

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Thursday, July 23, 2020 | 9 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 143



www.pencitycurrent.com

Ave. F residents want city's help

HISTORY OF HARASSMENT: Police have been to one address 36 times in past year

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

(Editor's Note: It was the decision of the Pen City Current to withhold the names of residents in the 1400 block of Avenue F voicing concerns at Tuesday's City Council meeting.)

FORT MADISON – Several residents living in the 1400 block of Avenue F spoke out about the occupants of a home on the block that are creating an alleged harassing and unsafe environment.

During the public comment period of Tuesday's regular Fort Madison City Council meeting, three residents spoke up about the environment in the neighborhood, and pleaded with city officials to take action.

Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld told the group that although the council couldn't speak to the issue because the discussion wasn't an agenda item, it wasn't falling on deaf ears.

"I want to say again, that even though we can't discuss these issues because they aren't on the agenda, the information you're giving us will be forwarded to city staff," Mohrfeld said.

One resident who lives on the block said the city has been responsive to the issue, but the issue requires more attention.

"The police, (Building Director) Doug Krogmeier and the city have been more than willing to help out. Every time there's been a complaint they've taking care of it," the resident said.

See NEIGHBORHOOD, page 9

CORONAVIRUS

Lee County hits 65 cases of COVID-19

BY PCC STAFF

LEE COUNTY – The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Lee County Health Department have identified two additional cases of COVID-19 in the county, one child and one adult who are currently in isolation. This makes 65 confirmed cases in Lee County to date with 45 cases reported as recovered.

Health officials encourage interested residents to access the Iowa Coronavirus website at <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov> if interested in county testing data, confirmed case counts, and other useful information.

According to the website, the state has seen two of the top five days in positive case reporting in the past 10 days. On July 10th 688 positive tests were reported and on July 16th, 663 positive tests were confirmed in the state. Those two trail April 29th when 804 tests came back positive, May 26 – 803, and April 23 – 727. Five of the last six days have shown a decline in positive numbers.

The state tracks a rolling 14-day total, which is the high line of the infection period. That total was at its lowest point since April 23 on June 17 at 3,893. Since that day, the state has seen an upswing that hit 6,229 on Wednesday.

Lee County has confirmed nine additional positive tests since July 15 out of 65 total reports. Lee County is showing a 2.6% positive rate, compared to a state-wide figure of 9.3% positive.

LCHD wants to remind everyone of the recommended safety measures in place that can help reduce the spread of this active virus that continues to infect individuals in our county. These safety measures include:

- Maintaining at least a six-foot physical distance apart from others outside your home.
- Wearing a face covering especially when social distancing is not feasible.
- Staying home when ill away from others.

See LCHD, page 9

Hawks eliminated

Central Lee's boys were eliminated from Class 2A post-season baseball on Wednesday with a 9-7 loss to Mid-Prairie in Mediapolis. The Hawks rallied to a 2-run deficit in the bottom of the 7th, but stranded the bases loaded on the third out. At right, Corbin Pohren slides back into first on a pick-off play. See page 4 for the game story.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

OPINION - By Katie Scoville

Small privileges unveiled as pandemic continues to unfold

College is a time to spread your wings and move out of your comfort zone. You're introduced to a new, independent lifestyle that doesn't involve your parents. My first semester at Syracuse University was a dream. I formed amazing friendships, created memories, and got involved on campus. Heading back to campus in January, I thought second semester would trump the first, but fate had



SCOVILLE

other plans. COVID-19 emerged all over the country and caused Syracuse to shut down in March. I was sent home to complete my classes online. Living through COVID-19 has taught me three valuable lessons: always be grateful for what you have, reach out to those you love, and to put others before yourself.

Everyone has lost something because of this pandemic. Many have lost their freedoms, their jobs, even their lives. I lost a part of my freshman year that I'll never get back. However, being able to reminisce on the memories, friends, and connections I've made at Syracuse makes the lost time worth it. It's easy to dwell on the negatives and fail to see the posi-

See POSITIVES, page 6

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WEATHER

THU 23 Jul.....	Sunny Skies, 79° F/ 62° F
FRI 24 Jul.....	Sunny Skies, 84° F/ 64° F
SAT 25 Jul.....	Hot, Light Rain, 86° F/ 69° F

OpenWeatherMap



IOWA LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS 07/21.....	1425 26 41 43, Mega Ball: 15	Megaplier: 3
PICK 3 01/06 MIDDAY.....	4 6 9	
PICK 3 01/06 EVENING.....	3 7 4	
PICK 4 01/06 MIDDAY.....	3 6 9 9	
PICK 4 01/06 EVENING.....	4 2 3 4	

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Education News

SCC rolls out new Return to Campus plans for fall semester

WEST BURLINGTON – Southeastern Community College will resume face-to-face classes and limited campus activities with safety accommodations when students return August 19.

Planners developed the Blackhawk Strong, Blackhawk Safe return to campus plan over the past three months in conjunction with state and local health department recommendations, as well as input from faculty and staff.

While SCC will be open for face-to-face classes, it will also deliver many subjects via other methods that eliminate or reduce the amount of time students need to be on campus including online, hybrid, and scheduled livestream class delivery.

“Every student learns differently and has their own comfort level with the realities of our world right now,” says SCC President Dr. Michael Ash. “We’re doing our best to provide as efficient and effective learning opportunities as possible that also ensures everyone’s safety.”

Ash continues that for those students in health and

technical programs whose only option is to attend classes on campus to complete their degree requirements, SCC has implemented a number of safety measures.

Students can also choose from ten degree programs that can be completed entirely online. Programs include degrees in agriculture, accounting, biomedical electronics, and a number of four-year transfer majors.

“Every college in the country learned a lot when we transitioned to online-only learning last spring,” Ash says. “Since then, we’ve had time to research, plan and implement a whole slew of safety measures that enable us to provide a safe, quality on-campus learning environment.”

Elements of the plan include:

- Face masks required for all persons while inside SCC facilities
- Protective shields installed at front line service counters
- Campus signage with guidance on health safety practices and requirements

Other safety measures include:

- Increased cleaning and sanitization protocols
- Hand sanitizer dispensers located in classrooms and high traffic locations
- Reduced capacity classrooms with distanced desks and workstations
- Limited food service offerings with single-service meals in West Burlington
- Special screening and quarantine requirements for residence hall students
- Increased availability of student services via phone, videoconference, or online delivery

While most of the elements are already in place, the plan will be in full effect the week before classes begin on August 19.

For more information on the campus reopening plan, visit scciowa.edu/covidsafereturn.

For more news or to learn about Southeastern Community College, visit: scciowa.edu.

Do Your Part!

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

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

LEROY POUNDER

Leroy Pounder, 87, of Nauvoo, Illinois, passed away at 12:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 21, 2020, at his home in Nauvoo.

Leroy was born on June 19, 1933, in North Platte, Nebraska, the son of Joel Smith and Minnie E. Lange. He was raised by Richard and Minnie Pounder - Johnson. On April 20, 1977, he married Lela R. McQuiston in Yankton, South Dakota. She preceded him in death on March 22, 2008.



POUNDER

Survivors include his five children: Terry (Dee) Pounder of Lakewood, Colorado, Brenda (Mike) Johnson of Sioux City, Iowa, Roger Pounder of North Platte, Nebraska, Phyllis Pounder of North Platte, Nebraska and Michelle Soto of North Platte, Nebraska; nine grandchildren: Angie, Chad, Tanner, Amber, Patrick, Kristi, Toni, Becky and Steven; several great grandchildren; four siblings: R.J. (Jan) Pounder of Brighton, Colorado, Helen (Billy) Haney of Tryon, Nebraska, Larry Johnson of North Platte, Nebraska and Charleen (Floyd) Danzack of Johnston, Colorado. Also surviving are many nieces, nephews, cousins and very special friends: Carol, Kaylee and Kody McGhghy.

He was preceded in death by: his parents; wife: Lela; one sister: Alice Richardson and one brother: Chuck Johnson.

Leroy was a United States Army Veteran having served in the Korean War.

He was retired from Armour Dial. In his younger years, he raced stock cars. Leroy also enjoyed watching NASCAR races and was an avid Denver Broncos, Rusty Wallace and Nebraska Corn Huskers fan. He was a jokester and prankster. Leroy loved his dogs.



Friends may call after 10:00 a.m. Friday, July 24, 2020, at Schmitz - Banks & Beals Funeral Home in Nauvoo where the family will receive friends from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

A Funeral Service will be held at 2:00 p.m. at Schmitz - Banks & Beals Funeral Home in Nauvoo with Pastor Mark Anderson officiating.

Social distancing requirements will be in place. Wearing a mask is encouraged.

Burial will be at Fort McPherson National Cemetery in Maxwell, Nebraska with full military rites.

A memorial has been established in his memory.

Schmitz - Banks & Beals Funeral Home of Nauvoo is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.sbbfuneral-home.com.

OBITUARIES

EUGENE WILMESMEIER

Eugene "Gene" Wilmesmeier, 79, of Wever, Iowa passed away in Rapid City, South Dakota on July 21st, 2020 after a long illness.

Gene was born on the family farm in Fort Madison, Iowa on March 21st, 1941 to Louis and Clara Fraise Wilmesmeier. He graduated from Aquinas High School in 1959. Gene married Karen Susan Hitch on August 24th, 1974; they were married for 45 years. They had known each other all their lives but their courtship began at a Thanksgiving church "feather" party where bingo players won a chicken or turkey. After working the family farm, Gene worked as a salesman for Building Materials Inc for thirty years. He enjoyed gardening, woodworking, raising chickens, and spending time with his grandsons. He was a lifelong fan of the Chicago Cubs and passed that love on to his children. He was a member of the Wever Volunteer Fire Department, the Aquinas School Board, and the Aquinas God's Portion Day Committee. He was a member of both the St. Joseph and St. Mary parishes.



WILMESMEIER

Gene is survived by his wife Karen, his children, Bonnie Wilmesmeier, Rapid City, South Dakota, Jan (John) Johnson, Rapid City, South Dakota, and Scott (Sara) Wilmesmeier, Killduff, Iowa; three grandsons Blake Wilmesmeier, Tyson Wilmesmeier, and Henry Johnson. He is also survived by his sister, Martha (Wilmesmeier) Luttenegger, Fort Madison, Iowa, and many nieces and nephews.

Gene was preceded in death by his parents, Louis Joseph Wilmesmeier and Clara Matilda (Fraise) Wilmesmeier and an infant daughter.

Socially distant visitation will begin at 10 AM on Monday, July 27, 2020 at Ss. Mary & Joseph's Catholic Church, a funeral mass will follow at 11am. Graveside service at Hillcrest Memorial Park will immediately follow the mass. Face masks highly recommended. King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory is in charge of the arrangements.

Online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com and cards of condolences may be sent to: Karen Wilmesmeier 2916 Elderberry Blvd, Rapid City, South Dakota 57703.

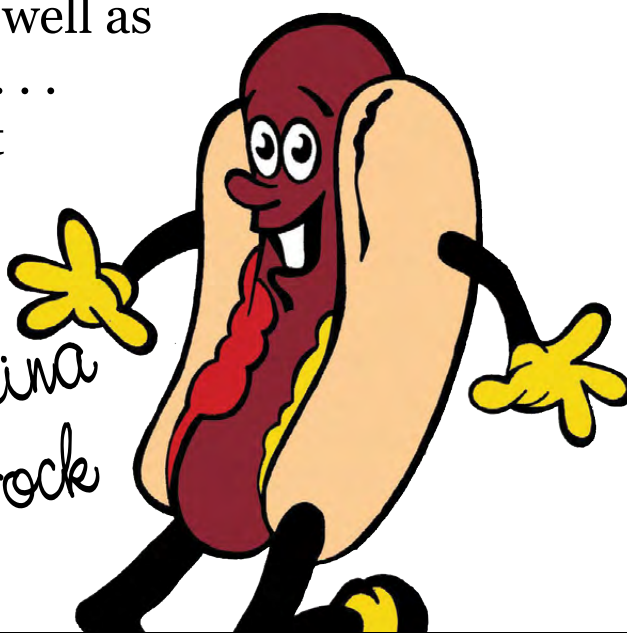
Pen City Current obituary policy

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.

SONNY'S Super Market

The Sonny's staff sends a heartfelt Thank You to our friends, old and new, who have supported us during the COVID-19 situation. As always, we work hard to stay stocked while providing personal service to our customers.

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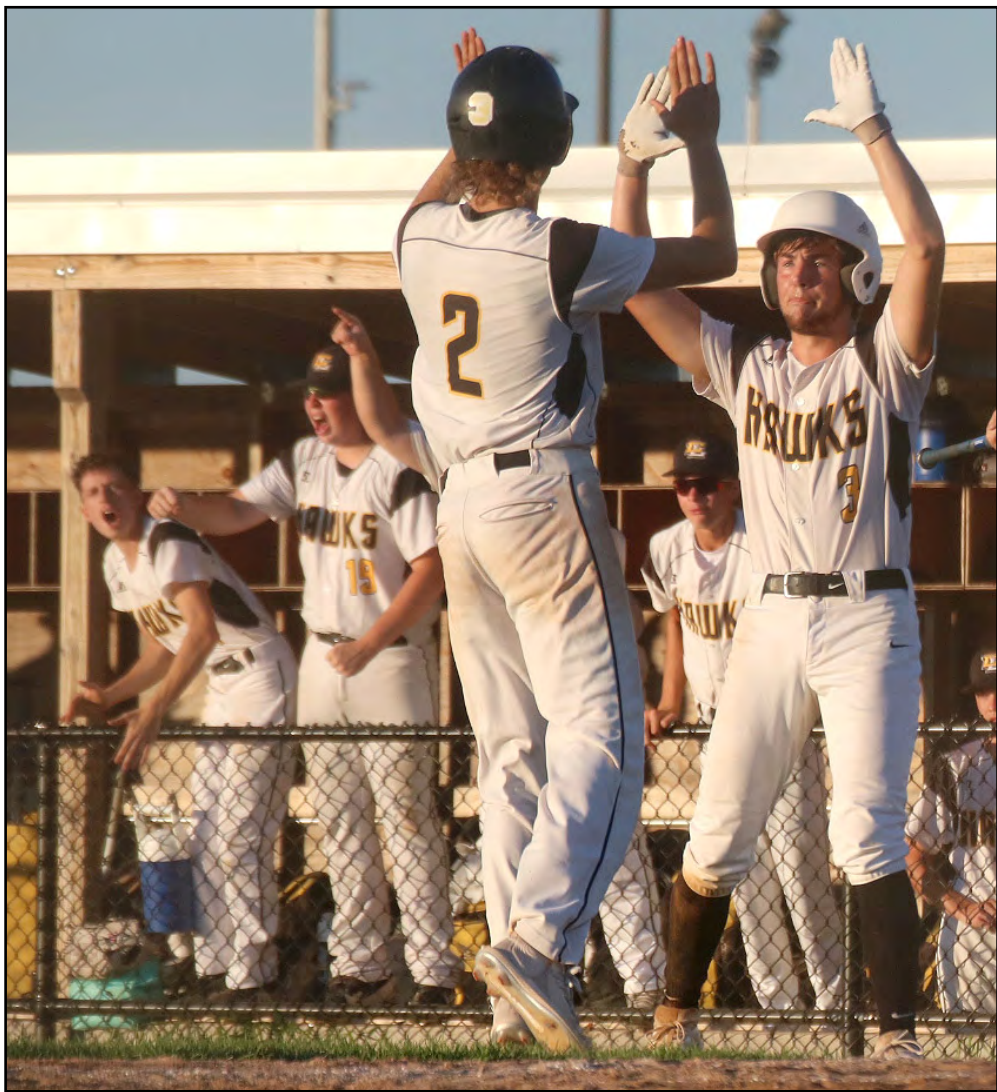
It Takes a Community

- Wash your hands frequently with soap & water - 20 seconds or more
- Cover your coughs & sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- Keep your hands away from your face - eyes, nose, mouth are doorways for germs
- Stay home when you are ill
- Avoid gatherings of more than 10 people
- Help protect our elderly or those with health conditions

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Sports

Hawks rally, but fall in Class 2A substate final



Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Jadon Hawk (2) gets a high five from TJ Stutes (3) after scoring early on Wednesday night in the Hawks' 9-7 loss to Mid-Prairie in the Class 2A substate final in Mediapolis.

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP
PCC SPORTS

MEDIAPOLIS — Shane Weirather was thinking the same thing a lot of Iowa high school baseball coaches were thinking as the COVID-19 pandemic put the summer season in doubt.

"There was a point when I didn't think we would have a season," the Central Lee coach said. "I remember telling my assistant coaches what a shame it would be to not have a season. I thought this team had a chance to be one of the greatest teams at Central Lee."

Five senior starters — seven seniors in all on the roster — gave Weirather hope.

"It would be a shame,"

he said, "if they didn't get to play."

The Hawks got to play. They got to play up until the final out of Wednesday's Class 2A substate final against Mid-Prairie.

Central Lee nearly came back from a six-run deficit before falling, 9-7, to the Golden Hawks.

Mid-Prairie (15-3) advanced to the state tournament in Des Moines.

Mid-Prairie broke open a 4-3 game with three runs in the fifth inning, then added two more in the sixth.

But Central Lee scored three runs in the bottom of the sixth, and added two in the seventh. The potential tying run came to the plate in the sixth, the potential winning run came to the plate in the seventh.

The Hawks couldn't get

that crucial hit.

"They're good kids," Weirather said. "They're going to fight to the end, no matter what. And, by god, we had a shot there at the end. In the end, they made less mistakes than we did."

Four walks and two errors in the third inning led to four runs for the Golden Hawks.

"It's just not what we've been all year long," Weirather said. "Give them credit — good at-bats put pressure on us. When you get pressure, you make mistakes. And we sure had our share of them tonight."

Central Lee ended its season with a 12-2 record.

"We played pretty well (all season)," Weirather said. "Even tonight, they showed what kind of kids they are."



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Senior TJ Stutes takes a knee after the Central Lee Hawks' season ended with the bases loaded in the bottom of the 7th in Mediapolis. The Hawks finished the COVID-shortened season 12-2.

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Opinion

Detasseling was summer rite of passage for many

My only goal was to keep up with Ray in the row beside me and not fall behind. The corn leaves sliced across my face, arms and legs. Foolishly, I had on a short sleeved shirt and shorts. Ray on the other hand had every inch of skin covered, save for his face, and even there he had a net to pull down over his eyes and nose. Of course, I was only there to go one round with Ray the checker, not spend 12 hours in the field like him and his fellow detassellers. I wanted to see what detasseling was like in 2020. (They have porta potties now.) I had rogued and hoed corn as a teenager, and had some vivid memories—clouds of mosquitoes so thick they would fly in your mouth and nose, breath-stealing heat, and a blistered nose from sunburn (it wasn't cool to wear a hat). But the money was good: the only spending money we had, actually. Detasseling was a summer rite of passage in small town Iowa, a way to get in shape for two-a-day football practice.

Ray stopped with his arm outstretched in front of my face, pointing

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm

at a corn stalk beside my head. "Tassel," he said in broken English. "Toe soul." He gave a hand motion like pulling it.

I took a hold of the tassel and pulled up. It came loose and I stared at it. I could not even tell it was a tassel. How Ray, whose name is Raymundo Camacho, could spot it as we speed walked through the field, I had no idea. We were doing clean-up work. The cutter machine had been through, then the wheel puller, then the first wave of hand detassellers, and now clean up. Rows had to be 99.98% clean—less than two tassels per mile-long row. I know five star businesses that don't have a quality rate that high. Ray is a checker, the person who ensures that each person on the crew is not missing a tassel.

I spotted a tassel in the row to my right. I reached for it, but Ray stopped



me. "Male," he said, and held up his two way radio. He talked in Spanish to his foreman back at the refurbished school bus, then held the radio up for me to hear. The foreman told me in English that there is one male row for every four female, and that only the female seed corn was detasseled so that it doesn't self pollinate.

At the end of the round, I was just pleased that my 72 year old body was able to keep up with the tall, lanky 28-year old Raymundo. The foreman, Greg Martinez, explained to me that their home base is in Florida. He's been coming up to Mt. Pleasant for 10 years. Each year their company, Martinez Brothers, hires 300 H2 workers from Mexico. They start out in Florida harvesting 4,000 acres of celery and 5,000 acres of iceberg and Romaine lettuce. Then they come up to Georgia to harvest sweetcorn. Then it's Iowa for detasseling. Then Louisiana for sugarcane.

"I know what you're thinking," Martinez said. "No, we did not bring COVID with us. We were out of Florida before the second wave hit. Out of 300 employees, only three came down

with COVID. I rented them hotel rooms and quarantined them, with a guy bringing them food for 14 days. It was nasty, like a flu you've never seen. They lost over 20 pounds. But they cured up. My brother must have sent me a million masks. When we're in the bus, taking them to Walmart to cash their checks, they all wear masks. But not in the fields. It's so hot you can hardly breathe without a mask. We have digital thermometers. If anyone has a fever, they get sent home. I have Ana from Little Mexico in Mt. Pleasant bring them lunch and dinner. They eat good and work hard."

My day was over, and it wasn't 8:00 a.m. Ray and his buddies had a good 10 hours left. Something moved in my shirt pocket. I pulled out a Japanese Beetle. I flipped it back in the cornfield and went home for a shower and breakfast, thinking I didn't have it so bad.

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.

Culture change from virus could be long-lasting

POSITIVES - Continued from Page 1

tives. I'm grateful I can still contact my friends, I can still participate with my campus organizations, and I can look back on my freshman year with great joy. I'm grateful that my family and myself are happy, healthy, and able to spend quarantine together. These small privileges have made quarantine less painful.

At Syracuse, I've created friendships that'll last a lifetime and being plucked away from friends who live half-way

across the country has been difficult. Luckily, I can still contact them. Interacting with them through a screen isn't desirable, but it's the best option available. Even if the messages are a simple, the smallest gestures still have an impact. Checking on those you care about is more important than ever.

Perhaps the best lesson I've learned is how to put other's needs before my own. I understand how difficult it is not being able to live life normally.

However, the current conditions are too dangerous and unpredictable to only think of myself. How would I feel if my family was infected? How would I feel if one of my friends was infected? I'm dedicated to abiding by health guidelines and keeping those I love safe. It's always easy to have fun. What isn't fun is thinking about how your decisions can inadvertently affect others. I've taken the time to prioritize the needs of others over my own.

COVID-19 has completely devastated lives all around the world. Every-

one is in this fight together. I'm aware that I'm one small piece of a gigantic puzzle, and I'm doing my part. I'm wearing a mask every time I go out, I'm maintaining my distance, and I'm putting others before myself. I urge you to do the same. COVID-19 has truly taught me how to be a better person, and for that I'm thankful.

Katie Scoville is a Syracuse University journalism student and 2019 graduate of Holy Trinity Catholic High School. She can be reached at admin@pencity-current.com

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Classifieds/Public Notices

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE WEST POINT UTILITY SYSTEM WEST POINT, IOWA July 14th, 2020

The West Point Municipal Utility System Board of Trustees met in regular session at, West Point City Hall, West Point, Iowa 52656 on July 14th, 2020. Board Chairman Randy Welding presided and called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Board Member Brian Schmitz were present. Board Member Ted Vonderhaar was absent from this meeting. Tentative agenda was approved by consensus. Status of delinquent accounts was discussed and considered by Board Members in detail. Field operations report, as prepared by Utility Superintendent, was discussed by Board Members in detail.

Board Chairman was reported on the following: The next regular Utility System Board Meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, August 11th,

2020 at West Point City Hall 5:30 p.m. and is open to the public. On motion, minutes of prior regular meeting of July 14th, 2020 was approved. On motion, approved warrants payable for July 2020 as presented. On motion, meeting adjourned at 6:06p.m., July 13th, 2020.

EXPENDITURES FOR MAY 2018

3rd GENERATION ELECTRIC - TRENCHING	150.00
ABOLT, RON - REBATE	100.00
AGRINEED - HERBICIDE	59.99
ALTORFER INC. - ELEMENT	61.38
DAILY DEMOCRAT- LEGAL PUBLICATION	56.02
DELTA DENTAL - INSURANCE	69.24
EFTPS- FED/FICA TAX TAXES	4,803.61
FLETCHER REINHARDT - SUPPLIES	7,145.20
FLOYDS- TRASH PICK UP	120.00
FULLENKAMP INSURANCE - PREMIUM	1,386.00
HUFFMAN WELDING - BAR OIL, PLUG	37.35
IOWA DEPT OF REVE-	

NUE- EXCISE / SALES TAX	2,776.00
IOWA LEAGUE OF CITIZES - D SMITH ACADEMY	97.50
IOWA ONE CALL - LOCATE SERVICES	200.70
IMMENSE IMPACT - WEBSITE SUBSCRIPTION	424.22
IPERS -RETIREMENT	2,786.36
KEMPKER'S TRUE VALUE - PAINT, BRUSHES	8.00
MC FARLAND - OFFICE SUPPLIES	106.54
MEDIACOM - TELE / INTERNET	257.67
MOELLER, KENNETH - REBATE	100.00
PETTY CASH- MISC.	26.83
RATHBUN REGIONAL WATER - WATER	5,917.00
RESALE POWER GROUP OF IOWA - WHOLESALE ELEC	61,596.45
RICOH - COPIER / COPIES	43.67
SCHMITZ, BRIAN -	

MEETINGS	120.00
SKARSHAUG TESTING LAB - TESTING	408.51
SONNY'S SUPERMARKET - SUPPLIES	25.75
STATE HYGIENIC LAB - LAB FEES	13.00
SUN LIFE FINANCIAL - INSURANCE	108.57
TASCO - PAGER SERVICE	142.55
TREASURER STATE OF IOWA - STATE, EXCISE, - SALES TAX	736.55
UPS - SHIPMENTS	10.73
US POSTAL SERVICE - MAILING	80.00
VAN METER INC. - WIRE	353.42
VERMEER SALES & SERVICE - LATCHES	163.00
VONDERHAAR, TED - MEETINGS	120.00
WELDING, RANDY - MEETINGS	187.50
WELLMARK BC/BS OF IOWA - INSURANCE	2,577.55
WEST POINT UTILITIES - UTILITY CHARGES	615.97
WEX BANK - GASOLINE	

162.53
/s/ Randy Welding,
Chairman
Attest: Dawn M. Holtkamp, Billing & Collection

HELP WANTED

REGISTERED DENTAL ASSISTANT

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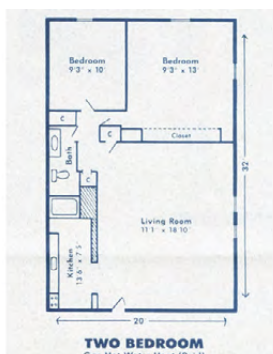
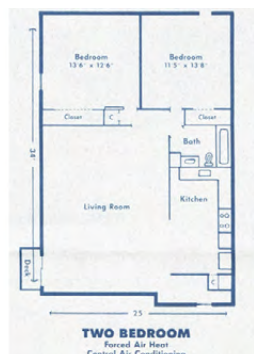
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Celebrations/From the Front

Birth Announcements

GONZALEZ

WEST POINT – Morgan and Jason Gonzalez, of West Point, are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Siena Gonzalez, on July 10, 2020 at Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Siena joins Lonzo Gonzalez at home.

Grandparents are Dave and Carrie Steffensmeier of Nauvoo, Ill.; Irma and Joaquin Gonzalez of Algonquin, Ill.; and Jeanne Steffensmeier (deceased) of West Point.

Great-grandparents are Gene and Alvera Merschman of St. Paul; Vern Steffensmeier of West Point; Raul and Luz Gonzalez (both deceased) of Mexico; and Rigoberto and Angelica Guzman of Mexico.

Pen City Current congratulates the family on this wonderful news.

CLARK

KEOKUK – Jenna Phillips and Kelsy Clark are proud to announce the birth of their son Watson Dean Clark, on July 17, 2020 at Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Watson joins Tristin and Amzlee at home.

Grandparents are Truman and Annie Phillips of Warsaw; Rebecca and Svend Dieffenbach of Florida; Ron and Barbie Bryant of Keokuk; and Carroll Clark of Keokuk.

Pen City Current congratulates the family on this wonderful news.

LCHD issues more health tips as cases grow

LCHD - Continued from Page 1

ers or if tested positive for COVID-19

- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow/upper arm.
- Washing hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if necessary.
- Disinfecting common touch surfaces
- Seeking medical guidance when there are health concerns

Those with pre-existing health conditions or those 65+ years of age should continue limiting their activities outside their home to reduce possible exposures.

Lee County Health Department website, www.lee-countyhd.org, and their Facebook page, will continue to be updated with information as well.

Got a news tip?
Call Chuck (319)371.1670

City takes next step with P.O.R.T. trails

NEIGHBORHOOD - Continued from Page 1

“We’re just requesting the city work with us as much as possible and do what we can to clean up this neighborhood. Sometimes there’s as many as six adults living in that house and people living in a pop-up camper in the back. We just ask the city council to help us take care of this.”

Another resident broke down in tears recalling alleged regular harassment and harassment toward the resident’s child including name calling and threats.

Fort Madison Police Chief Mark Rohloff said the department is aware of the situation and has made repeated stops at the property.

“We have a long history and some additional concerns to be addressed with them. There are conflicts with abatement, trash and rubbish, noise and disorderly behavior,” Rohloff said.

According to city records, since from July 20, 2019 to July 20, 2020 there have been 92 calls for service in the 1400 block of Avenue F. Just over 1/3 of those calls have been to 1413 Avenue F. Six were four harassment, five for disturbance, four for animal complaints, among 15 other categories.

The next highest service calls were to 1409 Avenue F with 11, five for disturbances and two for harassment.

“This issue is particularly disconcerting to the City. Usually a notice or occasional enforcement corrects the problem,” Rohloff said. “The neighbors are suffering from a quality of life issue, and cannot enjoy the peace of their own home and yard.”

“I’ve made a personal appearance down there, but a long-term solution is necessary. I’ve floated the idea of a civil action against the homeowner, but that may take buy-in from all the neighbors.”

In an unrelated issue, City Manager David Varley said the city ended the fiscal year on June 30, in better financial shape than they had anticipated, but he said the current fiscal year will be more difficult.

“The general fund ended in better shape. We had some one-time revenue infusions and ended up with minimum working capital of 850,000 which is good,” Varley said.

“But the current budget year will be more difficult. Some

revenues were keeping an eye on because of the virus situation.”

Varley said road use funds were down a bit due to reduced travel with the pandemic, but he said expenditures were up a bit as the city continues to put more money into street repair.

“That will pay dividends and it’s nice to see the work that’s being done,” he said.

Varley said the city’s water fund underperformed compared to previous years with electricity usage up almost \$100,000, an added expense he’s looking into. Revenues were off for the year about \$450,000.

The city’s waste water, sewer and solid waste funds all performed close to budgeted figures.

In other action, the council:

- approved 5-0 to set a public hearing on a project to relocate a sewer on Henry Ladyn Drive as part of a project to allow the state DOT to build a slip ramp for Siemens-Gamesa wind blade transportation on Hwy. 61.

- approved a sharing agreement with Lee County and the DOT for salt storage.

- approved three resolutions that will pave the way for additional progress on the PORT trail including the Great River Health System-Fort Madison Community Hospital Community Foundation’s trail along 15th Street and X32 between the city and Rodeo Park.

- approved a \$29,000 bid from Brockway Mechanical and Roofing in Burlington to reshingle City Hall.

- discussed amending City Code to allow hiring outside the 10 mile restriction for city employees. No specific mileage was set, but City Manager David Varley said he’d like to look at different restrictions for each department based on needs.

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