

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Monday, March 16, 2020 | 5 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 56



www.pencitycurrent.com

Depot contract in front of council

City to vote on 2020-21 budget and talk dilapidated structures

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

The Fort Madison City Council could put an end to 20 years worth of deliberation on a new Amtrak Depot in Riverview Park if it approves a construction contract for the depot Tuesday night.

2000s and even before when former Fort Madison mayor John Wright hinted at moving the depot back to

the park during his tenure in the late 90s. But his successors Steve Ireland

See **CITY**, page 5

FORT MADISON – It could be a long night Tuesday as the Fort Madison City Council has several high profile projects on the agenda and a workshop to follow.

The city is close to finalizing a contract to start work in building a new depot platform for Amtrak service on the back of the North Lee County Historical Society Museum in Riverview Park.

The project dates back to the early

COVID-19 knocks area schools out four weeks

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Central Lee, Fort Madison and Holy Trinity Catholic school officials have announced closures for the next four weeks due to the spread of the coronavirus, and at the recommendation of Gov. Kim Reynolds.

Reynolds has set a press conference for tomorrow to provide additional information.

According to a statement Sunday evening, Gov. Reynolds is making this recommendation in consultation with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and based on CDC guidelines.

“Earlier today, IDPH was notified of four additional positive cases of Iowans with COVID-19, for a total of 22 positive cases. According to IDPH, two cases are related to international travel. The individuals are residents of Allamakee County, one is a middle-age adult between 41-60 years; the other is a child, age 0-18 years. The third case is a middle-age Johnson County resident with no identified travel-related risk or exposure to a known COVID-19 case, and is considered the second case of community spread in Iowa. The fourth individual resides in Polk County and is a middle-age adult and indicates a third case of community spread,” Reynolds said in a video statement Sunday.

Fort Madison school officials posted an email Sunday evening with the following message:

“As a school district, we have been closely monitoring the news and best practices regarding the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). At the direction of Governor Kim Reynolds, this evening, she is recommending schools in Iowa must close for four weeks. This closure will begin tomorrow, March 16, 2020.

The closure affects all school program-

See **CLOSURES**, page 2

OPINION

Mishap puts end to couple’s trip to Holy Land

The uneven stone steps going down were damp. Her heel caught on the edge of a rounded step and she fell. An unbearable pain shot up through her left leg. “My ankle!” she screamed. She raised up and looked at her leg and wondered, “Whose ankle is that?” It was hers, twisted to the left.

Mt. Pleasant residents, Marilyn and Mike Vincent, were with their tour group in Jerusalem. They had just left the Upper Room, the place where Jesus met with His disciples for the Last Supper. Marilyn was deep in thought. Like most of Jerusalem’s streets, the cobblestones are uneven and worn. You have to watch your footing carefully. When

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm



she fell going down the steps, there were many people from her group around her. Quickly, a man, Ed, supported her and a retired nurse, Becky, removed her shoe and sock.

Emergency personnel were summoned and they arrived quickly, one on a bicycle and another on a motor scooter. An ambulance was summoned.

At the hospital, Marilyn’s ankle was

x-rayed, repositioned and placed in a hard plaster cast. She was instructed to return home and immediately see an orthopedic surgeon.

But there was still a day-and-a-half left of the tour: a walk in Old Jerusalem on the Via Dolorosa, the path Jesus walked carrying His cross, and a tour of the Holocaust Museum. Disappointed, the Vincents went back to their hotel room, Marilyn in a wheel chair.

When the tour bus left Jerusalem for Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, the bus driver, Karim, picked up Marilyn, carried her up the bus steps, put her in the front seat and propped her foot on a

See **SWARM**, page 2

CORONAVIRUS

Iowa Democrats postpone county conventions

DES MOINES – On Friday, Iowa Democratic Party Chair Mark Smith released the following statement regarding county conventions slated for March 21.

“Today, the Iowa Democratic Party

is announcing it will postpone County Conventions to a future date to be determined. After extensive consultation with County Chairs, the State Central Committee, party leaders, and public health officials, we have

come to the determination that the spreading coronavirus poses a risk that outweighs a temporary delay in moving the caucus-to-convention

See **CONVENTION**, page 2

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WEATHER

MON 16 Mar.....Overcast, 46.3° F / 44.6° F
TUE 17 Mar.....Broken Clouds, 49.2° F / 48.5° F
WED 18 Mar.....Heavy Rain, 51.9° F / 47.4° F

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LOTTO AMERICA 03/14.....10 17 29 46 51, Star Ball: 10, All Star Bonus: 2
PICK 3 03/14 MIDDAY.....139
PICK 3 03/14 EVENING.....484
PICK 4 03/14 MIDDAY.....1213
PICK 4 03/14 EVENING.....5682
POWERBALL 03/14.....9 23 26 30 32, Powerball: 8, Power Play: 3

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From the Front/Local News

Schools to offer more info this week

CLOSURES - Continued from Page 1

ming, including before- and after-school activities, all athletic and extracurricular practices and competitions, and all weekend events.

District teachers and staff have been considering e-learning plans for our students. Your teachers will be providing more information later this week. If you have any questions, please contact your child's building principal. We understand we have some challenges regarding internet access in our community and we are trying to determine a viable solution.

More details on possible breakfast and lunch services will be provided in the coming days. "

Central Lee Superintendent Dr. Andy Crozier issued the following statement from Central Lee.

"As a school district, we have been closely monitoring the news and best practices regarding the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). At the direction of Governor Kim Reynolds, tomorrow she will be recommending schools in Iowa must close for four weeks. This closure will take effect on March 23. Next week, we are already scheduled to be on Spring Break.

The closure affects all school programming, including before- and after-school activities, all athletic and extracurricular practices and competitions, and all weekend events.

District teachers and staff have been considering e-learning plans for our students. Your teachers will be providing more information after March 23 if we go this route. If you have any questions, please contact your child's building principal. We understand we have some challenges regarding internet access in our community and we are trying to determine a viable

solution.

We are actively preparing to continue with school lunch services on March 23. More details on school lunch will be provided in the coming days.

Please know that my heart is with you. I know the days ahead will be challenging for you and your family. We will do our absolute best to rise to the occasion and try to assist you in finding solutions going forward. May we all lean on each other in the days ahead."

The coronavirus is thought to be spread via person-to-person contact through contaminated air droplets from coughing and sneezing by an infected person. As with controlling the spread of other viruses, we urge you to speak to your child about the following prevention measures:

- Wash your hands regularly, especially after using the restroom and before preparing or consuming food. Using soap and hot water, wash for about 20 seconds. Be sure to also wash your fingertips.
- Avoid coughing or sneezing into your hands or in the air. Always try to cough or sneeze into a tissue, then throw the tissue away. If you don't have a tissue, cough/sneeze into your arm.
- As much as you can, avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose.

The symptoms of coronavirus are similar to the regular seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite, and coughing. Some people with coronavirus have reported additional symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. In some situations, the virus can develop into pneumonia.

Individuals who need medical care should call their medical providers to report their illness prior to seeking care at a clinic, physician's office, or hospital.

Bum ankle hindered return trip for MP woman

SWARM - Continued from Page 1

pillow. She was astounded at Karim's strength.

However, at the airport there was a problem. She could not fly on Austrian Airlines with a hard cast since it left no room for swelling during altitude changes. A call to the tour company confirmed that a car and driver would pick Marilyn and Mike up and take them back to the hospital. Unfortunately, they would miss their flight home. Like any tour of this nature, group members become quite close. Sadly, they had to leave Marilyn and Mike behind.

But they were in good hands. At the hospital the cast was split down one side. The Israeli surgeon exclaimed, "What's with you Americans always falling? Don't you walk?"

"Yeah," they thought, "just not on cobblestone streets and uneven steps."

After another eight hours in a hotel, this time a luxurious, former Arabian castle that served delicious wood-fired-brick-oven pizza, it was off again to the airport.

Cleared by the airport doctor, they flew comfortably in business class on Delta Airlines to JFK Airport in New York City, then on to Chicago O'Hare where a driver picked them up and drove them home—all arranged by the tour company and paid for by travel insurance.

After a visit to the Henry County Health Center Emergency Room, and surgery in Iowa City, Marilyn now has two plates and 11 screws in her ankle, which will raise havoc with airport security scanners. She's tired of "screw loose" jokes.

Are they ever going to leave home again? Sure. They are frequent travelers. Before this trip, they had recently toured the Pacific Northwest, China and the Canadian Rockies. They now want to sail through the Panama Canal, tour Portugal and Spain, and maybe New Zealand. Marilyn will get a walking cast March 16th. Is Panama ready for the Vincents?

Looking back, it could have been much worse. They could have contracted the Coronavirus that hit Bethlehem just after they left. Marilyn may have missed the Via Dolorosa, but as when Christ fell, there were many hands to lift her up.

Have a good story? Call or text Curt Swarm in Mt. Pleasant at 319-217-0526, email him at curtswarm@yahoo.com or visit his website at www.empty-nest-words-photos-and-frames.com

District, state conventions still on schedule

CONVENTION - Continued from Page 1

process forward.

"This is not an easy decision, but we believe it is the right decision. By their design, caucuses are gatherings built around a sense of community, and throughout every step, we have worked to ensure the process is safe and accessible for every Iowan. However, Iowa Democrats should not have to choose between democratic participation and remaining in good health, and concerns for the wellbeing of our delegates, thou-

sands of volunteers, workers at convention venues, and the public come first.

"It is in Democratic spirit that we will work together to find solutions. We are committed to being as transparent as possible going forward, and rest assured: Iowa will be heard at the DNC Convention."

As of this time, District and State Convention planning will proceed as scheduled. For more information on COVID-19 in Iowa, please visit the Iowa Department of Public Health website for the latest updates and safety precautions.

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PEN CITY CURRENT

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For the Record/Lee County News

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

03/12/20 – 8:34 a.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 800 block of Avenue H.
 03/12/20 – 9:10 a.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2000 block of Avenue J.
 03/12/20 – 10:13 a.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 300 block of Avenue G.
 03/12/20 – 10:20 a.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 2000 block of Avenue G.
 03/12/20 – 1:55 p.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 4500 block of Avenue O.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

03/12/20 – 12:54 p.m.
 – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Joseph William Driver, 58, of Galesburg, in the Mason County Jail, on warrants for 3rd-degree burglary and 4th-degree theft. He was held in custody.
 03/12/20 – 5:01 p.m.
 – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Roy Morrell Steward, III, 36, of Keokuk, at the Scott County Jail in Davenport, on a warrant for violation of probation. He was held in custody.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

03/12/20 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to one medical call and one car fire.
 03/13/20 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to three medical calls.
 03/14/20 – Fort Madison firefighters had no calls

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AD
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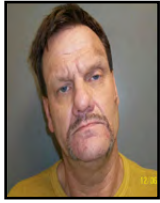
319.371.4125

Task Force, G.H.O.S.T. team make busts

BY PCC STAFF

LEE COUNTY – The Lee County Narcotics Task Force reports the arrest of a Keokuk man on Felony and Misdemeanor drug charges.

Daniel Summers, 54, of Keokuk, Iowa was arrested on March 2, in the 600 Block South 18th St. in Keokuk. Summers is charged with Possession with Intent to Deliver Methamphetamine more than five grams 2nd or subsequent a Class B Felony; Possession with Intent to Deliver Marijuana less than 50 kilograms a Class D Felony; Drug Tax Stamp violation a Class D Felony, Maintaining a Drug House an Aggravated Misdemeanor, and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia a Simple Misdemeanor.



SUMMERS

The arrest of Summers stems from an investigation by the Lee County Narcotics Task Force into allegations that he was involved in the distribution of illegal drugs in the Lee County area.

The Task Force also arrested Scott Lynch, 40, of Fort Madison, on March 6, in the 1600 block of Ave. F in Fort Madison. Lynch is charged with Possession of less than 5 grams of Methamphetamine 3rd or Subsequent a Class D Felony; Possession of Drug Paraphernalia a

Simple Misdemeanor; Driving While License Suspended a Simple Misdemeanor, Fail to Yield to Emergency Vehicle a Simple Misdemeanor, Failure to Maintain a Safety Belt a Simple Misdemeanor, and a warrant for Probation Violation.



LYNCH

Lynch's arrest stems from a traffic stop conducted by the Lee County Sheriff's Office utilizing an unmarked patrol unit. Lynch led deputies on a brief slow speed pursuit through Fort Madison before being taken into custody. During the stop, officers located controlled substances.

Another traffic stop, this time conducted by the county's new G.H.O.S.T. (Guns, Habitual Offenders Strike Team) strike team on March 7, resulted in the arrest of Brian Howes, 40, of Keokuk in the 1700 block of Johnson St. in Keokuk. Howes is charged with Possession of more than five grams of methamphetamine with the Intent to Deliver a Class C Felony and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia a Simple Misdemeanor.



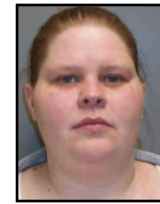
HOWES

The arrest of Howes stems from a traffic stop conducted by the Lee County G.H.O.S.T. during a pro-active policing operation to arrest Howes on active warrants. Howes briefly fled

on foot before being taken into custody. During the operation controlled substances were located.

In addition, Michelle Decker, 34, of Fort Madison, Iowa was arrested on March 3rd near the intersection of Bluff Road and 33rd Street in Fort Madison.

Decker is charged with Possession with Intent to Deliver Cocaine a Class C Felony; Possession with the Intent to Deliver Marijuana a Class D Felony; Violation of Drug Tax Stamp a class D Felony; and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia a Simple Misdemeanor.



DECKER

The arrest of Decker stems from a traffic stop conducted by the Fort Madison Police Department for speeding. During the stop officers located controlled substances.

The Lee County Attorney's Office, Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement, and the Fort Madison Police Department assisted the Lee County Narcotics Task Force in this investigation.

These defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The Lee County Narcotics Task Force is funded in part by the U.S. Department of Justice and the funds administered by the Iowa Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy.

**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:

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- Place all recyclables loose in bins
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- Properly dispose of all electronics and household hazardous waste

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Great River Regional Waste Authority

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Classifieds/Public Notices

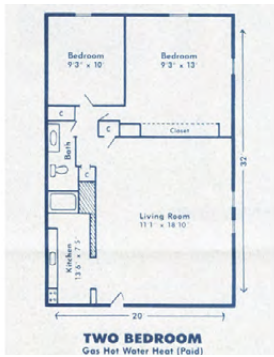
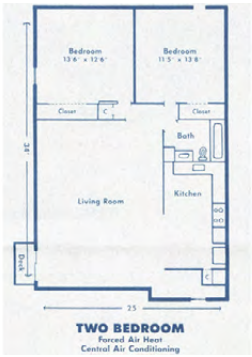
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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE
Lee County, Iowa
Board of Supervisors
Agenda
DATE: TUESDAY,
March 17, 2020
MEETING
CONVENING TIME:
9:00 A.M.
LOCATION:
Correctional Center
2530 255th Street,
Montrose, IA

AGENDA
 Pledge of Allegiance
 Approve Agenda
 Approve Tuesday, March 10, 2020 Board Minutes
 Consider Approval of Claims
 Public Input
 Discussion of COVID-19 with Health Department Director Michele Ross
 Review Bids and Consider Approving Resolution Awarding Contract for Project M2020-1 Flood Debris Removal

Consider Approval of Agreement with Keokuk First Baptist Church for Use of Parking Lot
 Consider Approval to Set' Public Hearing for Approval of FY21 Budget
 Consider Approval of Loan Agreement with Secretary of State's Office for Purchasing Poll Pads
 Consider Approval of Resolution Supporting Two Person Crews
 Personnel Actions:
 A. Step Increases-Conservation (2)
 Reports:
 A. Sheriffs Monthly Report of Fees Collected
 Commission or Committee Reports
 Adjourn
 Workshop to Follow
PUBLIC MEETING
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Contact Title VI Administrator 319-372-3705
 County Website: www.leecounty.org
PUBLIC NOTICE
PUBLIC NOTICE OF STORM WATER DISCHARGE

The City of Fort Madison plans to submit a Notice of Intent to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to be covered under the NPDES General Permit No. 2. The storm water discharge will be from Roadway Construction located in SE 1/4, Section 3, T67N, R04W, Lee County. Storm water will be discharged from 5 point sources and will be discharged to the following streams: Fork Creek, Mississippi River. Comments may be submitted to the Storm Water Discharge Coordinator, Iowa

Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, 502 E. 9th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-0034. The public may review the Notice of Intent from 8:00am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday, at the above address after it has been received by the department.

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
 Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held by the Fort Madison City Council at 5:30 P.M. on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, at the Council Chambers of Fort Madison City Hall at 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison regarding a request to rezone property at 1731 - 39th Street and adjoining alley between 38th and 39th Streets, and 1729 - 39th Street from R-4, Single-Family Dwelling

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Classifieds/From the Front

PUBLIC NOTICES

District to B-3, Service and Wholesale Business District.

You may obtain further information or express your views concerning this issue either in person or through an authorized representative at the public hearing, or prior to the meeting by fax at (319) 372-8661, by telephone at (319) 372-7700 ext. 206, by E-mail at dkrogmeier@fortmadison-ia.com or in writing to the Fort Madison City Clerk, P.O. Box 240, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, Iowa, 52627 no later than 4:30 PM on March 17, 2020.

Melinda L. Blind
City Clerk

2020, at 5:10 P.M. at City Hall, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison. Mayor Mohrfeld presided with Council Members Bowker, Morawitz, Rink, Andrews and Miller present. Council Members Cangas and Lair were absent.

Patrick O'Connell, an attorney with Lynch Dallas, P.C., was present to lead Council through a training. The training included a basic overview of the law of local government, introduction to Council Manual Rules and Procedures, common legal issues and when to contact the City Attorney. No action was taken.

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 P.M.

/s/ Matt J. Mohrfeld,
Mayor

ATTEST:
/s/ Melinda L. Blind,
City Clerk

**PUBLIC NOTICE
PROCEEDINGS
FORT MADISON CITY
COUNCIL
February 13, 2020**

The Fort Madison City Council met in an in-formal work session on Thursday, February 13,

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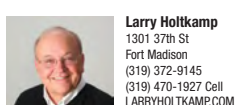
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Council to talk about plans for marina

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and Brad Randolph championed the project, which has of late been mired in budget problems.

A public hearing is set for Tuesday night with resolutions to enter into a contract with Iowa Bridge and Culvert, of Washington, Iowa for \$2.7 million. In September a bid from Iowa Bridge and Culvert came in double the cost at \$2.83 million almost killing the project. Former mayor Brad Randolph, and former councilman Chris Greenwald and other staff went to work with Amtrak and Federal Rail Administration officials to try and come up with a last-minute resolution to the project.

Two weeks ago, the FRA gave Amtrak approval to use \$1.4 million in Amtrak's Americans with Disabilities Act funds to help offset the remaining costs of the project.

With contingencies added into the project, City Manager David Varley said the project could still fall a half a million short.

The city council will also be voting to approve the 2020-21 fiscal year budget. The city has had several workshops this year to iron out details of the budget, which is a new twist to the usual budget review with council by Varley prior to approval.

In other action, the council could set a public hearing regarding the rehabilitation of two city parking lots in town. The first is at the southeast corner of 8th Street and Avenue F, and the second is the parking lot just north of City Hall on the southwest corner of Avenue D and 8th Street.

Following the regular meeting the council will hold a workshop, where the council will address possible programs to assist property owners with dilapidated structures. There will also be a discussion on future plans for the city's marina.

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