PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Thursday, August 6, 2020 | 7 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 153



www.pencitycurrent.com

RIVERFEST 2020



Adelita's Way frontman Rick DeJesus gives a young lady on her dad's shoulders a little attention during the opening night of River-Fest 2020. The annual riverfront rock fest runs through Saturday night. Thursday night's headliner features former WWF superstar Chris Jericho and Fozzy. Tickets are still available at www.riverfestfm.com.

Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

KEMPKER'S HITS 50 YEARS



Image courtesy of Kempker's True Value and Rental, Inc

From left to right: Bob and Barb Kempker, Chuck and Dawn Kempker, Jason and Kimberly Kempker, and Dustin and Sarah Kempker are celebrating 50 years in business this year with events planned for Oct. 2 and 3.

STORIED HALF-CENTURY: Customers, staff, and family keep local hardware flourishing

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Fifty years and five communities later, Kempker's True Value and Rental Inc., is still helping fix Fort Madison.

The company started in the early part of February in 1970 by Bob and Barb Kempker at 725 Avenue G, has sustained as a not-so-prototypical neighborhood hardware store even as the country's big boxes have changed the landscape of Main Street America.

A strong belief in customer and community service has made the Kempker family brand a storied retail operation in Fort Madison.

"Being a family business, being customer oriented is the top pri-

ority. If you take that away your just another number." said Chuck Kempker, who owns and operates the Fort Madison location along with his wife Dawn.

From the early beginnings downtown, the family and business outgrew the 3,000 square foot location they purchase from Stibbens Hardware in 1969 in about a decade. In 1979 they moved operations to 1904 Avenue H, next to Greenwald's grocery store and into a much larger 7,500 square foot space.

In about another 10 years they would purchase the grocery store and add that space to the create the current location in 1990 adding another 9,000 square feet.

See **50th**, page 5

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Gov. Reynolds restores felon voting rights

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

DES MOINES – Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds signed an executive order to restore felon voting rights, but said the move needed to be made permanent.

At a press conference announcing the executive order, Reynolds said she was still going to push for a permanent restoration of felon voter rights.

"An executive order is at best a temporary solution. It can be changed by a stroke of a pen by the next governor, which is not good enough."

The order requires that Iowans with felonies complete in prison, probation, parole or special sentencing requirements, and requires those who committed felony

See VOTING, page 4

INTERNET

Supervisors make contribution to broadband mapping

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG

FORT MADISON – Lee County Supervisors have put a little money where their mouth is when it comes to upgrading broadband access in rural areas.

Supervisors, at Tuesday's regular board meeting, unanimously approved paying about 20% of the cost of a new mapping system already in the hands of the Lee County Economic Development Group.

The cost of the mapping project was just over \$5,000 and the county agreed to pay \$1,000, but Supervisor Rick Larkin encouraged other entities in the county to chip on the project as well.

"We need to know where we're at and we need to get this done as soon as possi-

See **MAPPING**, page 2

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WFATHER

 OpenWeatherMap

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 Mostly Sunny, 75° F / 58° F

 FRI 07 Aug
 Sunny, Warm, 80° F / 61° F

 SAT 08 Aug
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Local News/From the Front

County to seek grants for road repairs

MAPPING - Continued from Page 1

ble. That's why I brought it up last week," Larkin said. Upon a check with the Lee County Auditor's office, Larkin said there was funding available if the motion were approved.

He also said Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld was behind supporting the project financially.

Mohrfeld said the cost of the project shouldn't be shared by just one entity.

"If it truly is a partnership then everyone needs to get behind it," Mohrfeld said Wednesday. "But I don't want to put a dollar figure on it because I don't know what that means for other entities."

LCEDG already has the map and covered the cost of the project up front. Vantage Point Solutions, of South Dakota handled the mapping study. The new tool is a digital overlap that combines current census block information with additional layers showing information from the three county school districts where coverage actually exists to provide a more accurate picture of the census block coverage data vs. real time information.

LCEDG President Dennis Fraise said the next step is to analyze and formulate plans off the information. Those plans can be used to access federal and state funding to help target better coverage.

Currently, one part of area school districts plans to provide high-speed Internet to rural families for remote learning is to park buses with wi-fi service in different areas around the county.

Supervisor Rich Harlow said he'd he recently seen a television program that said about half the country is without broadband coverage despite information from the Federal Communications Commission that says there is greater coverage.

"When we look at that, we see that a lot of people, not only in America, but in Lee County, have dead spots," Harlow said. "That's important now because we are educating children by computer. If you don't have high-speed Internet, how can you learn anything."

In other action, supervisors:

- passed two measures to allow County Engineer Ben Hull to apply for grants for road projects. The first project is a \$500,000 grading of a 1/2 mile of 255th Street near 160th Avenue, to reduce the peak on hill and make the intersection safer. The second was anoth er road safety grant for \$65,000 to join with Van Buren County to purchase traffic signals for road construction work.
- approved a \$19,702 change order for work on the South Lee County Courthouse boiler replacement project for a piping system required for fire safety.

COUNTY OFFICES

County Treasurer moves to appointment-only

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – Lee County officials have done away with any walk-in service at the county's treasurer's office, despite a decision last week to require appointments only for driver's license services.

But on Wednesday, officials released a statement saying the treasurer's department would only take customers by appointment only going forward.

The release is below in it's entirety.

"In order to serve the public in a more efficient way, the Lee County Treasurer's Office is switching it's format to appointment only. You may make an appointment by calling 319-372-3405. Office hours are 8:30 – 3:30. Masks are required.

Office Building in Fort Madison-Enter on the East side of the building. There will be a guard to take your temperature and administer COVID symptom questions. Again, masks are required. You will exit through the front door on Avenue H.

Courthouse in Keokuk-only the door on 7th Street will be open. There will be a guard to take your temperature and administer COVID symptom questions. Masks are required.

Business can still be conducted online or by mail. There are drop boxes at both locations for your convenience. In Fort Madison, the box is located in the alley behind the Administration Building at 933 Avenue H. In Keokuk, outside the Courthouse on 7th Street. PLEASE include your phone number on what you drop off so we can call you with any questions.

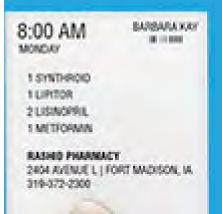
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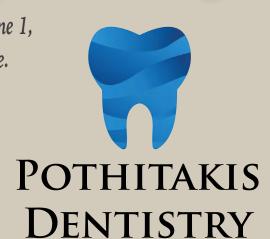




We are honored to be joined by Dr. Courtney on June 1, after more than three decades of private practice.

Dr. Courtney will be seeing patients at our Fort Madison Family Dentistry West office. Call 319-372-4882 for your appointment.

www.DrMarkDDS.com



Obituaries/Iowa News

J.D. WYATT, JR.

J.D. Wyatt, Jr., 27, of Ankeny, IA, formerly of Keokuk, IA died Monday, August 3, 2020 at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center in Des Moines, IA.

He was born July 7, 1993 in Lakeland, FL the son of John Dale and Jeri Moore Wyatt. He graduated from Central Lee High School with the Class of 2012. He then furthered his education and attended Southeastern Community College in Keokuk where he

received his Associates degree.

J.D. was a veteran of the Iowa National Guard and proudly served his country for eight years.

On September 9, 2017 he was united in marriage to Jaclyn Gilpin at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Keokuk.

He is survived by his wife, Jaclyn of Ankeny, IA, his mother, Jeri Duncan (Tony) of Galesburg, IL, his father, John D. Wyatt (Tracy) of Keokuk, siblings,

Paige Vermazen (Kyler) of MO, Cody McClain of Davenport, IA, Grant Duncan of Quincy, IL and Allyson Duncan of MO. He is also survived by his grandfather, Richard Moore of Hamilton, IL, great-grandmother, Marjorie Cossel of

Montrose, IA, great-grandmother, Elizabeth O'Conner of Hamilton, IL and one amazing niece, Wynona Vermazen.

WYATT

He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Dale Wyatt, great-grandfather, Cecil Cossel, Jr., grandmothers, Joyce Wyatt and Jana Moore and one sister, Verna Nelson.

J.D. was a member of Melrose Methodist Church in Argyle, IA.

He had been employed by True Green as a lawn technician.

J.D. enjoyed playing Pokemon and was an avid gamer. He loved animals, spending time with his family and always made people smile.

A funeral service will be held at 2 p.m., Friday, at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk, IA. Burial with military rites will be in the Hickory Grove Cemetery in rural Keokuk.

Visitation will be held prior to the service from 12-2 p.m., Friday, at the funeral home with family meeting with friends at that time. The family requests everyone come in casual and comfortable dress as J.D. would have liked.

Social distancing requirements will be in place at both the visitation and the funeral service and attendees may be limited according to those requirements. Masks are strongly encouraged. Memorials may be made to the family.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

Miller files 2nd COVID price gouging suit

DES MOINES — Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller has filed a second lawsuit alleging an eBay seller violated the price-gouging law during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brenda Kay Noteboom of Orange City is accused of selling more than 320 items on eBay at excessive prices for a two-week period in mid to late March 2020. The items included toilet paper, paper towels, disinfecting and sanitizing products and other items needed by disaster victims. Noteboom realized more than \$5,500 from the sales, the lawsuit alleges.

Noteboom is the sister of victims of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Michael Evan Noteboom, who was sued by Miller on April 26. The lawsuit accused him of charging excessive prices on more than 250 items on eBay. Michael Noteboom denies that he violated the price-gouging law. On May 7, Judge Third Judicial District Judge Patrick Tott signed an order granting a stipulated temporary injunction, in which Michael Evan Noteboom agrees to be enjoined temporarily from selling or buying items or merchandise needed by

To file a price-gouging complaint, go to the Iowa Attorney General's website.

JACK E. EAVES

Jack Edward Eaves, 78, left his earthly life on Tuesday, August 4, 2020. He was born February 18, 1942 and was one of the 14 children born and raised in Dallas City, IL to Florence and Roy Eaves. In August 1961, he married Sandra "Kay" Marsh, the girl he met at the Bishop's soda fountain in Fort Madison. They were blessed with their two sons, Kurt and Kevin.



EAVES

Jack worked at the State Penitentiary for 10 years. Then worked 11 years at Armour Dial. Often neighbors would see Jack learning some boxing moves from his brothers, and in 1971 was approached by a youth wanting some pointers to defend himself. A few weeks later, he was approached by another boy requesting the same thing. Not long after, he found out the two boys had been fighting each other! He saw a need in the community for the boys and young men to have a place to challenge themselves. In 1977, putting his personal property up for collateral, he obtained a loan at the local bank

to start the Lee County Boxing Club. With it, he rented a floor of the Anthes Hotel for their training facility, using his own money to purchase boxing equipment. He later received financial support from many local individuals, businesses, and organizations such as The United Way Foundation. Mike Delaney was instrumental in helping Jack with the start of the club. Jack had a special way with the boxers, many of whom needed a father figure. Ask any of the hundreds of boxers that agreed to the rules of the club (no cussing, no fighting outside the ring, keep your grades up, respect others), and they would all agree that Jack taught them just as much outside of the ring as he did inside. The club became well-respected in the boxing circuit, taking many athletes to the State and National levels. In 1986, he was awarded the National Child Labor Committee's Lewis Hine Award for Voluntary Service to Children and Youth. Also, in 2010, he was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Daily Democrat. Jack gave his heart to The Lord and was a member of Joy Baptist Church. He enjoyed his time and fellowship with Reverend Beal and helping with the Prison Ministry.

Survivors include his wife, "Kay", of nearly 59 years; son, Kurt (Angie) of Grinnell, IA and their children, Erica Place (Andy) and Alyssa Johnson (Gunnar); son, Kevin, and his children, Chelci Eaves-Mehaffy (Noah) and Ian (Cara); and great granddaughters Genevieve and Gabriel Ruble and Grace Eaves, all of Fort Madison, IA; brothers Guy, Jerry, and Richard, sister, Imogene, sister in law, Carolyn Marsh Weber & sons.

He was preceded in death by his parents and siblings, Betty Scott, Helen Boulyou, Linda Neuendorf, Ruby Pickard, Billy, Lester, Mike, Pat, & Vernon Eaves & a brother in law, John Weber.

A public visitation will be held from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 7, 2020 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory in Fort Madison, IA, without family being present, due to the current Co-Vid situation. A private family graveside service will be held at Fairview Cemetery in rural Fort Madison, IA with Rev. Earl Beal officiating. A memorial has been established in Jack's memory and contributions may be left at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory during the public visitation. Online condolences to Jack's family may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

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Charles Vandenberg, Editor

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sales@pencitycurrent.com

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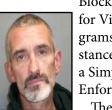
Lee County News/From the Front



Task force gets Keokuk man on meth charges

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

Todd Spurgeon, 45, of Keokuk, Iowa was arrested on August 3rd, 2020 in the 2600 Block Main St. in Keokuk, Iowa. Spurgeon is charged with a warrant



Block Main St. in Keokuk, Iowa. Spurgeon is charged with a warrant for Violation of Probation; Delivery of Methamphetamine less than 5 grams 2nd Offense a Class C Felony; Possession of Controlled Substance a Serious Misdemeanor; Possession of Drug Paraphernalia a Simple Misdemeanor and Providing False Identification to Law Enforcement a Simple Misdemeanor.

SPURGEON

The arrest of Spurgeon 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. Keokuk Police

Department arrested Spurgeon after receiving a report of a suspicious person in the area.

The Kookuk Police Department, Lee County Atternov's Office, and the Jove Division

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

The defendant is 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.

Governor vows to fight for amendment

VOTING - Continued from Page 1

homicides to still individually apply for voting restoration.

Reynolds thanked legislators, the NAACP, ACLU, Americans For Prosperity and advocates for working to move both chambers of the Legislature on a permanent solution, even though that hasn't been realized yet.

She said at this point, the order is the right thing to do and makes a difference allowing a lot of people to participate in the election process.

"It boils down to our fundamental belief in redemption and second chances," she

Reynolds created a task force lead by Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg to keep working on issues of racial profiling with a goal of making recommendations by October for her program next year.

"We cannot ignore how negatively and significantly the current process has impacted the lives of so many Iowans of color," she said.

Iowa was the only state in the country that prohibits a convicted felon from voting or holding public office for life unless they petition the governor.

Reynolds said she will continue to fight for an amendment to the state's constitution and has delayed signing the executive order through the legislature as she pushed for a permanent change over the temporary resolution.

CURRENT-LEE

End Alzheimer's T-Shirt Contest

Help The Kensington design their team t-shirt for Walk to End Alzheimer's! Submit your design to The Kensington by August 17, 2020. Winner will be announced on August 24th. Design should be for the back of the t-shirt.

<u>Print this photo</u> and design your t-shirt on it, then drop off at 2210 Avenue H, Fort Madison or email it to <u>vmatlock@kensington-evergreen.com</u>.

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From the Front/Classifieds

Kempker's plans Oct. 2-3 weekend festival to honor 50th anniversary

50th - Continued from Page 1

While all that was going on, Bob added the franchise tag True Value in 1982, to the Kempker name. In 1994, rentals became part of the business model, with the unique name "Just Ask Rental." The Radio Shack franchise was then added in 1998 and a floral and gift department was was added in 2000.

That department is now called, "The Girls Side at Kempker's True Value & Rental, when Dawn renamed it in 2019, and it was moved into it's own building on the property.

But the business started out very much as the family affair with all of the Kempker children, Sherry, Debbie, Sandy, Chuck, and Peggy, growing up working in the store doing odd jobs.

Now Chuck and Dawn, now own and operate the 16,500 square foot "store within a store", and have since 2003 when it was passed to them.

Kempker said back when the big boxes boomed it was a challenge. He said staying focused on customer service won the war, but he took hits during the battle.

"Sooner or later I knew that would come back," he said. "It was probably about a year pushing forward but the repercussions were felt. I told my boys the other day that that was one of the biggest challenges I had when I first got in."

But with the family building a strong team of employees focused on top-shelf customer service and expanding into rentals, plumbing, paint and electronics and core hardware has uniquely positioned the brand to move into the next 25 years.

"When you start growing and having different locations, you can't find yourself out on the floor all of the time. Our staff in all locations helps me to concentrate on another section of the business," he said.

"We have employees that have been here for decades and these employees are like our family. They enjoy coming to work and they are part of the success. They are the core of the store."

Kempker said smaller footprints with more store-to-door services such as online ordering, deliveries, and pick-ups, could be the path of the future. But he having frontage where people can come in and get what they need, when they need it is not going away.

"There are things that you just can't do online. Say you wake up and find a water line broken," he said. "Online isn't going away, but there is still that piece where you have to have the frontage to walk in and grab and go."

As the decades rolled on, the couple and their sons, Dustin and Jason launched expansions into Mt. Pleasant, Burlington, Grimes, and Huxley starting in 2011, with the final acquisition of Huxley in 2017.

Jason and his wife, Kimberly, oversee the Grimes operation, while Dustin and his wife Sarah, oversee the Burlington location. Both of those families own and operate the Huxley store.

Kempker said the main celebrations of the 50th anniversary will take place in the fall.

"We were gonna have something in May, but COVID hit and I wanted to have the whole family here. So Oct. 2 and 3 we're gonna have a celebration. It should have been way earlier but it's still 2020."

"We're gonna have a big sale with a percentage off so people should be watching for those flyers very soon. That Friday morning will do some media event with some dignitaries and then roll into the two-day event."

The next 25 years is full of pride for Chuck and Dawn.

"It's interesting because, again, its pretty nice that the boys are enjoying it. They want to grow and have other locations. As we talk, do I have an exit plan?... it's a family business," he said with a laugh.



Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PC

Chuck and Dawn Kempker have owned and operated Kempker's True Value and Rental, Inc. in Fort Madison since the business was handed down from Chuck's parents Bob and Barb Kempker in 2003. Below, Chuck spends some time with a customer in the garden section Wednesday morning.



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RiverFest 2020





Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

At left, Adelita's Way bass guitarist Andrew Cushing lends some vocals in the early going of Wednesday night's set at RiverFest presented by Frank Millard and Co. in Fort Madison. Above, Cole Hollow's revs up the crowd before the headliner on the Mohrfeld Electric Main Stage.

Do Your Park

Great River Regional Waste Authority encourages you to wear goves when moving bins for residential trash pick-up.



Ft. Madison Main Office: 2092 303rd Ave Fort Madison, IA 1-319-372-6140 Keokuk Transfer Station: 111 Carbide Lane Keokuk, IA 1-319-524-6175

Great River Regional Waste Authority

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