SPORTS: Youth advance in K of C free throw shoot • See page 2

PEN CITY CURI It's Black & White and Read all over

Monday, January 20, 2020 |8 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 26

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CAKE AUCTION: Fans show up to bid on cakes to help FMHS Athletic activities

Fort Madison High School cheerleaders line up to roll Super Hero-themed Bloodhound cakes through the Hound Dome Saturday during the annual Bloodhound Athletic Boosters' Cake Auction. Proceeds from the event are used to enhance Fort Madison's many athletic programs throughout the school year.

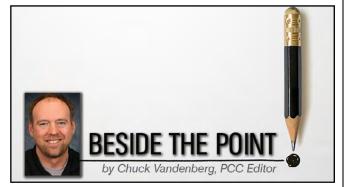
Photo by Chuck Vandenberg



BESIDE THE POINT City's grit with downtown building is good

 ${
m A}$ message of sorts was sent to city residents late Friday afternoon. Mayor Matt Mohrfeld is putting the city's money where his mouth is.

Mohrfeld gave a full-throated response to a question from City Councilman Mark Lair asking for an update on the progress of repairs to the Humphrey building in downtown. The building has been undergoing some sort of repairs externally and, supposedly internally, after city officials saw structural sagging that eventually gave way blowing some exterior brick facing from the building onto a sidewalk, the city had already cordoned off.







Syndicated or not, author still a good local read

 \mathbf{I} 'm often asked, by aspiring writers, how I got my column into so many newspapers. Well, I'll take and tell you (as my grandmother used to say), for maybe the first time in my life, I listened to someone. The former publisher of the Mt. Pleasant News, Emery Styron, took me under his wing, and told me exactly how to go about it. When he was a journalism major in college, he had a syndicated column that was carried by a number of newspapers. What he did was go around and personally visit each newspaper office (unannounced), ask for the publisher or editor, then show them a sample of his writing. Emery would offer to let them run his work for free to gauge reader response, and then called them back in a week or so to see if they would like to add him as a regular columnist. The key is that Emery was presenting himself and his work in person. In this manner, the publisher or editor had a visual and personal encounter with Emery, formed an immediate opinion of who Emery was and what his writing was like.

Never ever solicit by email, fax, or telephone. Newspaper editors are bombarded with solicitations. The majority of these solicitations are ignored. By making a personal visit, a bond is established. First impressions are the longest lasting.

I followed Emery's directions exactly, and it works! I took a few days, traveled around the state, dropped in on newspaper offices (unannounced), asked to see the publisher or editor, and my Empty Nest column is now in over 40 newspapers in three states. Always drop in unannounced, never make an appointment—you will be put off. The publisher or editor will always come out to see you because they think it's a disgruntled reader with an ax to grind. They are so relieved to see that it's just another columnist, they are more than agreeable to look at your work, and now they know who you are.

Now, a 1/2 city block has been barricated off for the past three months and business owners in the area are starting to clamor for something to be done.

Mohrfeld responded to Lair saying the current con-

dition of the building was unacceptable.

"This cannot be the face of our community. We can't be held hostage by one irresponsible property owner. It's not right." he said in response.

On Friday, Mohrfeld informed Pen City Current

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See EDITORIAL, page 8

I have added a new twist to Emery's detailed

OpenWeatherMap

See **SWARM**, page 3

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WEATHER

MON 20 Jan	(*)
TUE 21 Jan Partly Cloudy, 25.8° F/ 19.5° F	
WED 22 JanLight Rain, 33.2° F/ 30.9° F	

IOWA LOTTERY

LOTTO AMERICA 01/18	5 7 31 41 43, Star Ball: 9, All Star Bonus: 2
PICK 3 01/18 EVENING	
PICK 4 01/18 MIDDAY	
PICK 4 01/18 EVENING	
POWERBALL 01/18	20 24 38 56 68, Powerball: 18, Power Play: 2

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Sports/Lee County News



Winners include from left to right first row. Blake Mohrfeld (First Place Boys Age 11), Calli Kruse (First Place Girls Age 10), Jack Ragar (First Place Boys Age 9). Back Row: Mary Hellige, (First Place Girls age 14), Nathan Box. (First Place Boys Age 12), Adalyn Kruse (First Place Girls Age 11), Luke Hellige (First Place Boys Age 13), Emma Mohrfeld, (First Place Girls Age 12), Carter Gehling, (First Place Boys Age 10).

Youth advance in K of C free throw shoot

LEE COUNTY – Five boys and four girls from the local Ft. Madison, Houghton and West Point areas, ages 9 to 14 were named local champions of the 2020 Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship, and have earned the right to compete at the district level. Knights of Columbus councils in Ft. Madison, Houghton, and West Point sponsored the local competition at the Holy Trinity Elementary school on Wednesday January 15, 2020. All youngsters ages 9 to 14 were eligible to participate.

The nine year old boys' champion was Jack Ragar, Carter Gehling was the 10 year old winner, and Blake Mohrfeld was the 11 year old boys' champion. In the 12 year-olds' bracket, Nathan Box was the boys' champion, and in the 13 year old boy's division, Luke Hellige was the winner.

In the girls division, the 10 year old champion was Calli Kruse, the 11 year old winner was Adalyn Kruse, the 12 year old winner was Emma Mohrfeld, and the 14 year old champion was Mary Hellige.

Each contestant was allowed 15 free throw attempts in the contest. The 10 year old boys division was well represented, with 10 boys participating. Each division winner was awarded a Knights of Columbus basketball.

Each of these winners can compete in the district competition to be held on a date to be announced, with an eye toward moving on to the state competition to be held in Des Moines.



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Burlington Family Dentistry 319-752-7993

Burlington Dental Associates 319-753.2515

New London Dental Care **319-367-2311**

Extension office holds manure application workshop in February

Confinement site manure applicators should plan to attend a two-hour workshop offered by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to maintain or renew their confinement site manure applicator certification. The Lee workshop will be offered on February 6 at 1:30 pm in Donnellson at the Pilot Grove Community Room.

"Iowa law requires confinement site manure applicators to attend two hours of continuing education each year of their three-year certification period or take and pass the exam once every three years," said Dan Andersen, assistant professor, ISU Ag and Biosystems Engineering and coordinator of the manure applicator certification program. "If applicators fail to attend the two hours of continuing education each year, they will be required to pass a written exam to be eligible to recertify." Each year nearly 200 confinement site applicators fail to attend training and must pass the remedial exam prior to being eligible to renew their certification for the following year.

The workshop serves as initial certification for those applicators that are not currently certified, recertification for those renewing licenses and as continuing education for those applicators in their second or third year of their license.

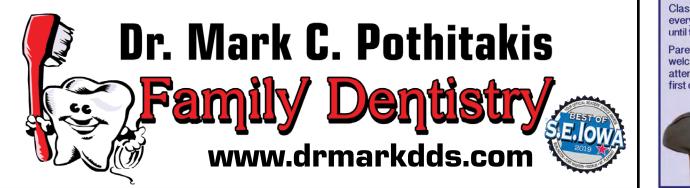
The 2020 Confinement site program will include rules for applicators as well as land-application and setback distance requirements, water quality, evaluating manure storage structures, hydrogen sulfide safety, and swine manure deep-pit foaming.

Operators must be certified to handle, transport, and apply manure if the confinement livestock operation has more than a 500-animal unit capacity unless the manure is applied by a commercial manure applicator. The certification fee is \$100 for a three-year certificate. This fee is paid when applicators initially get certified and then every three years when they re-certify to apply manure.

Confinement site applicators are also required to pay an annual education fee of \$25. All fees and application forms must be sent to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to complete certification requirements.

ISU Extension and Outreach will charge a \$10 fee to applicators choosing to view the certification materials on a non-scheduled reshow day at the county office. For this reason, all applicators are encouraged to attend the workshops or to plan to view training materials on the scheduled reshow date at their local county extension office. This fee will not apply to workshops or scheduled reshow dates. Please contact the county extension office to determine which days are scheduled for the manure applicator certification programs.





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Celebrations/For the Record

Mt. Pleasant author still building base for columns

SWARM- Continued from Page 1

formula for getting newspapers to accept my column. I bring Ginnie. I introduce Ginnie as my wife and editor. Publishers and editors love this—a husband and wife team, meaning the column is fluffed, puffed and spit-shined. One look at Ginnie and they know my writing has been cleansed.

Since including Ginnie when I drop in on newspaper offices, we are batting 100% acceptance. And it's a fun day out, which usually includes lunch and a little site seeing.

One more thing: I write for free. Writing is my love, my art form, my life. If you love something, you will practice it whether you're paid or not.

Celebrations

MILLER

FORT MADISON – Carissa Kay and Nathaniel Miller are proud to announce the birth of their son Zachariah Castiel Miller, on Jan. 14, 2020 at Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Zachariah joins Aalayna Kay at home.

Grandparents are Tera Hart of Denmark; Elmer and Donna Kay of Keokuk; and Nathanial Miller, Sr., of Chicago.

Pen City Current congratulates the family on this wonderful news.

SWAYZER

FORT MADISON – Alexandra Burghoffer and Antone Swayzer are proud to announce the birth of their son, Antone Xavier Swayzer, Jr., on Jan. 3, 2020 at Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Grandparents are Curtis and Lyndsey Richardson of Fort Madison; and Allen and Andrea Swayzer of Burlington.

Great-grandparents are Aaron and Deborah (deceased) Burghoffer of Fort Madison; Robert Antone Korf (deceased) of Burlington, Sara Meyer of Davenport, Dorothy Mae Cratton (deceased) of Burlington; Mary Richardson of Chicago and Cleveland Richardson of Chicago.

Pen City Current congratulates the family on this wonderful news.

For the Record

Fort Madison **Police Report** 01/16/20 - 2:57 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft reported in the Fort Madison area. 01/16/20 - 6:20 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 3400 block of Avenue L. 01/17/20 – 4:01 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2600 block of Avenue L.

tion of Hwy. 61 and 255th Street. According to the report, a vehicle driven by Cassidy L. Dusenberry, 16, of Lomax, struck a vehicle driven by Alex Andrea Alger, 27, of Keokuk during a lance change after Dusenberry turned left onto Hwy. 61 northbound. Dusenberry was cited for failure to yield. No injuries were reported. 01/16/20 – 11:30 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies cited Jorge Antonio Gonzalez, 23, of Wever, at the sheriff's department, on a charge of failure to appear. He was released upon citation. Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Example: church organists. As you know, newspapers across the country, with the advent of the internet, are struggling financially. They've lost a big chunk of advertising dollars. Therefore, they love writing that has an established following and doesn't cost anything. Little do they know they are doing me a favor. By accepting my column, they are providing me with a creative outlet and the discipline of a weekly deadline.

So, if I write for free, am I syndicated? I don't see the word "paid" included with the definition of "syndication." At least one of the newspapers that carries my column calls me a "syndicated

columnist."

I also stick with human interest. Of course, I have strong political opinions, but every time I write something political, I get crucified. I'm a people pleaser to the max, and would rather write human interest. It's more refreshing, positive and a nice break from the political war that's raging.

My goal is 200 newspapers. Which would put me right up there with the likes of "Dear Abby," "The Amish Cook" and "Dr. Oz." With Ginnie as my editor, it could happen.

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



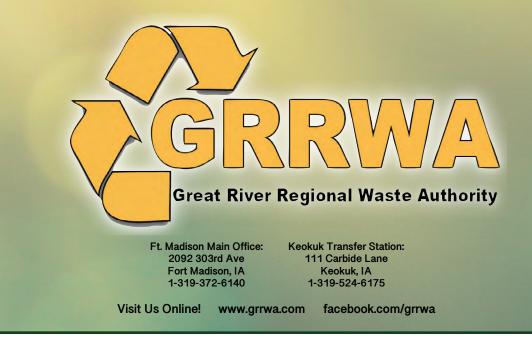
Thank you to all our customers who worked to reduce their environmental footprint last year. We look forward to helping you continue your efforts and to educating our communities on more ways to help this year.

Here are just a few ways you can help:

- Don't put plastic bags in recycling bins
- Rinse & clean all food jars & cans before recycling
- Flatten empty boxes for better storage & volume reduction
- Place all recyclables loose in bins

Lee County Sheriff's Report 01/16/20 – 3:39 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a report of two-vehicle accident at the intersec-

- Don't recycle wrapping paper
- Properly dispose of all electronics and household hazardous waste



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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE PROCEEDINGS OF THE **REGULAR MEETING OF** THE WEST POINT **CITY COUNCIL** WEST POINT, IOWA 52656 **JANUARY 13, 2020**

Mayor Paul Walker called the properly noticed regular meeting of the City Council of the City of West Point to order in the Conference Room of the Public Library, 317 Fifth Street, West Point, Iowa 52656 on January 13, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. In addition to Mayor Walker, the following indicated Council Members were present: Joe Loving; Brian Meierotto; Will Stuekerjuergen; Dan Waters; and, Bruce Wellman. Absent: None. The Public Works Department report was reviewed. Upon invitation Police Chief Brad Roberts presented the Police Department report. Mayor reported the following: FYE21 budget committee workshops were completed; Fireman's Ball will be held February 15, 2020; Census 2020 will be conducted soon and asked for community cooperation to achieve a complete count; meeting date and time for meetings of Library Board; the upcoming Municipal Utility Board; and, next regular Council Meeting of February 10, 2020. Dennis McGregor presented City Administrator's report. On motion approved second reading of Ordinance No. 296-20 amending hours of operation for ATV's and UTV's. On motion waived third reading of Ordinance No. 296-20 amending hours of operation for ATV's and UTV's. On motions approved liquor license applications for J & M Korner Shop; Palm Bowl (with outdoor service); and, American Legion Club Post #668 (no outdoor service). Discussion was held regarding the sidewalk replacement

program. Discussion was held regarding a secondary road annexation. On motion minutes of prior regular Council Meeting of December 9, 2019 were approved as presented. On motion Treasurer's Report for December 2019 was approved as presented. On motion warrants payable for January 2020 were approved as presented. On motion meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m., January 13, 2020.

CLAIMS REPORT FOR DECEMBER, 2019

Alan Environmental, supplies933.63 Baker & Taylor, books Cessford Construction, rock......693.10 City Clerk – FM, fees Daily Democrat, publications......123.64 Delta Dental, premiums Demco Inc, supplies Dennis McGregor, mileage.....10.15 Diane Smith, mileage/ reimb.....75.12 Dorsey & Whitney, legal fees......10000.00

Ebert Supply, supplies Farm & Home Publisher,

Drake Hardware, renew-

als.....124.00

Mississippi Valley Embroidery, services......52.00 Panther Uniforms, uniform52.99 Petty Cash, supplies

Pilot Grove Savings Bank, P&I.....9490.28 Quill Corp, supplies

Ricoh USA, copier Sonny's Supermarket, supplies6.29 Sun Life Financial, premiums.....227.69 SYNCB/Amazon, supplies Treasurer St of IA, taxes US Cellular, telephone Verizon Wireless, data plans.....40.01 Wellmark BC/BS, premiums......3156.23 West Point Lumber, supplies44.07 West Point Utilities, utilities.....2302.05 West Ppoint & St Paul Fire, allotment.....6791.27

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PUBLIC NOTICE

December 10, 2019

The regular meeting of

the Board of Directors of

Great Prairie Area Edu-

cation Agency was held

on December 10, 2019, in

the Executive Conference

Room at the Fairfield Arts

I. Meeting was called to

Members Present:

& Convention Center,

200 N Main, Fairfield,

RECAPITULATION

FUND: PREV BAL, RCPTS, DSBSD, CUR BAL: Gen. Govt .: 365503.93, 19472.26, 35082.05, 349894.14; Grants: 21405.10 ---, ---, 21405.10; Cap Equip: 4127.06, ---, 4127.06; Lib County/St: 10343.82, 15.12, 531.59, 9827.35; Lib Mem & Gift: 18744.47, 87.35, 106.42, 18725.40; Road Use: (8682.90), 7655.60, 1082.82, (11110.12); LOS: ---15455.58, 15455.58,--; Sewer Lagoon: ---, 235012.45, 235012.45, ---; Sewer: 28350.88, 20506.58, 38629.55, 10227.91; Sewer Sinking: 40139.45, 10871.97, 3972.65, 47038.77; Landfill: 259.53, ---, 259.53

/s/ Paul Walker, Mayor Attest: Diane E. Smith,

IA. All Board Members were sworn in prior to the

meeting. order by Chief Administrator Yelick at 5:31 p.m. Melissa Ballard, Rhonda Frevert, Margaret Kelly, Cindy Kurtz-Hopkins,

Patricia Miletich, Matt Greiner, Janet Smith,

Victoria Stephenson, & Lora Wolff

Also Present: Dr. Cindy Yelick, Dennis Gourley, Dr. Sally Lindgren, Greg Manske, and Jennifer Woodley

Guests: Jennifer Keith, Amanda Larkin, Christine Riegel, & Sarah Titman II. Open Forum - No action.

III. Motion was made by Greiner and seconded by Stephenson to approve the Agenda as posted.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

IV. Chief Administrator Dr. Yelick asked for nominations from the Board for a Board President for 2019-20. Board Member Stephenson nominated Melissa Ballard. Nomination was seconded by



Reporter/Stringer

renewal.....59.00 Flavian Boeding, tractor fees.....521.25 Floyd's E-Z-Way, trash pickup40.00 Fye Excavating, construction......216110.41 Garden & Associates, engineering......8902.04 GRRWA, fees440.00 GWorks, forms......59.32 Iowa Finance Authority, Lee County Health Dept, fee.....150.00 Linda Betsinger McCann, books.....40.00 Mary Jane Pranger, cleaning120.00 Mastercard, supplies Mediacom, telephone243.90 Menke Professional Auto, supplies95.83



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The Pen City Current is seeking a part-time to fulltime 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

PEN CITY CURREN

Classifieds/Public Notices

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

Greiner. Motion made by Greiner and seconded by Stephenson for nominations to cease. With that nominations ceased and the nomination was unanimously supported by a vote of the members present.

V. Chief Administrator Dr. Yelick asked for nominations from the Board for a Board Vice President for 2019-20. Board Member Stephenson nominated Greiner. Nomination was seconded by Miletich. Motion made by Stephenson and seconded by Kellyfor nominations to cease. With that nominations ceased and the nomination was unanimously supported by a vote of the members present.

VI. Motion was made by Greiner and seconded by

Miletich to appoint Jennifer Woodley as the Board Secretary for 2019-20.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

VII. Motion was made by Stephenson and seconded by Miletich to reappoint Dennis Gourley as the Board Treasurer for 2019-20.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

VIII. Motion was made by Kelly and seconded by Stephenson to appoint Greg Manske as the Agency's Chief Negotiator for 2019-20.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

IX. Motion was made by Stephenson and seconded by Kelly to reappoint Greg Manske and Dr. Deb Cook as Great Prairie **AEA Equity Coordinators** for 2019-20.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

X. Motion was made by Greiner and seconded by Miletich to appoint Ahlers & Cooney P.C, as Great Prairie AEA Legal Counsel for 2019-20.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

XI. Motion was made by Kelly and seconded by Miletich to appoint Dr. Deb Cook, Jim Cope, Kim Kirchner, Dennis Gourley, and Greg Manske to serve on the Teacher Quality Professional Development Committee for 2019-20.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

XII. Motion was made by Miletich and seconded by Greiner to designate U.S. Bank and Wells Fargo Bank as Great Prairie AEA's Depository Banks

for 2019-20. Motion Carried Unani-

mously. XIII. Motion was made by Stephenson and seconded by Kelly to set the time and location for regular Great Prairie AEA Board of Directors meetings at 5:30 PM on the second Tuesday of each month, to be held at the Fairfield Arts & Convention Center, 200 North Main, Fairfield, Iowa.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

XIV. It was moved by Kelly and seconded by Miletich to approve the previous minutes.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

XV. Motion was made by Greiner and seconded by Kelly to approve the Treasurer's Report and Invoices Payable.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

XVI. Motion was made by Miletich and seconded by Stephenson to approve the contractual adjustment as presented. Motion Carried Unani-

mously. XVII. Motion was made by Stephenson and

seconded by Greiner to approve the new employee contract as presented. Motion Carried Unani-

mously. XVIII. Motion was made by Kelly and seconded by Stephenson to approve the second reading of the board policies as presented.

a. 405.7R Office Closing Regulation

Motion Carried Unanimously.

XIX. Chief Financial Officer Dennis Gourley gave a brief overview of the Audit Report and stated that Michael Polaski will formally present the report at the January 14 meeting.

XX. Reports to the Board - No action.

XXI. There being no further business President Ballard adjourned the meeting. Time: 6:11 p.m.

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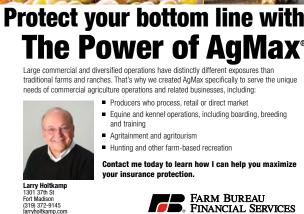


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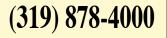


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From the Front

City coming too far to leave building alone

EDITORIAL - Continued from Page 1

via email that the city had started legal proceedings against the building's property owner, Bryan J. Humphrey of Fort Madison.

Humphrey has had crews shoring up the exterior of the building and it is assumed that work is also being done to shore up the column that collapsed inside as well. However, Mohrfeld said city officials do not know where progress is at on those repairs.

In his email Friday, the mayor said he hopes to have a trial date set in the next 90 days to have a Lee County judge intervene in the matter. The city would likely be represented by Lynch-Dallas out of Cedar Rapids.

Since Mohrfeld was appointed to the City Council in August of 2018 his voice has risen to the top of discussions. His seasoning as a former Lee County Supervisor, coupled with various other local positions on non-profit boards, and even a governor's board appointment, has been paying dividends for the city in the past 18 months.

He even flexed his political muscle a little in an emotional battle over golf carts and ATVs on city streets. We've yet to see one. Seriously. Not one.

But it should put a smile on most faces to see the city pushing here. That's one of the biggest structures downtown. Kyle Galloway and Barker Financial came in and put \$4 million into renovating properties downtown and have a right to expect a return on that investment. The behavior of the city and other property owners impacts that return.

Just a quick look at the investment going on downtown, and you can go back to Griffin's Muffler & Brake rebuilding on the corner after the fire. Then you get the Fox Theater, Dollhouse Dreams and Megan's Old-Fashioned Ice Cream, Velocity Dance, Olive Branch Jiu Jitsu, the upper apartment renovations, and all the new services moving in.



And most recently the investment in the former Bentler Rental building that now has commercial space being leased and Southeastern Community College's \$500,000 investment in the former CarSmart property.

These folks are smart with money and they see something happening in downtown Fort Madison. It's comforting that the city seems at this point to be 'getting their back'.

We all can and do hope the city and Humphrey can bring this to a resolution without spending too much to force the issue, but as millennials love to say, "It is what it is."

Mohrfeld's been...well....barking about the city getting a dog park. It's in the budget for 2020-21 proposed to go in at rodeo park's old baseball diamond.

He doesn't believe that the city's financial picture is as bleak as it may seem, but instead chooses to look at financial stewardship and tough decisions to bring this back into focus.

He's changed the format of the city council meetings randomly moving people, including City Manager David Varley who has sat at the right arm of the mayor for at least the past three years, to different chairs to generate different conversations.

He brought the now gender neutral Boy Scouts of

America in to present colors at his first meeting and he's asking department heads to rotate in giving deeper dives on what's happening internally.

We think it's a start of something different in how things are done at City Hall. There's no comparative here to his predecessor Brad Randolph. Randolph's impact on the city, in our opinion, is still yet to be fully realized.

Mohrfeld even got a gift from Randolph at the mayor's first meeting. A red phone that may or may not dial the former mayor's number. There's little doubt, however, that that number will be used.

As we watch from the side as Mohrfeld makes his way through meetings with the movers and shakers in Fort Madison, it could just be the newness of the position and that early energy.

But if you look at Mohfeld's business, his commitment to area swimmers and runners, boards, commissions, you can see he's all in. The real indicator may be that he may have chosen a local elected post over a state one.

We give him good marks at the outset. There will be tests for sure and it remains to be seen what grades he gets as we move forward. But showing some teeth on this building thing is a good indication.

Andrew Breitbart said 'Politics is downstream of culture'. Mohrfeld, at first blush anyway, is rowing pretty hard upstream.

Speaking of politics, the three area elected officials to the state legislature met in Fort Madison on Friday and talked about issues facing the legislature this year. It would appear that the collection of online sales tax is happening, but the companies paying are under no federal mandate to do so. That's odd.... and Beside the Point.

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