projects

DOWNTOWN - Continued from Page 1

engineering estimates.

That project involved creating deep bases where storm water would run down between the pavers into the subsurface, but the unknowns of coal chutes and other impediments to the project ran the price up with only one company bidding on the work.

Bowker said she would like to see the city put a couple thousand dollars into engineering for the work. But city staff including Public Works Director Mark Boussetot said the program should be integrated with other plans for work to be done on Avenue G from 6th to 10th streets.

The city is under a mandate to separate sanitary and storm sewers by the end of this decade, a project City Manager David Varley described as a "tough nut to crack".

That project involves tearing up a good portion of Avenue G and its intersections, replacing the sewer lines and connections, and repouring the streets. Initial plans included redoing the curbing and sidewalks along with the streets.

Bowker said she spoke with Mark and an engineer who said the sidewalks could be replaced out to the curbing and the rest of the work could be done separately.

"Unless I was mislead in previous conversations. I think we move something forward instead of just talking about moving forward," Bowker said.

She said downtown business owners have been open to the idea of sharing some of the cost of the sidewalks.

"Keeping in mind it's the city's responsibility to do the curbing and those types of things," she said. "Nobody is saying let's give the businesses free sidewalks."

Varley said city staff has put together a sheet of future projects.

Chris Sorrentino, head of the city's Historic Preservation Commission, said the condition of the city's business

district is poor.

"We do need to look at the downtown district as a whole. We're spending millions everywhere else, and yet we have a district that, pardon the expression, is quite embarrassing for the city of Fort Madison."

Mayor Matt Mohrfeld said as the city gets more information on where the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is going, it can bring together other resources such as Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission, to help create plans to try and access some of the federal funds associated with the program.

Bowker is also a member of the Fort Madison Beautification Foundation. She said the city needs to spend a little to update the plans created in the previous sidewalk project so they have up-to-date information.

"I don't want to go to the building owners and say, 'Hey are you willing to do X, Y, Z to your taxes to replace your sidewalks?' We've got to have some kind of information when we're moving forward."

City Finance Director Peggy Steffensmeier asked if Bowker was talking about doing the sidewalks outside of the sewer separation projects.

"Because those are going to do this," she said.

"Yeah in 2029 or 2040," Bowker said.

Boussetot said the city needs to figure out what direction they are going with the sidewalks. He said when the city does the 10th Street intersection to pick up sewers, they could do some of the beautification of the streets, curbs, and sidewalks as the work progresses.

"I don't want to wait 20 years for that happen. We're already discussing delays and getting ourselves extended because we can't afford to do those other projects," she said.

"We've only been talking about it for a couple years now, I guess we can talk about it for 10 more years."

Mohrfeld directed Boussetot to get people already involved in the project together to examine the "what ifs" around it and see if there are possibilities to move the project up on the city's timeline.

THANK YOU

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BACK
TO THE **90'S**



March
26

Presented by:

**Bloodhound
Booster Club**

8 Categories
Of Trivia



Bring Snacks
Dress Up
Have Fun

DOORS OPEN 6PM - TRIVIA AT 7:00 PM
\$150 Table (8) - Walk Ins \$20 & will be placed on a team



**Thank you for joining us for 90s Trivia Night
sponsored by the
Bloodhound Booster Club.**

Date: Saturday, March 26, 2022

Location: Eagles Club, Fort Madison

Time: Doors will open at 6:00, Trivia starts at 7:00

Theme: Back to the 90's

* Be sure to come dressed accordingly - most 90's dressed team wins a prize!

* There will be 6 rounds of general 90's trivia and 2 bonus rounds of 90's
BLOODHOUND trivia.

Bring Snacks and get ready for a night of fun!

-----cut-----

Please return this bottom portion and payment to:

Fort Madison High School

% Kelly Knustrom

2001 Ave. B

Fort Madison, IA 52627

Team Name: _____

Team Contact Person: _____ Phone Number: _____

Number of total team players* _____ (\$150 for 8 members max, if you cannot fill a team of 8 - the cost is \$20 per person. If you would like, we could assign walk ins to your team on the night of the event)

- Yes! Give us some more teammates if we still need them!
 No thank you, we've got the winning team right here!

Checks can be made out to FM Bloodhound Booster Club

*Must be 21 years or older

United Way of the Great River Region



Friday, May 6, 2022 • Sheaffer Memorial Golf Park • Fort Madison, Iowa

Team Registration—\$400 Deadline for Team Registration is **Monday, April 25, 2022**
Includes carts, lunch, free soda & water, snacks, 2 mulligans per golfer &
5 drink tickets per golfer (drink tickets not good for mixed drinks)

Packet pick-up will begin at 10:00 am.

Waiver & release must be signed before play begins.

Lunch at 11:00 am.

Shotgun start at 12:00 Noon.

Sponsor Name: _____

Team Name (if different from above): _____

Contact Person: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Golfers (if known): _____

****Please note, all golfers will sign a waiver and release before play begins.****

**FUN extras available on site include: BIG Raffle \$10/ea. • Hole Games •
Silent Auction Items • 50/50 Tickets (cash only) \$2/ea, 6/\$10 or yd/\$20**

**Have a great time while supporting 21 community agencies and other
United Way priorities!**

Your donation is tax deductible for the portion above actual expense.

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United Way of the Great River Region



Friday, May 6, 2022 • Sheaffer Memorial Golf Park • Fort Madison, Iowa

Golf Outing Sponsorship Opportunities

There are many sponsorship opportunities available. Feel free to mix and match. Have questions?
Contact Karen at United Way of the Great River Region at 319-524-4504.

- Corporate Sponsor—\$1000** Maximize your sponsorship with the first deadline of **Monday, March 21, 2022**. Some advertising will already be done before the second deadline of **Monday, April 11, 2022**
Includes name & logo on advertising, banner hung at the golf course, hole sponsor sign, opportunity to be at the golf course to market to players, can have a four person golf team but not required. Please provide a jpeg file of your logo to the United Way. Use team registration page if entering a team in.
- Hospitality Sponsor—\$300** Deadline **Friday, April 29, 2022**
Includes name & logo on beverage carts, at the buffet line and throughout the golf course. Please provide a jpeg file of your logo to the United Way.
- Hole Sponsor—\$100** Deadline **Monday, April 25, 2022**
Includes sign by green and opportunity to be at your green to market to players. Please provide a jpeg file of you logo to the United Way.
- Team Sponsor—\$400** **See team registration page.** Deadline **Monday, April 25, 2022**
Includes: cart, lunch, free soda & water, snacks, 2 mulligans/golfer & 5 drink tickets/golfer (drink tickets not good for mixed drinks)

If you wish to be invoiced, please contact Karen Siefken at the United Way office at 319-524-4504.

Be sure to check the box by the sponsorship you are interested in.
If you are sponsoring a team, please use the team registration page.

For Corporate, Hospitality or Hole Sponsorship please email a jpeg file of your logo to director@unitedwaygrr.org on or before the appropriate deadline.

Sponsor Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____