

# PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Tuesday, April 7, 2020 | 5 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 73



www.pencitycurrent.com

# Cruise breaks out on G



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld gives a thumbs up Sunday afternoon during a downtown auto cruise. Mohrfeld posted on Facebook last week that he was going to be cruising the downtown and anyone was welcome to join him for the hour long cruise.

## MORE CLOSURES: City and school officials shut all parks, recreation facilities

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Fort Madison city officials have closed all parks, playgrounds and campgrounds effective immediately, while school officials have said all district facilities will be closed beginning tomorrow morning.

The move comes on the heels of Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds expanded emergency declaration to include playgrounds and campgrounds in the state.

Shortly after the expansion of the emergency declaration was announced, Fort Madison City Clerk Melinda Blind sent an email

to Pen City Current advising that the city's was moving in the same direction.

"In the continued effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus and abide by the Governor's list of closures, the Fort Madison Parks & Recreation Department will be closing all parks, playgrounds and campgrounds effective immediately until further notice. Public restrooms within City parks and all drinking fountains will remain out of service at this time," Blind wrote.

"All shelter rentals scheduled prior to Thursday, April 30th, will be postponed. Renters will be contacted by the Parks & Recreation

See PARKS, page 4

## CENTRAL LEE

# School to move to twice-weekly meal deliveries

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

DONNELSON – Central Lee school officials are changing the meal delivery system following Easter Sunday.

Meals which have been being delivered

daily to almost 350 district students for the past two weeks, will now be shifted to a twice-weekly delivery.

At Monday's special meeting of the Central Lee School board, Superintendent Dr. Andy Crozier, said the move will help reduce the amount of time nutrition staff

are exposed to each other.

Meals for two days will be delivered on Monday, April 13 and Wednesday April 15. Then the following week the meals will be delivered on Sundays and Wednesdays

See BOARD, page 4

## COVID-19

# Governor stops all camping

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

JOHNSTON – Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds has expanded her emergency declaration to include more businesses and state campgrounds, but stopped, again, short of calling for a shelter in place.



REYNOLDS

Reynolds said according to the Iowa Department of Public Health's regional mapping system that breaks the state into six regions, the regions on the eastern side of the state are the most dire, but haven't reached a metric threshold.

Sarah Reissetter, the state's deputy medical director has been part of Reynolds' almost-daily pressers for about three weeks in the place of

See STATE, page 3

## FM PARTNERS

# Virus causes group to revamp upcoming events

FORT MADISON – Governor Reynolds made the statement last week to extend the "Social Distancing" due to the COVID-19 pandemic until at least April 30th. "This announcement will effect



GOBBLE

a number of activities planned by our office that would have normally taken place", states Tim Gobble, Fort Madison Partners Director. The

events that have been cancelled, postponed or are still being decided are:

Legislative Luncheon: April 17th-  
Cancelled Community Clean-Up:  
April 22nd – requesting residents to clean up around their own blocks

See PARTNERS, page 2

## INDEX

Business Directory.....P.5  
BUSINESS NEWS.....P.2  
CLASSIFIEDS.....Ps.4-5  
EDUCATION NEWS.....P.4  
Fort Colony Family Restaurant.....P.4  
FROM THE FRONT.....Ps.2-4

Great River Regional Waste Authority.....P.3  
HEALTH NEWS.....Ps.2-4  
IOWA NEWS.....P.3  
LCK Roofing.....P.2  
LEE COUNTY NEWS.....Ps.3-4  
LOCAL NEWS.....Ps.2,4

OBITUARIES.....P.2  
• Joyce S. Cowles, 84  
• Mary K. Sickels, 61  
• Philomena R. Stephenson, 97  
Pen City Current.....Ps.2,4-5  
RonDavoo.....P.2

## WEATHER

TUE 07 Apr.....Light Rain, 69.1° F/ 58.1° F  
WED 08 Apr.....Light Rain, 72.7° F/ 43.7° F  
THU 09 Apr.....Clear Skies, 50.6° F/ 35.2° F

OpenWeatherMap

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# Obituaries/From the Front

## OBITUARIES

### MARY K. SICKELS

Mary Kathryn Sickels, 61, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 6:21 a.m. on Sunday, April 5, 2020 at the University of Iowa Hospitals in Iowa City. She was born on September 3, 1958 in Fort Madison, IA to William & Patricia Duff Kottenstette. She married Mark D. Sickels on June 9, 2001 in Fort Madison, IA. She worked at Lamont Limited for 16 years and then as the manager of the BP Station in Fort Madison for 16 years. She enjoyed visiting her grandchildren and playing Sudoku.



SICKELS

Mary is survived by: her husband: Mark "Doug" Sickels of Fort Madison, IA; 1-daughter: Staci (Todd) Stillwagon of Conway, SC; 1-son: James Higgins of Fort Madison, IA; 2-step sons: Austin Sickels of Middletown, IA & Larry "Ed" (Scottie) Crawford of Donnellson, IA; 4-grandchildren: Brayden & Briley Stillwagon, Abigail Crawford & Corbin (Bailey) Link; 1-great granddaughter: Willow Link; 1-sister: Suzanne Kottenstette of Mason City, IA; 2-brothers: Stephen (Michelle) Kottenstette of Solon, IA & Paul Kottenstette of Fort Madison, IA. She was preceded in death by her parents & 1-sister: Joyce.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory and no services are planned. Online condolences to Mary's family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: [www.kinglynk.com](http://www.kinglynk.com).

### PHILOMENA R. STEPHENSON

Philomena Rose Stephenson, 97, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 6:15 a.m. on Friday, April 3, 2020 at her home. She was born on October 11, 1922 in Marceline, MO to Frank & Constance Thome Strayhall. She married Bernard Ray Stephenson, Sr. on March 15, 1943 in Marceline, MO. He preceded her in death on August 11, 1988. She was a homemaker and worked at the Sheaffer Pen Company. She was a member of Holy Family Parish, Catholic Ladies Auxiliary & the Altar & Rosary Society of the church. She enjoyed dancing, playing golf and attending sporting events.



STEPHENSON

Philomena is survived by: 1-son: Bernard (Vicki) Stephenson Jr. of Fort Madison, IA; 2-grandchildren: Bernard (Lori) Stephenson III of Nevada, IA & Stacy (Brad) Turner of Nashville, IL; 5-great grandchildren: Patrick, Abby, Isaac, Gannon & Hawkins. She was preceded in death by: her parents, husband & 1-great grandson, Isaiah.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A private family burial will be held at Soldiers' Circle in Oakland Cemetery. A memorial mass will be held at a later date at Sacred Heart Church. A memorial has been established for Fort Madison Community Hospital Hospice and contributions may be sent to: Bernie Stephenson, 2799 River Hills Road, Fort Madison, IA 52627. Online condolences to the Stephenson family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: [www.kinglynk.com](http://www.kinglynk.com).

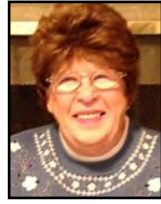
#### Pen City Current obituary policy

The Current runs obituaries one time at no charge to funeral homes and they run the day they are submitted in most cases. They are also run as submitted by the funeral homes.

## OBITUARIES

### JOYCE S. COWLES

Joyce S. Cowles, 84, of West Point, passed away at 8:57 PM on Saturday, April 4, 2020 at her home.



COWLES

She was born on October 28, 1935 in Ft. Madison to Malcolm Stine and Gertrude Teresa Holterhaus Evans. On July 2, 1955 she married Clarence "Corky" Cowles at St. Mary's Church in Ft. Madison and he passed away on January 4, 1987. After graduating from Ft. Madison High School, Joyce worked at Sheaffer Pen Co. for three years. Joyce was then a stay at home Mom for eighteen years before beginning work at Ft. Madison Bank and Trust for twenty five years where she retired in 2000.

Joyce enjoyed many things such as genealogy, restoring old cemeteries, her dance group the Silver Steppers and going barrel racing with her daughter and granddaughter. She was lovingly known as Granny by all of the horse world. She was a proud member of the Daughters of the American Revolution society and the Red Hat Club. Joyce was a founding member of the Old Fort Genealogical Society, Treasurer of Lee Co. Pioneer Cemetery Association and Treasurer of Friends of the Library. She was also well loved by her grand dogs.

Survivors include one daughter, Karen (Edward Todd) Kester of West Point; one granddaughter, Rae (Aaron) Fedler of Lowell; several brothers and sisters in law as well as thirteen nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband, parents and an infant son David Rene.

Due to the COVID 19 virus a private family graveside service will be held and there will be no formal service at this time. King-Lynk Funeral Home is assisting the family.

A memorial has been established for PAW and may be sent to her daughter, Karen. Online condolences may be left at [www.kinglynk.com](http://www.kinglynk.com).

## FM Partners closing offices due to coronavirus

### PARTNERS - Continued from Page 1

(using social distancing) during Earth Day. Chamber Facebook page has additional information Paint-a-thon: Postponed until June 22-27th Small Business Breakfast: May 7th- TBA Legislative Luncheon: May 15th- TBD Barley Hop Craft Beer Tasting Glass Pre-Sale: Postponed until July 24th Barley Hops Craft Beer Tasting Event: Postponed until July 31st

Please go to the Partners and Chamber Facebook pages for updated information

pertaining to these events, COVID-19 and from our members. "Although we're unable to visit with you in person right now, we want our businesses and our community to know that we are still here for them," states Chamber Coordinator Savanna Collier, "and that they can contact us via email ([chamber@fortmadison.com](mailto:chamber@fortmadison.com)) or phone (319-372-5471) with questions or to chat." "We encourage everyone to look for the restaurant listing we've been pushing,"

Gobble continues, "As it is complete with phone numbers, hours and delivery/take out options." Also, it is encouraged for all small businesses to keep their social media accounts current and continue to promote themselves as well as items in their stores. "Even though you may need to have your doors closed to the public, doesn't mean you can't still make sales based on the items you post- I've bought two items based on pictures posted" - stated Gobble.

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## From the Front

# Lee County parks will remain open, but camping shuttered

**STATE** - Continued from Page 1

Director Dr. Caitlin Pedati, said the IDPH has set a point system of 10 to trigger additional mitigation efforts in those regions.

"None of the six regions have met the highest score of 10, but eastern side has the highest scores," she said. "I don't have the numbers in front of me, but I can confirm none have risen to the level of a 10 as of this morning."

With the death toll now at 25, 16 last week alone, Reynolds said the state and the nation are staring at the toughest week coming up and it's imperative that Iowans be responsible for the mitigation recommendations already in place.

Reynold even brought Stephan Bayens, director of the Iowa Department of Public Safety in to caution Iowans against gathering in large groups.

"Most Iowas are being responsible and doing their part, but there is a small segment throwing caution to the wind and ignoring social gathering limitations," he said. "That small segment has an enormous impact and law enforcement will take reasoned and measured steps if forced to do so."

He said state law enforcement officer will encourage people to comply and disperse, but should all reasonable measures fail they will enforce the governors order.

"Own your behavior and be part of the solution rather than the problem," Bayens said.

Reynolds said 10% of the total cases are among residents of long-term care centers with three outbreaks confirmed at facilities in Linn, Tama, and Washington counties. Of the confirmed cases in Linn County 175 are directly related to the Heritage Care Center in that county.

She made a pointed plea for Iowans to respect recommendations of staying home and follow health protocols so the health care workers on the front lines have the best chance to continue working.

"Every Iowan has a responsibility to keep family, friends, and the community safe, especially our most vulnerable, and health care workers serving on the front lines of this crisis," Reynolds said.

"They don't have the luxury of staying home. These heroes among us are putting fear aside and showing up to care of us. And we need to

do our part by taking care of them. We need to stay home and we need to be responsible.

"I know this is especially difficult for all of you who are our warriors, and we can't win this fight without you. Thanks for showing up and being the best sell for the people who are counting on you. Please know we have your back and will do everything we can to support you through this time."

Reisetter said the state uses a benchmark of three confirmed cases in any care facility as an "outbreak" triggering additional direction and support from the state. That includes segregating confirmed cases, as well as staff so there's no mixing of care for confirmed and non-confirmed cases, mandated shield and eye cover in addition to other PPE and

screening of all staff, family and residents coming in and going out of the facility for fever and cough.

Reisetter was also pushed from pool reporters on the subject of asymptomatic transmission and said individuals needed to respect social distancing and all other health protocols during this outbreak to minimize those situations.

Reynolds said she is meeting with Iowa Economic Development Authority Director Debi Durham today to go over data from small business grant applications that were closed on March 31. Reynolds said there would be announcements on those grants in the next few days, and the program could be expanded.

Additional closures under the expanded order include campgrounds, playgrounds,

malls; tobacco or vaping stores; toy, gaming, music, instrument, movie, or adult entertainment stores; social and fraternal clubs, including those at golf courses; BINGO halls, bowling alleys, pool halls, arcades, and amusement parks; museums, libraries, aquariums, and zoos; race tracks and speedways, and roller or ice skating rinks and skate parks, all through the end of April.

Lee County Conservation Director Nathan Unsworth said all public county campgrounds will be closed at 8 a.m. Tuesday.

"I believe this was the correct call and I support her decision, we had already suspended cabin rentals locally. Our bathrooms and playgrounds are also closed. Campers with reservations in April should contact the Lee County Conservation office

to reschedule their reservations," he said.

"Our parks still remain open and park usage is up across the state. We encourage people if they are out at any park to practice social distancing measures just as they would going to the grocery store. Like many people, I find spending time outdoors to be a great stress reliever. This is even more true right now. Whether I am running, hiking with my dog, or just enjoying time in a park, I am making sure that I am staying six feet away from other individuals on trails, side-walks, etc. I would encourage all other park users to take the same precautions. We all must do our part to help slow the spread of COVID-19 even when are outdoors."

In addition, all unsolicited door-to-door sales are prohibited.

The IDPH was been notified of 78 additional positive

cases over the past 24 hours for a total of 946 positive cases. There have been an additional 680 negative tests for a total of 10,653 negative tests to date, which includes testing reported by the State Hygienic Lab and other labs. The total number of tests confirmed by the lab to date is 11,599 with 8.2% coming back positive, and of those 946 positives, 2.6% have proved fatal, with 99 currently hospitalized.

That state currently has 1,850 tests available.

The three additional deaths were also reported in the past 24 hours were in Linn and Tama counties, all older than 61.

The governor also announced a change in her press conference schedule, saying that press conferences shown live on Facebook typically at 2:30 p.m. daily, will be moved to a Monday-Friday format at 11 a.m.



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## From the Front/Classifieds

# Principal says required supplemental learning would miss 40% of kids

**BOARD** - Continued from Page 1

going forward through end of the suspension or the school year, whichever comes first.

Each meal package includes a breakfast and lunch offering for any student in the district that requests one.

"This cuts down on daily interaction for our staff. We're just preparing for a tough two or three weeks nationally and in the state," Crozier said. "We'll start after Easter."

Crozier said the response to the meal programs has been positive and he's nothing but good feedback from those that are participating.

In an unrelated issue, the district board discussed the voluntary supplemental learning program going on during the suspension, as opposed to a required learning program.

The Iowa Department of Education has put in place an order that requires schools that are providing supplementary learning to inform the state by April 10, whether that learning will be required or voluntary. Either way the district will not have to make up the days.

However, schools that choose to do no supplemental learning will be monitored by the state to make sure the time of the suspension with no offered learning programs, is made up.

Several principals on the teleconferenced meeting indicated that student participation in the voluntary program varies.

Nicole Herdrich, the Central Lee High School principal says she's heard of participation as low as one student, to as high as 51 for teachers with multiple classes.

She said if the district went to required learning at the high school, she could probably get 60% of students involved, but that would leave 40% out.

"The state motto is "Do No Harm", but I don't know how we don't do harm to that other 40%," she said.

Crozier said he's not aware of any school district that is going to the required learning in southeast Iowa. He said some high schools may go to the required curriculum, but none for the Kindergarten through 8 programs.

"We're continuing with supplemental learning and that has to do with quality access in homes for Internet," he said.

Central Lee Elementary principal Heather Fuger said across all grades she's seeing about a 40% participation rate.

"We're still trying all methods we can to reach out to those we haven't reached electronically," Fuger said.

Crozier said the district spent \$1,500 this week in mailing supplemental learning packages to students in the district. Some were sent via the meal vans as well.

"The simpler we keep the tasks the more likely the kids are to respond," Herdrich said. "Teachers are doing a good job with feedback, but we just have to remind the kids that the feedback is coming."

In other action, the board approved construction contracts for the upcoming \$13 million facilities upgrade. The project is being managed by Estes Construction. Officials with that company said despite the current global conditions of the coronavirus, the bids for work came in very favorable to the district.

# FM schools to close facilities to public

**PARKS** - Continued from Page 1

Department to determine available dates for rescheduling purposes.

Then Monday evening at about 5:50 p.m., Fort Madison School District Activities Director Jeremy Swink announced that the district was also closing all facilities and school park equipment starting Tuesday morning.

"The school will fall in line with the governor and the city of Fort Madison's recommendations to close parks. This includes our outdoor facilities: track, outdoor fields, tennis courts and playground equipment," he wrote.

He said all facilities will be locked down until further notice.

"I am torn by this as I love seeing our students and community stay active during this tough time, but it would be irresponsible for the school to not follow the recommendations from our governor and city officials," Swink wrote.

"I anticipate some unhappy community members, but I want to remind everyone that the Fort Madison Community School District has the best interest of our students and community members at heart. During these tough times, we as a community need to come together now more than ever. Thank you for your support and cooperation."

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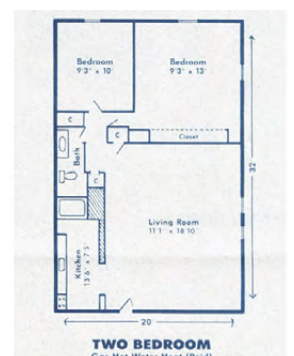
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How can chiropractic therapy help you?

### BENEFITS OF CHIROPRACTIC

- Improved joint mobility, function, and health
- Decreased degeneration of joints and connective tissues
- Improved circulation
- Increased energy, vitality, and improved sleep
- and many, many more

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