

# PEN CITY CURRENT

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## HTC to move to required learning

**APRIL 14:** System administrators moving to mandatory learning through shutdown

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Students at Holy Trinity Catholic will begin required distance learning systemwide starting Tuesday, April 14.

Sheerin said whether school is restarted or canceled for this year, HTC is positioned to move forward.

“The truth is we’re planning long-term and I think at this point any school would tell you they are not on a 3-week plan. They are really planning to end the school year,” Sheerin said.

“We would rather be overly prepared and hope the government would say we’re

coming back May 1, but we’ve made a decision to plan this out for the long term.”

He said the first two weeks out of school the system started introductory distance learning programming to get everybody’s feet wet, find out online capabilities and see what the returns are from students. These next two weeks have been fine tuning the processes, and preparing for required

See **SCHOOL**, page 4

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### Unemployment charges will go back to employers

*IWD director says state will not charge next \$180 million*

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

JOHNSTON – Iowa Workforce Development Director Beth Townsend announced Thursday that the state will cap the amount of unemployment claims that will not be charged to employers due to the coronavirus.

At Gov. Kim Reynolds daily press conference Thursday, Townsend said when the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund balance reaches \$950 million, the state will once again start charging unemployment claims against employers.

The trust fund currently has a balance of \$1.13 billion, so Townsend said that leaves about \$180 million before the charges are triggered again against employers. She said last week alone the state paid out close to \$27.5 million in unemployment claims and those claims are on the rise.

That math would indicate anywhere from four to seven weeks would remain before the move would take place depending on the rate of increased claims.

Townsend also sent out a stern warning to those voluntarily quitting jobs to collect the unemployment and a federal \$600 per week additional stipend.

“You cannot voluntary quit your position, that is a disqualifier for these benefits,” she said.

Townsend said IWD staff is getting to calls and claims as fast as they can, and asked for patience. She said when calling wait for the ringing to stop, there will be small silent delay, and then someone will pick up the phone.

“I’d like to ask all Iowans to provide our hardworking dedicated staff the same patience and grace they would friends and neighbors,” Townsend said. “We will get to you and more important, we will get your claims paid.”

See **UPDATE**, page 2



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Red cups stuck in the fence links in front of Richardson Elementary show students are missed.

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## WEATHER

**FRI 10 Apr**..... Clear Skies, 49.4° F/ 44.6° F  
**SAT 11 Apr**..... Moderate Rain, 54.2° F/ 49.1° F  
**SUN 12 Apr**..... Snow, 55.5° F/ 36.6° F

OpenWeatherMap

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**LOTTO AMERICA 04/08**..... 2 718 26 40, Star Ball: 3, All Star Bonus: 2  
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**PICK 3 04/08 EVENING**..... 3 81  
**PICK 4 04/08 MIDDAY**..... 6 054  
**PICK 4 04/08 EVENING**..... 3 798  
**POWERBALL 04/08**..... 2 37 39 48 54, Powerball: 5, Power Play: 3

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## Lee County News/From the Front

# County auditor moves primary polling locations

*Fraise moves Keokuk, FM spots to allow for more space, voters*

Submitted by Lee County Auditor's Office

LEE COUNTY – Lee County Auditor Denise Fraise announces change in polling locations for the June 2nd Primary Election.

Polling places for the 2020 Primary Election will be as follows:

First Baptist Church 301 24th Street Fort Madison

Fort Madison Wards 1-5, Madison, Jefferson, Washington and Green Bay Townships

First Christian Church 3476 Main Street, Keokuk

Keokuk Wards 1-7 and Jackson Township

PGSB Comm. Room – Donnellson at 506 N Main Street, Donnellson Cedar, Franklin, Marion, Harrison, Charleston, Des Moines, Van Buren, Denmark, Pleasant Ridge and West Point Town-

ships and the Cities of Franklin, Donnellson, Saint Paul, Houghton and West Point, Montrose Township and City of Montrose

Fraise is encouraging all voters to take advantage of the opportunity to vote by mail from the comfort and safety of your home. The Iowa Secretary of State will be mailing absentee ballot requests to all registered active voters in the next few weeks. Remember, we must have a signed request in order to mail you a ballot. The last day we can mail ballots is May 22nd. Voted ballots can be mailed back or placed in a ballot drop box at the North Lee Office Building or the South Courthouse.

For the Primary Election, you must declare a Political Party. This is the parties procedure to nominate their candidate to appear on the November General Election ballot. And please remember to sign the yellow highlighted signature line located on the affidavit return envelope.

Anyone having questions regarding voting, may contact the Auditor's office at 319-372-3705.

# Southeast Iowa region still ranked as 9 out of 10

**UPDATE** - Continued from Page 1

Reynolds got a bit stern as well, when questioned by a pool reporter who wanted to know what additional assumptions are being considered in addition to metrics for determining regional scores.

State officials have designated six regional zones and are assessing scores of up to 10 with a 10 being the highest risk score possible. Reynolds has said at several conferences that state leaders are looking at metrics including hospitalization, age, and resources to determine the scores, as well as other assumptions.

"People get so hung up on the metrics. Let's go back to the main mes-

sage. Stay home. Help me elevate that message and raise the volume," she said taking off her glasses and talking straight to the camera.

"If we do that, these press conferences can be about how we can open things back up and get this state and country back to normal. Let's focus on what we need to be doing and what we can do by being individually responsible."

As of Thursday, Region 5, which includes southeast Iowa up to Johnson County and Iowa City, is at a score of 9. Region 6, which includes Linn County and Cedar Rapids, to the northern border, is at an 8, one

point down from the 9 it had earlier this week.

Region 2 was at 7, Region 1 was an 8, and regions 3 and 4 were both at 6.

Reynolds updated Region 5 data saying 32 patients in the region are currently hospitalized with COVID-19, seven of which were newly hospitalized in the past 24 hours. There were 14 patients in ICUs and 11 on ventilators. There were 702 beds still available in the region, 93 in ICUs and 167 ventilators still available in the region.

"Iowa's capacity is very good at this time. We're monitoring information daily and if situations change we're ready to respond," Reynolds said.

She said the state is also continuing to monitor personal protective equipment supplies, but supplies are tight. Reynolds rattled off numbers of Iowa manufacturers who are helping make face shields, masks, and hand sanitizer that are helping with supply issues.

"PPE continues to be an issue and we're monitoring it carefully and getting supplies where they are needed most, but we can't let up for a second. We have to dig deep and do our part to answer the call," she said.

The state has also received 15 Abbott Lab testing machines which give results in about five minutes. Reynolds said health experts are now determining where the state would get the best usage out of the machines and the limited testing supplies on hand.

In the past 24 hours the state reported 125 new cases bringing the total positives in the state to 1,270 with no new counties discovering positive COVID cases. There were 882 negative cases in the past 24 hours and the State Hygienic Lab has testing capability for 2,532 tests currently.

Two additional deaths were reported out of Linn County bringing the state total to 29, while 115 remain hospitalized and 476 have recovered from the illness, according to state data.



# 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.

**Here are just a few ways you can help:**

- Don't put plastic bags in recycling bins
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- Flatten empty boxes for better storage & volume reduction
- Place all recyclables loose in bins
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- Properly dispose of all electronics and household hazardous waste



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# Obituaries/For the Record

## OBITUARIES

### DONNA S. EAVES

Donna S. Eaves, 82, of Fountain Green, Illinois passed away Wednesday, April 8, 2020 at 5:12 p.m. at her home.

Donna was born on October 8, 1937 in Fort Madison, Iowa, the daughter of George and Florence (Anderson) Adams. On May 4, 1956 she married Guy Eaves in Fort Madison.

Donna was a graduate of Fort Madison High School and worked at various jobs throughout her life, including IAAP, as a CNA at The Elms in Macomb, Methode in Carthage and for Carl Sandburg College, retiring after 25 years. She enjoyed crocheting, mowing, working in her flower garden and watching hummingbirds. Donna especially loved her family.

Survivors include her companion, Guy; one daughter, Jeanette Poulson of Fountain Green; two sons, Steve (Lana) Eaves and David Eaves all of Fountain Green; three grandchildren, Amber (Chris) Eaves, Brittany (Shannon) Poulson and Kenlee Eaves; seven great-grandchildren, John, Anthony, Ryan, Addy, Keegan, Lukas and Maxwell; one sister, Betty (James) Bindewald of Blandinsville; two nieces; one nephew and two special friends, Kimberly Burford and Jeff (Sandy) Hainline. Also surviving is her beloved dog, Ellie Mae.

Donna was preceded in death by her parents and one granddaughter, Ashley Lorain Eaves.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic a private graveside service will be held at McConnell Cemetery, near Fountain Green with Rev. Bruce Goettsche officiating. In lieu of flowers, a memorial fund has been established for the MDH Hospice or Hancock County Animal Shelter. Contributions may be mailed to Donna Eaves Memorial Fund, c/o Banks & Beals Funeral Home, P.O. Box 503, LaHarpe, IL 61450.

Banks & Beals Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. To sign the guest book or leave a condolence please visit Donna's obituary at [banksandbeals.com](http://banksandbeals.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.

## Library may be closed to public, but plenty of activity going on

BY SARAH  
CLENDINENG  
FM Library Director

We still have a lot of services to offer the community

The library has a lot of online resources to offer at [www.FortMadisonLibrary.org](http://www.FortMadisonLibrary.org). Under the "Watch, Read and Listen Online" link, we have books, audiobooks, music, magazines and streaming videos. The "Education, Career, Language and Hobbies" tab has links to family history resources, research databases for students working on homework and language learning, if you want to take some time to learn a new language. If you don't have a library card, there is a link to apply for a digital library card on the library's main page. Once the application is filled out, we should be able to get you access to our online resources in 2 business days. This card will only provide you

access to the library's online content. Once we re-open, you can bring in proof of your current address to the library for continued access to the library's digital, and physical, resources.

We have been providing curbside pick-up of library materials for current library card holders and have checked out 564 items between March 18 and April 6. We would like to continue this but can't guarantee we will be able to. If you have a library card and would like to check out library materials, please call us at (319) 372-5721 and see if this

service is still available, or check our Facebook page for notices.

We are taking our Cook the Book program online (temporarily) and looking for people to share favorite recipes and cooking stories on our Facebook page. The theme for the post on April 3rd was comfort food and it's not too late to share a recipe. On April 9th, the theme will be favorite breakfast or brunch foods.

We are also available to answer questions and help you find information by

See LIBRARY, page 5

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## For the Record

### Fort Madison Police Report

04/07/20 – 8:28 a.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 800 block of Avenue H.

04/07/20 – 1:23 p.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1900 block of Avenue N.

04/07/20 – 3:07 p.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 300 block of 34th Street.

04/07/20 – 7:47 p.m.

– Fort Madison Police arrested Justin Russell Raszler, 32, of Fort Madison in the 600 block of Avenue H, on a charge of driving while barred.

He was released on a promise to appear.

04/07/20 – 12:01 a.m.

– Fort Madison Police arrested Christine Pennington, 40, of Fort Madison, in the 2600 block of Avenue L, on a charge of driving while barred.

He was released on a promise to appear.

04/08/20 – 5:34 a.m.

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

04/08/20 – 7:35 a.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2600 block of Avenue L.

04/08/20 – 9:31 a.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1900 block of Avenue O.

04/08/20 – 11:25 a.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1900 block of Avenue O.

04/08/20 – 11:30 a.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 5000 block of Avenue O.

04/08/20 – 5:15 p.m.

– Fort Madison Police arrested Tyler James Hammond, 29, of Keokuk, in the 5400 block of Avenue O, on a charge of interference with official acts causing injury. He

was taken to the Lee

County Jail and held. 04/08/20 – 5:30 p.m.

– Fort Madison Police arrested Keith John Rogers, 36, of Fort Madison, at the police department on 15 counts of violation of a no contact order and 1st-degree harassment.

He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

04/09/20 – 8:42 a.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2600 block of Avenue L.

### Lee County Sheriff's Report

04/07/20 – no arrests or accident activity reported

04/08/20 – 5:30 p.m.

– Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Tyler James Hammond, 29 of Keokuk in the 5400 block of Avenue O, on warrants for failure to appear and violation of parole. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

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

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Left to right: Chris, Erin, Judy, Jill, Brian, Shelby, and Desiree

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## From the Front

# HTC planning on distance learning to end the year

**SCHOOL** - Continued from Page 1

learning that will translate to credits for students.

He said student participation has been “sporadic”, but said at times some classes were seeing 85% participation and some could be lower than 50%.

Pen City Current sat in on a class with teacher Kevin Barnes last Friday that had no student attendance during the allotted Zoom teleconference time, but Barnes said there could have been a technical snag.

He said tech is a big issue right now because not everyone has access with the rural broadband connectivity issues in Lee County. But he said for the most part students have been doing well with the system.

“I believe the voluntary learning is working out very well for the students who can access it,” Barnes said.

“They know what they are going to learn is limited. The direction they move is going to be a little slower paced than in the classroom. But it also gives them something to do with social restrictions we have right now.”

He said the learning is centered around concepts and not small details. Most of his classes are currently working on final projects so a lot of the class time is centered around questions on the projects.

But he said in some instances, students are doing better because they aren't with their peers, they are more relaxed and even have brought pets on their laps as they sit it on coursework.

Sheerin said if this shutdown has highlighted anything it's the lack of rural broadband access.

“State by state now I believe you're going to see huge investments in high speed and getting fiber optics to every home. That will be a major effort going forward.”

But he said the district will mail or deliver or have available for pick up, packets that have instructional material in them, and will work with students who don't have reliable Internet access.

Sheerin said the district has been looking at personalize learning models for several years and because of those efforts, the transition to distance learning has been easier.

“Each student can move on at their own pace, in a nutshell. If you're in third

grade and you know multiplication and another student is still on addition models, one can move on and the other can work at his or her pace,” Sheerin said.

With the learning being required effective Tuesday, the coursework will now be issued credit or grading, but Sheerin said that will have to be adaptive as well.

“That will be all done on very personalized basis based on families' ability to get information and get it returned. Then we'll assess fairly,” he said.

“What that likes like will be a work in progress whether it's pass/fail, to a grade, to a rubric of 1-4. with 1 being optimal and 4 being challenged. Then you have to look at how that effects grade point averages for those students.

Sheerin said High School Principal Jason Woodley has been instrumental in getting the high school teachers and students ready for the transition to the required learning.

“Mr . Woodley has done an outstanding job at the high school and he's been very instrumental in getting things ready in that system,” Sheerin said.

He said high school AP and dual credit courses will still be scored and graded as they were before.

He said if the state sees enough progress from the health and safety side of things and opens schools back up May 1 the district is ready. And going forward federal, state, and local education officials will be working to perfect the systems that were quickly put in place for this shutdown.

“If May 1 were back in school then happy days. It's been a good introduction to us,” he said. “Every school will now work to perfect online learning services. The best lesson from all this is not necessarily that our schools aren't ready to be prepared, but the infrastructure around us has been fragile.”

He said he's been hearing from students that they'd like to get back and be a part of school activities.

“All the parents are saying kids are missing one another, but if we open it up they'll be back two weeks and will be clamoring for summer break,” Sheerin said with a chuckle.

Barnes said shifting to mandatory learning will be easier because the students have experienced it and have had access already.

“I think a lot of the students have had to chance to adjust and are doing very well with the online system. A number of students only able to get online short period of time a couple times a week. But I know what kind of workload to give them. I'm adjusting the workload,” Barnes said last week.

“If they do turn it over to mandatory, most students and districts will do just fine. There will be those that are left behind a bit but our school is providing paper packet pickup where families who struggle with the online access.”

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## Local News/Classifieds

# Library following CDC guidelines

**LIBRARY** - Continued from Page 3

phone and e-mail Monday through Friday. We are checking voicemail so please leave a message if no one answers.

What's been going on behind closed doors

Between March 18 and April 6, we had a lot going on here. While the library is closed, the library employees were keeping busy even though they were out of sight. First of all, we were answering phones and helping patrons as much as we could. In addition to that, we were working on digitizing patron registration forms so that they are more easily accessible to circulation desk staff.

Publishers are still putting out new books, music and DVDs and we were still ordering those new materials, cataloging them and processing them so that they can be checked out.

There will be future children's and teen programs and there will be a summer reading program and we were working on planning and organizing those. We were also taking advantage of this opportunity to get a big jump on inventory, which will help us clean up our catalog and limit frustration about items that it looks like we own but don't exist on the shelf.

Finally, we were, and will continue to be, disinfecting all of the library materials that are returned following recommendations for handling books and paper products from the CDC.

*To all our healthcare providers, first responders, postal/delivery workers, and grocery and food suppliers - for keeping us supplied and safe. We just want to say...*

*Thank you!*



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**Temporary Job Opening**

The Fort Madison Public Library is seeking a Summer Reading Corps Associate service member. This position will help with summer reading activities in the library and help us take our summer reading program to local daycare facilities. The position will be 300 hours between May 26 and July 25. Compensation includes a living stipend as well as an education award from the National Service Trust upon successful completion of the full term of service. Application and complete job description can be found at [www.FortMadisonLibrary.org](http://www.FortMadisonLibrary.org) or contact Sarah Clendineng at (319) 372-5721.



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