

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Tuesday, August 4, 2020 | 7 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 151



www.pencitycurrent.com

Mayor sits out HTC graduation

FAMILY STAYS: Mohrfeld was asked to leave if he didn't don a face covering

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

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

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

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



MOHRFELD

the pandemic.

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

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

Mohrfeld said his decision to leave and not see his senior son receive his diploma at Sunday's ceremony was based on

See MAYOR, page 7

CITY COUNCIL

Johnson out as city attorney after 40 years

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – With a move two weeks ago at the Fort Madison City Council meeting, attorney Robert Johnson has been replaced by a Cedar Rapids firm as Fort Madison's ongoing city attorney.

Lynch-Dallas P.C., a firm that has been providing legal services for the city on a myriad of issues in the past, was installed officially as the city's attorney at the last City Council meeting.

City Manager David Varley said the move was part of restructuring of city legal representatives and was mutually agreed upon separation.

"I think it was a combination of things, including his decision to retire (as city attorney) and we were at a point in time to make a change and do this," Varley said Monday.

Johnson has been serving as the city's attorney for the past 40 years, being sworn in on Jan. 2, 1980.

The city continue to use Johnson for some real estate issues, Varley said, but Lynch-Dallas will take over regular city attorney responsibilities. He said the firm may not be represented at every meeting, but they will be accessible and may be present via telephone for meetings.

"We don't need the presence at most meetings. It will depend on what's on the agenda. They will be on a call a lot of meetings," Varley said.

The city also hired Ed Harvey out of Mt. Pleasant on a part-time basis as a municipal prosecutor. Harvey is not associated with Lynch-Dallas. Lynch-Dallas also holds contracts for services with Fort Madison Community School District, and the Lee County Board of Supervisors for legal services.

"We're also adding a prosecutor so we can do more of our own prosecution of municipal court," Varley said. "That's an advantage for us as far as being proac-

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Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Getting ready for the show

Crews were busy setting up for RiverFest 2020, which begins Wednesday and runs through Saturday, in Fort Madison's Riverview Park. At left, Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld walks through the facility with Jenny Craft, who helped reboot the 90s festival with her husband Charles. Additional admission space, portable wash stations, sanitizers, and touch free admission and temperature checks are all part of the precautions being taken this year at the event.

ELECTION

County struggling to find election volunteers

BY KATIE SCOVILLE
PEN CITY CURRENT

FORT MADISON- In three months' time, it'll be time to cast your vote in the general election. In the past, polling stations were filled

with voters, eager to cast their votes. But with COVID-19 looming, voters may rethink how they vote.

Despite cutbacks from the U.S. Postal Service announced last week affecting worker hours, transportation schedules and retail service

hours, mail-in ballots will still be an important part of this year's election.

Nikki Sugars, Deputy of Elections at the Lee County Auditor's Office, said it will be critical that residents

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WEATHER

TUE 04 Aug.....Clear, Cool, 69° F/ 55° F
WED 05 Aug.....Mostly Sunny, Cool, 71° F/ 55° F
THU 06 Aug.....Scattered Rain, 77° F/ 57° F

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PICK 3 08/02 EVENING.....656
PICK 4 08/02 MIDDAY5458
PICK 4 08/02 EVENING.....8596

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Obituaries/Lee County News

OBITUARIES

JOHN HARRINGTON

John "Jack" Harrington, 84, passed away on Wednesday, July 29, 2020 in Neptune, NJ, where he moved in October, 2019. A lifelong resident of Keokuk, IA, he and his wife of 56 years, moved to New Jersey to be near their daughter. He was born June 23, 1936 in South Bend, IN, the son of Tim and Maude Harrington.



HARRINGTON

Jack graduated from St. Peters High School in Keokuk. He attended Culver Stockton College in Canton, MO, and served in the National Guard.



On April 28, 1962, Jack was united in marriage to Deisy Cabrera in Keokuk.

Jack was in the restaurant/bar business for 58 years. He owned and operated Harrington's Lounge and Restaurant in Keokuk, IA. He enjoyed the people he met there. Jack was a great story teller and loved sitting at the end of the bar to tell stories of the old days.

He was a member of All Saints Catholic Church in Keokuk. His voice still resonates through the church where he sang and directed the congregation during Sunday masses. An avid Cardinals fan, he was upset at the Covid19 virus for cutting off the games for this year. He was a sports enthusiast and enjoyed watching baseball, football, and basketball, preferably at the bar with all his friends. He loved cars and taking long drives, by the Mississippi in Keokuk and by the ocean in NJ. He will be missed by many friends and family. He is survived by his wife, Deisy (Cabrera), of Neptune, NJ, his son Tim Harrington of Fox Lake, IL, his daughter, Gigi Harrington of Neptune, NJ, grandson Drake Harrington of McHenry, Il, cousins and many friends. A Celebration of Life will be held in Keokuk at a later date when it is advisable to gather with a large group again, as he would want everyone to be safe. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society.

The Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk is assisting the family. Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

Pen City Current obituary policy

The 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.

OBITUARIES

GWENDOLYN D. REDD

Gwendolyn Diane Redd, 76 years, of Quincy, Illinois and formerly of Fort Madison, Iowa died Saturday August 1, 2020 at Blessing Hospital, Quincy. She was born October 26, 1943 in St. Louis, Missouri, a daughter of Rev. Daniel and Beatrice



REDD

(Broadous) Wilbon. On August 23, 1980, she married George H. Redd Sr. in St. Louis, Missouri. They moved to Fort Madison, Iowa that same year. She was a homemaker. She enjoyed helping elderly people and worked as a home health companion. She liked to crochet, embroider, and do crafts. Gwendolyn was of the Baptist faith.

She is survived by two daughters, Beatrice Elizabeth Allen of Atlanta, Georgia and Natalie (David) Edwards of St. Louis; two sons, Timothy (Mayia) Redd of Quincy and John Redd of Keokuk; one sister: Eleanor Louise Frost of St. Louis; one brother, Daniel (Alfreda) Wilbon, Jr. of St. Louis; numerous grandchildren, one niece Che Danielle Frost, and one nephew Ernest William Frost II. She was preceded in death by her parents and husband, Pastor George Redd Sr.

A private graveside service and burial will be at the Oakland Cemetery, Fort Madison. Barr Memorial Chapel is honored to serve the Redd family and an online guest book may be found at www.barrmemorialchapel.com.



Lee County Health Department Lee County COVID-19 Case Numbers

8/3/2020

New Confirmed Cases	
1 adult, 2 middle-age, 3 older adults	6
Total Recovered	53
Total Cases	95
Deaths	3



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— Abraham Lincoln

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For the Record

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

07/31/20 – 7:07 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2700 block of Avenue N.
 07/31/20 – 7:10 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 600 block of 34th Street.
 07/31/20 – 9:28 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 300 block of Avenue F.
 07/31/20 – 9:54 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 2800 block of Avenue A.
 07/31/20 – 10:48 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 4600 block of Avenue J.
 07/31/20 – 11:23 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 4800 block of Avenue L.
 07/31/20 – 12:27 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1400 block of Avenue M.
 07/31/20 – 1:04 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 800 block of Avenue D.
 07/31/20 – 3:03 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1400 block of Avenue H.
 07/31/20 – 3:45 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 1100 block of Avenue H.
 07/31/20 – 6:22 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1100 block of 24th Street.
 07/31/20 – 7:16 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1000 block of Avenue G.
 08/01/20 – 2:53 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the

2600 block of Avenue L.
 08/01/20 – 8:34 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2800 block of Avenue O.
 08/01/20 – 11:14 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 500 block of 5th Street.
 08/01/20 – 12:12 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 1100 block of Avenue E.
 08/01/20 – 1:39 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 800 block of Avenue D.
 08/01/20 – 3:23 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 300 block of 12th Street.
 08/01/20 – 5:15 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 800 block of Avenue H.
 08/01/20 – 6:22 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a personal injury accident in the 2400 block of Avenue L.
 08/01/20 – 10:41 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 600 block of Avenue H.
 08/02/20 – 9:38 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Dillen Alexander Eaves, 26, of Fort Madison in the 3900 block of Avenue O, on a charge of possession of a controlled substance. He was released on a promise to appear.
 08/03/20 – 1:35 a.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Alexander Xavier Luna, 31, of Fort Madison in the 1500 block of Avenue M, on a charge of driving under suspension.
 08/03/20 – 2:11 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 3400 block of Avenue L.
 08/03/20 – 7:33 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 400 block of Avenue E.
 08/03/20 – 7:58 a.m. – Fort

Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 3600 block of Avenue L.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

08/01/20 – 2:00 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Sean Dale Harris, 51, of Fort Madison, in the 3200 block of 175th Street, on a charge of domestic assault. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and released on bond.
 08/01/20 – 3:32 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Brandon Beau Rinne, 28, of Waterloo, at the sheriff's office on a warrant for OWI. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and released on his recognizance.
 08/02/20 – 12:27 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a two-vehicle accident on Hwy 61. According to the report, a vehicle driven by Gary Christopher Coffee, 68, of Wever was headed northbound on 61 in the right lane. Coffee slowed to turn right onto 340th Avenue pulling a dump trailer filled with gravel. A vehicle driven by Justin Wayne Trout, 41, of Fort Madison was also traveling northbound on in the right lane and didn't notice Coffee slowing to turn right and struck the back of Coffee's vehicle. Trout was cited for failure to stop in an assured distance. No injuries were reported.
 08/02/20 – 4:47 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a two-vehicle accident on Hwy. 27. According to the report a semi-trailer driven by Khadar Ali Maalin, 28, of Minneapolis, struck a farm tractor driven by Gregory Dwight Hohl, 66, of Donnellson. Maalin was traveling southbound and attempted to move into the left lane but struck Hohl's tractor in the process and then overturned

while trying to correct back into the right lane. No injuries were reported. Maalin was cited for following to close.
 8/02/20 – 6:09 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident on 175th Street. According to the report, a vehicle missed a curve, hit an embankment on a driveway, and came to rest in a cornfield. The owner of the 2009 dark blue Chevy Tahoe SUV has yet to be identified as the operators fled the scene. But the report indicated that numerous alcoholic beverages containers were in the vehicle along with a strong odor of alcohol.

Hancock County Sheriff's Report

07/27/20 – Elaine F O'Brien, age 42, of Carthage, IL was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging her with Failure to Pay on original charges of Driving While License Suspended. O'Brien was released after posting the required bond and given a future court date.
 07/29/20 – Donovan A Hansen, age 46, of Nauvoo, IL was arrested on a Miami-Dade County Florida warrant charging him with Probation Violation on original charges of Grand Theft 2nd Degree. Hansen remains lodged in the Hancock County Jail in lieu of bail awaiting extradition to Florida.
 07/29/20 – Danny E Gossage, age 62, of Littleton, IL was arrested and charged with Driving While License Suspended and No Insurance. Gossage was released after posting the required bond and given a future court date.
 07/31/20 – Raymond J Tallman, age 47, of Keokuk,

IA was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging him with Failure to Appear on original charges of Unlawful Possession of Methamphetamine, Criminal Trespass to Real Property, and Driving While License Suspended. Tallman remains lodged in the Hancock County Jail in lieu of bond awaiting his next court appearance.
 07/31/20 – Andrea L Blint, age 36, of Niota, IL was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging her with Failure to Appear on a Petition to Revoke or Modify Sentence on original charges of Unlawful Possession of Methamphetamine, Driving While License Suspended, and Operating Uninsured Motor Vehicle. Blint remains lodged in the Hancock County Jail in lieu of bail awaiting her next court appearance.
 07/31/20 – Brooke J Cooper, age 43, of Hamilton, IL was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging her with Failure to Appear on original charges of No Valid Driver's License, Operating an Uninsured Vehicle and Expired Registration. Cooper remains lodged in the Hancock County Jail in lieu of bail awaiting her next court appearance.
 07/31/20 – David W Trapp, age 62, of Columbia, MO was arrested and charged with Operating Uninsured Vehicle. Trapp was released after posting the required bond and given a future court date.
 08/01/20 – Danielle F Siveira, age 22, of Carthage, IL was arrested and charged with Driving Under the Influence. Siveira was released after posting the required bond and given a future court date.
 08/01/20 – Terry R Tripp, age

58, of Warsaw, IL was arrested and charged with Driving While License Suspended. Tripp was released after posting the required bond and given a future court date.
 08/01/20 – Larry J Tripp, age 49, of Niota, IL was arrested and charged with Driving Under the Influence and Driving While License Suspended. Tripp was released after posting the required bond and given a future court date.
 08/02/20 – Jay A Mitchell, age 41, of Fort Madison, IA was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging him with Domestic Violence and Driving While License Suspended. Mitchell remains lodged in the Hancock County Jail in lieu of bail awaiting his initial court appearance.
 08/02/20 – Christopher T Simmons, age 38, of Plymouth, IL was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging him with Failure to Appear on original charges of Criminal Trespass to Real Property. Simmons remains lodged in the Hancock County Jail in lieu of bail awaiting his next court appearance.
Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

07/31/20 – Fort Madison Firefighters responded to one medical, one animal rescue, one welfare check.
 08/01/20 – Fort Madison Firefighters responded to two medical calls and two vehicle accidents.
 08/02/20 – Fort Madison Firefighters responded to one false alarm and one assist.

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Charles Vandenberg, Editor
 (319).371.1670
 editor@pencitycurrent.com

Lee K. Vandenberg, Sales Manager
 (319).371.4125
 sales@pencitycurrent.com

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From the Front

Absentee ballots to start going out Oct. 5

VOTE - Continued from Page 1

get ballots and requests for ballots in on time.

“It’s important that voters fill out the ballots on time. Ballots will be sent out starting Oct. 5, and this year we may see more requests than usual,” she said.

With COVID-19 restrictions in place, utilizing the absentee voting will be the safest option for voters. Because of a possible influx of ballots, additional help has been added to the absentee board for counting.

COVID-19 has also presented other problems for county election officials including staffing.

“We are currently having an issue getting precinct election officials as well as polling places to hold in-person elections,” she said.

Sugars said anyone interested in volunteering to help service can call the county auditor’s office. Election officials are paid by the county.

Precinct election officials set up polling places and instruct voters how to properly use the voting equipment. More information can be found on the Lee County Auditor’s website.

But despite regular claims of voter fraud from one party or another year over year, Sugars said she isn’t overly worried about issues surfacing in Iowa.

“This isn’t a major issue in Iowa and not a huge concern for us. We have people that check and double check to make sure everyone’s vote counts,” she said.

The Lee County Auditor’s Office has been working closely with the Secretary of State’s Office to release promotional videos about absentee voting.

According to the Secretary of State’s office link to request an absentee ballot, a registered voter may make written application to their County Auditor for an absentee ballot. A written application for a mailed absentee ballot must be received by the voter’s County Auditor no later than 5:00 p.m. 10 days before the General Election, which is Tuesday, Nov. 3. That link is provided here at <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/pdf/absenteeballotapp.pdf>.

Everyone in the state this year will be getting a request by mail this year, but those who don’t want to wait can fill out the request at the Secretary of State’s office link.

Although the voting process won’t be quite as traditional, it’s still important that people make sure their voice is heard and get out and vote.

Attorney tells city to reinstate Construction appeal board

CITY - Continued from Page 1

tive with municipal violations, so it will work out good for both us. It’s a win-win.”

Lynch-Dallas also provides the city with other legal specialists and gives the city broader coverage.

The agreement requires the city pay \$170 per hour for associates at the firm with more than six years experience, \$150 for associates and \$100 for legal assistants. The firm would also be reimbursed for fees for filing, postage, mileage, digital legal searches and copies.

Attorneys would bill at half-rate for travel time, plus the mileage reimbursement.

At the upcoming City Council meeting on Tuesday, the council will consider approving an ordinance to re-establish the city’s Construction Board of Appeals.

At last Tuesday’s meeting, several contractors spoke up about some inconsistencies in applications of city code by Building Director Doug Krogmeier.

According to a report from Krogmeier, the city eliminated the board several years ago as part of an effort to clean up boards that were no longer functional or appropriate.

“Because of recent events, it has become evident that the City needs to have such a board in place to hear appeals,” Krogmeier wrote in the report to the City Council.

“Lynch-Dallas has also expressly informed us that this board needs to be re-established as quickly as possible.”

The agenda shows a suspension of the second and third readings, typically required to change city code, to expedite the re-creation of the board.

The board will have two primary purposes: to review new building codes for adoption and to hold hearings on appeals of decisions and code interpretations made by the building department.

The mayor has submitted the names of Krist Roach, Tom Schulz, Glenda Schneider, Ronald Walker and Doug Kenel to serve staggering terms on the five-person board.

Other agenda items include:

- a first reading of an ordinance redefining how far city employee’s residences must be from city limits.
- a resolution to approve plans and award the contract for the Great River Health System-Fort Madison Community Hospital Community Foundation trail that runs from the high school to Rodeo Park, to Jones Contracting for \$1.2 million.



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PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC NOTICE
Section 106
Public Notice**

Windstream is proposing to modify an existing telecommunications facility on an existing pole located at the below address in Lee County, IA with associated coordinates and overall structure height.

Windstream seeks comments from all interested persons on the impact of the proposed action on any districts, sites, buildings, structures, or objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture, that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Specific information about the project, including the historic preservation reviews that Windstream is conducting pursuant to the rules of the Federal Communications Commission (47 C.F.R. Sections 1.1307(4)) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 C.F.R. Part 800) will be made

available to interested persons who request the information from the contact below.

All questions, comments, and correspondence should be directed to Mary Bryant at Dynamic Environmental Associates, Inc., 3850 Lake Street, Suite C, Macon, GA 31204, 877-968-4787, Sec106@DynamicEnvironmental.com

within 30 days from the date of this publication.

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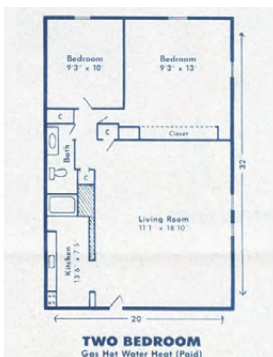
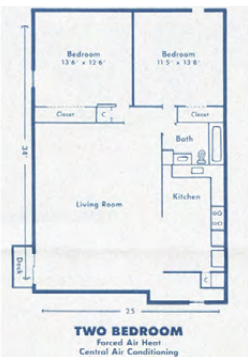
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From the Front

HTC says attendees were informed

MAYOR- Continued from Page 1

what he saw as hypocrisy in the system.

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

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

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

Sheerin wrote in a text

to Pen City Current Monday that parents and families were notified several weeks ago that if the event, which was originally slated to be held outside, was moved indoors everyone would be required to wear masks.

“What is the point of education if not to lay out information and have kids make a decision. Education is not about blind indoctrination. It just is not,” Mohrfeld said.

“It’s about teaching and allowing an environment where kids learn. I had a problem with that. They are adults now so they should be empowered and you should not make that decision for them.

“An education institution is not acting as an education system and I pushed back on that.

They’ve got every right to

ask me to wear a mask, but do I sit down and just comply with that when I don’t think that’s the way they should have gone about it? No.”

Mohrfeld’s son stayed through the ceremony with a mask on, as did two of his family members. All other attendees at the one-hour service wore masks and families were seated according to social distancing requirements.

Mohrfeld said he left the decision for his son to stay through the ceremony with his son.

“That got very complicated. He was torn between making a decision and disappointing his mother. He made a decision and God bless him. My decision was different than that,” Mohrfeld said.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Samantha Pothitakis, the 2020 HTC Valedictorian, dons a mortarboard themed with a statement from her favorite television show “The Office” as graduates prepared to receive diplomas Sunday at the Holy Trinity Catholic graduation exercise.



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**Lee County Health Department
Back-to-School Immunization Clinic**


August 20, 2020
9:00am - Noon
1:00pm - 4:00pm

#3 John Bennett Drive
Fort Madison, IA 52627

Appointments are strongly encouraged.
Walk-ins will be taken in order of arrival so wait times may vary.
Masks are required for those over the age of 4.

This Immunization Clinic is aimed at those children needing back-to-school immunizations specially those entering Kindergarten, 7th Grade & Senior Year.

For questions or to schedule an appointment please call (319)372-5225.





Welcome (back)

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