

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Sunday, January 26, 2020 | 7 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 29



www.pencitycurrent.com

WEEKEND SPORTS

Hounds come up short vs. No. 11 Mepo

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Fort Madison Head Coach Tony Sargent didn't take long to answer how many times his Lady Hounds haven't been in a ball game this year.

The Bloodhounds took on Class 2A No. 11 Mediapolis at home Saturday and after a soft first half came storming back, but an upset bid fell a couple buckets short as Mediapolis left town with a 53-46 win.

"We were never really in it at Ottumwa. We were down about 23-11 at the half and then they blew us out," Sargent said after Saturday's loss.

"Outside of that one, there really hasn't been too many."

The 15-1 Lady Bulldogs opened up a quick 10-point lead on the Hounds and after three straight turnovers in the

See **HOUNDS**, page 3



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

FM's Nadia Boeding knocks down one of four 3-pointers on the night Saturday as the Hounds lost to Class. 2A No. 11 Mediapolis 53-46.

OPINION



County made right move with LCEDG

Budgeting's tough business.

This is our fourth year digesting city and county budgets to turn around and tell our readership what is happening with their tax dollars.

It's one of those things that you put your reading glasses on for and prop yourself up in bed and read through at night when you can't sleep. There are a lot of things that fit that habit at the Pen City Current fun house.

As most know, we have a daughter with some pretty serious medical conditions that take us away frequently. It happened again at the beginning of this week and we were stuck in Iowa City for about three days working with doctors.

But all is well...almost. Another side effect is that sometimes we miss coverage because...well, family first.

One thing we missed was the Lee County Supervisors meeting on Tuesday.

The Lee County Economic Development Group was in the house with an army of board members because there was talk of taking \$71,000 out of the county's current \$200,000 annual contribution to the group's budget.

That's more than 30%. The supervisors wanted to use the money to add to its contributions to Lee County Emergency Medical Service to make that county budgetary contribution an even \$500,000.

With our daughter's medical condition's we've called Lee County EMS and we know how important that service is. But the biggest impact to that group isn't going to be the county finding \$71,000 somewhere else, which they will.

See **FUNDING**, page 7

WRESTLING: Bloodhound grapplers roll in sweep of Keokuk triangular

BY PCC STAFF

KEOKUK – Fort Madison surrendered just four matches and swept a triangular Thursday night at Wright Fieldhouse in Keokuk.

The Hounds rolled Keokuk 66-12 and downed Illini West 72-9.

Fort Madison recorded 11 pins on the night and took advantage of 12 forfeits on the night in the sweep. Carthage only fielded seven wrestlers and Keokuk had five open spots.

Will Larson and Mason Schau were the only Hound

wrestlers to take the mat in both meets.

Larson, wrestling at 138 lbs., defeated Keokuk's Levi Boudewyn in a 9-5 decision and pinned Carthage's Brayden McGinity just about a minute into the third period.

Schau recorded a pin over Keokuk's Dakota Haage in the first period at 152 lbs. at 1:17 in the first period, but then lost a 6-2 decision to Carthage's Lance Belshaw to go 1 an 1 on the day.

Nathan Steffensmeier, Levi Lowney, Danen Settles, Emmett Kruse, Owen Kruse, Gavin Wiseman and Aidan Pennock all recorded pins on the night.

UNEMPLOYMENT

December report shows Iowa jobless rate up a tick

DES MOINES – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased slightly to 2.7 percent in December. The state's jobless rate was 2.4 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate remained at 3.5 percent in December.

"Given the holidays and weather in

December, it was not surprising to see a slight increase in the unemployment rate. Still, Iowa's workforce grew by 4,400 jobs in December and has grown by 64,900 since the previous December," said Director Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development.

"We continue to have more jobs than

people to fill them and programs like Future Ready Iowa will help Iowans get the training they need for high-demand occupations and employers to find the talent pipeline they continue to need."

See **JOBS**, page 7

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WEATHER

SUN 26 Jan Broken Clouds, 32.3° F / 30.0° F
MON 27 Jan Overcast, 31.7° F / 30.7° F
TUE 28 Jan Overcast, 29.8° F / 27.5° F

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PICK 4 01/24 MIDDAY.....8941
PICK 4 01/24 EVENING.....2594

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Obituaries

RUTH F. HUTSON

Ruth Frances Hutson, 98, of Niota, Illinois, passed away at 4:20 A.M. Saturday January 25, 2020 at the home of her son and daughter-in-law near Wever, Iowa.

Born May 6, 1921 at Fort Madison, Iowa the daughter of August and Otilia (Gockel) Mansheim.



HUTSON

On September 7, 1942 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Fort Madison she married Clarence "Junior" Hutson. He preceded her in death on November 6, 1995.

Survivors include two sons: Dennis Hutson of Niota, Illinois and Ronald (Dorothy) Hutson of Wever, Iowa. Six grandchildren, fourteen great-grandchildren, two great great-grandchildren and one on the way. Also surviving is one sister-in-law Edith "Polly" Hutson and several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, one son, daughter-in-law grandson and great grandson. Also preceding her in death were two brothers and three sisters.

Ruth was a member of Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Nauvoo and the Catholic Women's Club. She was a graduate of Catholic Central High School and previously worked at the Sheaffer Pen Company.

The family will meet with friends from 9:30 A.M. to 10:30 A.M. Tuesday at Sacred Heart Church, Holy Family Parish, Fort Madison. The Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 A.M. Tuesday January 28, 2020 at Sacred Heart Church, Holy Family Parish, Fort Madison with Fr. Thomas Szydlak as Celebrant.

Burial will be in the Sacred Heart Cemetery in Fort Madison. In lieu of flowers the family requests memorials be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital or Ss Peter and Paul School in Nauvoo. Schmitz-Banks and Beals Funeral Home of Nauvoo is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.sbbfuneralhome.com.

FRANKLIN L. ELLIS

Franklin "Frank" L. Ellis, 75, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away on Friday, January 24, 2020 at 8:45 AM at his home.

He was born on September 6, 1944 in Sigourney, IA to William and Vivian Weimer Ellis. On August 7, 1965 he married Marcine Dawartz in Ft. Madison at St. Paul Lutheran Church by Rev. George Moeller. Frank worked at Shellor Globe for several years and was a foreman when they closed. He then worked for Catfish Bend Casino and retired on May 3, 2006. Frank graduated from Warsaw High School in 1962. He served in the US Army during Vietnam and served as a military policeman. He was an avid Iowa Hawkeye and Chicago Cub Fan. His greatest pastime was watching old western movies, especially John Wayne.



ELLIS

Survivors include his wife, Marcine Ellis of Ft. Madison; two daughters, Traci (Dennis) Stuekerjuergen of West Point and Kara (Dylan) Lumsden of Wever; four grandchildren, Brooke Meyer, Kaleb Stuekerjuergen, Kinley Lumsden and Xander Lumsden; three great grandchildren, Lucy Hawk, Hanna Hawk and Henry Stuekerjuergen; two brothers, Jesse "Bill" (Donna) Ellis of Billings, MT and Robert (Kathy) Ellis of Hardin, IL; one sister, Anida Riney of Springfield, IL; several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents.



Friends may call after 2 PM on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory where the family will meet with friends from 4:30-6:30 PM. The funeral service will be held on Thursday, January 30, 2020 at 10:30 AM at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory with Rev. Cheryl Simpson officiating. Burial will follow in Hillcrest Memorial Park Cemetery with military rites performed by the Ft. Madison Veterans Honor Guard.

A memorial has been established in his memory and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

HARRY E. FEDLER

Harry E. Fedler, 87, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away on Friday, January 24, 2020 at 3:02 PM at the Ft. Madison Community Hospital.



FEDLER

He was born on January 18, 1933 in Ft. Madison to Arnold and Alma Beach Fedler. Harry was a factory worker. He served in the US Army during the Korean Conflict. He enjoyed hunting and fishing.

Survivors include three brothers, Howard (Sandy) Fedler of Le-Claire, IA, Phillip (Mary) Fedler of Ft. Madison, and Francis (Janice) Fedler of Quincy, IL. Several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Per his wishes, cremation has been entrusted to King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A private family service will be held and burial will be held in Soldiers' Circle, Oakland Cemetery.

A memorial has been established for Montrose Health Center and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.



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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.

LEE CHD
 #3 John Bennett Drive, Fort Madison
 (319) 372-5225 . www.leecountyhd.org

Charles Vandenberg, Editor

(319).371.1670
editor@pencitycurrent.com

Lee K. Vandenberg, Sales Manager

(319).371.4125
sales@pencitycurrent.com

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For the Record/From the Front

Kruse has 10 3s in last two games

HOUNDS - Continued from Page 1

first period forced Sargent to call a quick time out to settle his team.

Out of the 30 second timeout, freshman Camille Kruse hit a 3-ball and Anna Kester scored again after a defensive stop to cut the lead to 7-12. Mepo would go on a 6-0 run to end the first, however, up 18-7.

The teams played even ball to halftime with both scoring 12 in the second quarter. A driving basket by Mollie Knipe from the left side cut the Bulldogs lead to four at 18-14, but that's as close as Fort Madison would get on the night.

Mediapolis senior Helena Hillyard hit a 3-ball in the second period to put the Bulldogs up 10. The three points put Hillyard over the 1,000 point mark for the Bulldogs.

In the third period, Mediapolis pushed the lead back to 13 at 44-31 behind Hillyard's seven points. But the fourth saw the Bloodhounds' Nadia Boeding heat up hitting back-to-back 3-balls as Mepo keyed on Kruse on the perimeter.

Boeding's second long ball came with 5:35 left in the game cut the Bulldogs' lead to 44-37. Hallie Mohr would answer for Mepo to end a Fort Madison 6-0 run to start the period.

Junior Brandy Walker, who's getting very comfortable with the ball anywhere inside 10 feet, put in an 8-foot jumper in the lane. After another defensive stop for Fort Madison, Walker would score again inside on a nifty pass from a driving Kruse to cut the lead to five at 46-41.

But luck would run out on the Hounds as

they went just 1 of 6 from the field the rest of the way and committed six personal fouls down the stretch to let the Bulldogs button up the game.

"How can you not be proud of these kids. The girls came into the game thinking this team beat us 70-12 last year," Sargent said.

"I told them if they beat us by 50 I'm resigning tomorrow because it ain't gonna happen. It's changed. That's over. It's done."

Sargent said the girls are just learning how to be competitive again this year and some of the success is coming from rebuilding confidence.

Down by five and forcing the Bulldogs into a turnover with about two minutes left, Sargent called time out to set up the offense, but out of the break the girls didn't execute the plan.

"We were gonna have a certain offensive set and they didn't run what we set up, but that's gonna happen sometimes," he said.

"These kids are still not used to winning and they're gonna do that kind of stuff. But these girls deserve a lot of credit. They fight hard and I'm proud of them.

"I'm not the greatest coach in the world, but I try to teach kids to have confidence in themselves and I think we're starting to see some of that now."

Kruse led Fort Madison with 14 points, followed by Boeding who had 12, her second straight game in double figures. Walker had nine points, while Kylee Cashman and Knipe each chipped in with four. Kester and Dalyn Wondra both scored a bucket to round out the Fort Madison scoring.

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

01/23/20 - 8:01 a.m.

- Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2700 block of Avenue L.

01/23/20 - 8:52 a.m.

- Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 600 block of Avenue H.

01/23/20 - 9:32 a.m.

- Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1900 block of 48th Street.

01/23/20 - 11:34 a.m.

- Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1800 block of Avenue D.

01/23/20 - 6:09 p.m.

- Fort Madison Police

responded to a report of a burglary in the 2000 block of 303rd Avenue

01/23/20 - 10:43 p.m.

- Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident at the intersection of Henry Ladyn Drive and Hwy. 61.

01/24/20 - 5:13 a.m.

- Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 400 block of Avenue C.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

01/23/20 - 10:29 p.m.

Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Neysa Marie Root, 35, at the sheriff's office on a judgment hold.

01/23/20 - 2:30 p.m. -

Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Angela Marie Neal, 41, of Mt. Pleasant, in the 1200 block of West Grimes in Fairfield, on a warrant for failure to appear. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

01/22/20 - Fort Madison

Firefighters responded to four medical calls, one smoke alarm.

01/23/20 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to four medical calls.

01/24/20 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to two medical calls and one smoke alarm.

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Sports

Holy Trinity Catholic

Nikes hold court on Homecoming

BY PCC STAFF

BURLINGTON – Holy Trinity Catholic gave 11th-ranked Burlington Notre Dame a run for their money for three quarters Friday night. But a lull in the second quarter was the difference at the Nikes won 44-33 and swept the regular season series.

Notre Dame won 49-30 back on Dec. 13 at Shotenkirk Gym.

The Crusaders went on a 7-0 run in the first period as part of an 11-6 first quarter lead, but couldn't hold the momentum on the Nikes Homecoming night.

Freshman Gabby Deery put up 11 first half points to help the Nikes wipe out the 5-point first quarter deficit and Notre Dame took the lead with about five minutes left in the second quarter at 14-13, a lead they would never relinquish.

With Holy Trinity down just one point at 18-17 with two minutes left in the first half, the Nikes would take control of the game with a 9-0 run

that spanned the halftime break. The Crusaders wouldn't score again until the five minute mark of the third period when a free thrown cut into Notre Dame's lead 27-18.

Notre Dame (14-1) would push the lead to 11 at the end of three and the two teams would play even ball the rest of the way.

"The girls played hard but we missed some shots and free throws. We make a couple of those, and we put some pressure on them," Head Coach Tony Johnson said.

"The effort was there tonight."

Claire Pothitakis led HTC with nine points, followed by Avery Hopper with 8. Kassi Randolph had five points, Bailey Hellweg added three, while Raquel Schneider and Brooke Mueller each had a bucket for the Crusaders.

Deery led the Nikes with 14 points. Taylor Ackerman had 13 and Katy Stephens had 10.

Holy Trinity falls to 8-8 on the year and plays host to Class 2A 7th-ranked Van Buren on Tuesday.

Notre Dame races by Holy Trinity boys

BY PCC STAFF

BURLINGTON – Senior Quentin Schneider put up 17 points for a depleted HTC squad as Burlington Notre Dame won at home Friday 62-49

The Crusaders, who typically run a six-man rotation, had to run without outside shooter Blake Crabtree due to illness. Head coach John Hellige said other players were also dealing with illness this week.

The Nikes rushed out to a quick 20-5 first quarter lead behind six each from seniors Mitchel Brent and Nick Skerik.

The Crusaders would get their legs in the second quarter and hand with Notre Dame 17-14, but the first quarter deficit would prove to be too much to

overcome.

Notre Dame wouldn't put too much more distance between the two in the second half, but Holy Trinity wouldn't be able to put together a run to get back in the game.

Matt Hellige had 12 points for HTC under the basket. Vasin Thurman put in eight for the Crusaders while Jason Thurman added seven and Chandler Rung put in five.

The Crusaders have now lost their last three and stand at 5-10 on the year.

Brent and Axel Tjaden led the 11-3 Nikes with 15 points each. HTC hosts Van Buren in Tuesday night and then travels to WACO on Thursday night to face the 3rd-ranked 15-0 Warriors.



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SPORTS BRIEFS

Central Lee girls win at WACO

Mya Merschman scored 22 and Makayla Morrison had 20 as the Lady Hawks downed WACO 56-41 Friday on the road. Macy Watkins added nine points, Ella Sanders had three and Kaylynn Summers had a bucket for Central Lee (10-6).

Morgan Graber threw in 17 to lead WACO.

Hound JV wrestlers get six titles

Cuyrin Ross, Bryce Britton, Austin Miller, Logan Kearns, Quinton Ross and Levi Lowney all won their brackets at the Louisa Muscatine Junior Varsity Invitational Friday.

Danny Savage, Aiden Pennock, Mason Rohdy, Chance Decker and Johnathon Lindner each took second in their brackets.

FMHS v Keokuk reset for Monday

The Bloodhound basketball games postponed Friday have been rescheduled for Monday, Jan. 27, beginning with junior varsity girls half at 4 p.m. the a junior varsity boys game at 4:45. The varsity girls will then play followed by the varsity boys.

Central Lee 7th graders win

The 7th grade Central Lee Hawks boys basketball team downed New London 32-21 on Thursday in Donnellson.

Brayden Wyrick led the Hawks with 14, followed by Chase Johnson and Kegan Damico with eight and Kayden Calfee with 2. In the extra quarter New London won 23-0.

The Hawks travel to Notre Dame on Monday and then play at home against Van Buren on Thursday.

Hawks 8th graders down Tigers

Ryan Wilbert scored eight to lead Central Lee past New London in 8th grade boys hoops 38-28.

Zach Manwill had seven, followed by Grant Myhre, Cory Jones and Aden Ross each with five. Hunter Gregory added four points, while Landan Lowenberg and Kayden Ames each had two.

Central Lee plays at Burlington Notre Dame on Monday night.

FM 8th graders split with Washington

FORT MADISON – Leif Boeding scored 20 points to lead the Fort Madison 8th grade boys team to a 41-25 win over Washington Tuesday night in the "A" game.

Hunter Cresswell lead the Little Hounds with six rebounds. He also had six points as did Carson Rashid. Cade Denning had five, and Ben Ramatowski and Aiden Benda each had two for Fort Madison.

In the 'B' game, Oliver Santiago and Richard Stocker had four points and William Bennett and Conner Fuget each had two. Bennett had five boards in the 29-12 loss.

Central Lee 8th graders down HTC

WEST POINT – Central Lee 8th grade boys basketball played at West Point against Monday night. The Hawks won 38-26. Aden Ross had 10 points. Zach Manwill scored seven points and Riley Stuecker had five. Other scorers for Central Lee included 4 points by Landan Lowenberg, Grant Myhre, and Dante Merschman. Cory Jones and Hunter Gregory each had two. Next game is Thursday at home against New London.

For HTC Maddox Run had 15, including three 3-pointers, Conner Gehling finished with four, James Stinson scored three points and Adam Sobczak and Luke Hellige each had two.

HTC won the 7th grade game 29-9. Sobczak had 13, while Hellige scored nine. Henry Graham had five and Brayton Schneider scored two in the win.

Holy Trinity travels to Danville Thursday night.

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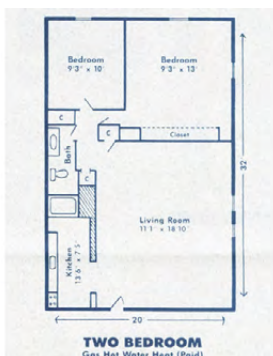
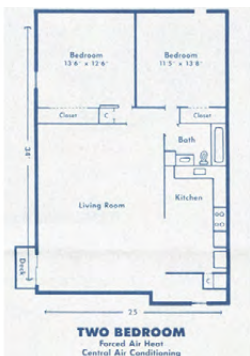
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The Pen City Current is seeking a part-time to full-time stringer/reporter for south Lee County.

Candidates will have some writing experience and basic photography skills. Compensation based on story production. Coverage would include the city of Keokuk, Keokuk Public Schools, Central Lee Public schools, south Lee County breaking news, and features. Sports coverage would be considered as an additional beat for the right candidate. This is an excellent opportunity with a rapidly growing local independent news outlet.

Please send resume, writing/photography samples, and cover letter via email to:

Chuck Vandenberg
Editor - Pen City Current
editor@pencitycurrent.com

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From the Front

County should always fund LCEDG

FUNDING - Continued from Page 1

It's going to be the state changing the way it reimburses Lee County EMS Director Bill Young's company for Medicaid patient services. You can go back to our story on that issue at this link:

<https://www.pencitycurrent.com/2020/01/07/lee-county-ems-asks-county-for-18-funding-increase/>

The state doesn't classify ambulance services as Essential Services, which would change the reimbursement formula. Many counties in the state are struggling with the financial health of those private/public partnerships.

But sludging up the LCEDG's budget isn't an answer either. Three of the five supervisors agreed to that. One was missing and Gary Folluo said that county contribution needs to be further reduced. Folluo said the group's fundraising campaigns are successful enough to allow the county to back off.

We disagree. There has to be a public/private partnership in the LCEDG portfolio. It's our understanding that potential investors look for that on a checklist of the "good stuff".

The discussion came on the heels of an announcement from ConAgra that they are going to invest \$30 million in the Fort Madison plant and add 91 jobs at a time when we already have more jobs than people who want to fill them.

Why would ConAgra do that? Because they like the partnerships they see and momentum they see. We don't know this for fact, but one would also think they see value in the programming LCEDG is doing with area students to get them interested in staying right here to go to work - in good paying jobs.

Lee County already produces a quarter of a billion dollars in manufacturing payroll annually. That's a lot of return on the investment LCEDG makes to hold hands with current business and industry.

A lot of good things are happening with that group and the principles involved have already pared expenses in payroll when Joe Steil was removed and the position

wasn't backfilled. There are things we hear whispers of, but won't report on because it's just the right thing to do. Just as I'm positive there are other things in the works that we don't know about.

There are things working at that state level that could take the sting out of the county's budget, including possibly paying for all mental health services out of the state's general fund. That's another huge nut to crack, but it gives a little room to breathe for supervisors going forward.

Prioritizing is tough business for elected officials and the county's right up against the state-mandated 2% soft cap. But these two groups need the funding. So does the sheriff, the health department,

the roads, the libraries, the conservation department, and everyone else keeping our county viable and growing.

The majority of the board saw fit to keep the LCEDG budget as is for now. It's the right move. And if the state does do things to ease the pain a little, even though they're not known for playing nice with local government budgets, that contribution should stay in place.

Hopefully, bills will be brought to the legislature to change ambulance service to an "Essential Service" so Bill and the fine team in place there can stay viable. And Folluo is right when he says the state should get involved in providing ambulances like they do sheriff's vehicles. That's huge purchasing power

that could save these vital service budgets.

Oh, and I braved the winter to go to Middletown Thursday to cover a Trade Expo at the Armory. Neat stuff there.

Union reps were there talking about the state needing to incentivize contractors to use companies with apprentice workers. If it helps attract people to those fields that's great, but we can't forget about the non-union companies like Mohrfeld Electric, Seither and Cherry, Huffman Welding & Mfg, and many others, that help fund our local non-profits, volunteer hours and resources, partner with our local schools, and work closely with our local governments to keep costs down on projects that ultimately keep dollars local ... but that's Beside the Point.

Manufacturing sees deepest jobs cuts

JOBS - Continued from Page 1

The number of unemployed Iowans increased to 47,200 in December from 46,200 in November. The current estimate is 6,800 higher than the year ago level of 40,400.

The total number of working Iowans increased to 1,716,100 in December. This figure was 4,400 higher than November and 64,900 higher than one year ago.

Iowa's total nonfarm employment trended down in December and shed 3,100 jobs. This is the second consecutive month that firms trimmed payrolls following a loss of 2,300 jobs in November. Goods producing sectors were lifted by unusual hiring in the construction sector, but private services declined again this month. Government lost 900 jobs in December but remains up 2,000 jobs versus one year ago.

Manufacturing posted the largest loss in December (-1,400) and has now pared jobs in six consecutive months following a recent high in June. Durable goods factories have been most affected with 1,900 jobs shed over the past three months.

Professional and business services were down in December (-1,200) due primarily to cutbacks in professional, scientific, and technical services. This decline follows a drop of 900 jobs last month. Truck transportation looked especially weak in December and transportation, warehousing, and utilities combined shed 1,400 jobs. On the other hand, construction posted an unusual increase in activity to end the year (+1,500). Most of these gains were in specialty trade contractors. Despite losses in October and November construction has generally been positive through much of the year.



2020 To Do List Save Our Planet

Thank you to all our customers who worked to reduce their environmental footprint last year. We look forward to helping you continue your efforts and to educating our communities on more ways to help this year.

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