

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Tuesday, March 24, 2020 | 5 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 63



www.pencitycurrent.com

CREWS OUT: All city staff working from home or on an on-call basis

WEST POINT SHUTS CITY DOWN

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

WEST POINT – For all intents and purposes, the City of West Point has shut down.

City Administrator Dennis McGregor said Monday morning, the city is sending all hourly employees home with pay indefinitely as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

McGregor said city crews will share daily responsibilities

of regular checks of the city's water and sewer intakes, but other than that almost all employees will be on an on-call basis, including West Point Utility workers.

"They've got daily routines they need to continue to do. Water checks...lift station checks... sewer intakes need to be checked and we'll continue to do those. But they won't be working together, they will be sharing that," McGregor said.

See **WEST POINT**, page 5

VIRUS UPDATE

Report shows no Lee County COVID-19

As of Monday still no positives from state hygenic lab for county

LEE COUNTY – Lee County is advising residents what they can do to help limit the potential spread of the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19. As of the morning of March 23rd, no one in Lee County has tested positive for COVID-19.

"Since the start of this outbreak, Lee County Health Department has worked closely with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) to monitor potential cases of COVID-19," said Michele Ross, Lee County Health Department Administrator. "We have and will continue to work with our local, state and national partners to be ready for when the virus does come to Lee County."

There are things all Lee County residents can do to help prevent the spread of all viruses, including influenza and COVID-19:

- Contain germs by staying home when ill
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your upper arm/elbow
- Clean hands frequently with soap and water
- Encourage recommended social distancing including no gathering with groups of people, use take-out and delivery options for restaurants, maintain a 6' space with others when possible, and stay home as much as possible.

Symptoms of the COVID-19 in people who have been exposed can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

For information and updates related to COVID-19, visit <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus> and follow IDPH on Facebook (@IowaDepartmentofPublicHealth) and Twitter (@IAPublicHealth).



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Getting ready

An employee with HRGreen, the city's engineer on the Avenue H reconstruction project, rolls through the traffic cones at the intersection of the Riverview Park entry and Avenue H Monday. Detour signs and barricades have been put in place, along with a stop sign at the intersection of Avenue H and 7th Street westbound. Crews are getting ready to replace the stretch of Avenue H from 2nd to 6th streets. See Page 2

MONDAY CHASE

Deputies make firearm arrest after Monday car chase

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

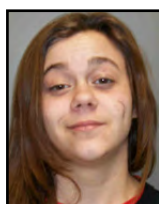
LEE COUNTY – A Monday morning chase has resulted in the arrest of two Keokuk residents, one on a weapons charge.

Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a hit and run off the Hwy. 61 bypass in Keokuk near Hilton Road at approximately 12:30 p.m.

According to Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber, deputies attempted to make a



HAYDEN



VICKERS

stop on a vehicle allegedly driven by Caleb Julian Hayden, 24, of Keokuk. A passenger in Hayden's vehicle Jade Renee Reynolds Vickers, 19, of Keokuk, was also arrested on an outstanding warrant out of Keokuk.

"One of our deputies tried to make a stop and Clayton continued to elude officers. When we finally were able to get him pulled over, we arrested him and he had a firearm in his wasteband," Weber said.

The chase led officers north to the area of 195th Street and White Plains Road at speeds in excess of 90 miles per hour.

The two were taken into custody, booked into the Lee County Jail and are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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WEATHER

OpenWeatherMap
TUE 24 Mar..... Moderate Rain, 43.3° F/ 39.8° F
WED 25 Mar..... Scattered Clouds, 56.5° F/ 53.4° F
THU 26 Mar..... Overcast, 51.8° F/ 46.0° F

IOWA LOTTERY

PICK 3 03/22 MIDDAY.....185
PICK 3 03/22 EVENING.....609
PICK 4 03/22 MIDDAY.....7052
PICK 4 03/22 EVENING.....6281

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Local News/Lee County News

Avenue H rehab work begins

From City of Fort Madison

FORT MADISON - The Avenue H from 2nd to 6th Street Reconstruction project has begun.

Effective immediately the following detour has been established: East-bound Highway 61 traffic will turn North (left) onto 7th Street and proceed to Avenue E, turning right at Avenue E and travelling East to 2nd Street. West-bound Highway 61 traffic will turn West (right) onto Avenue E and proceed to 7th Street, turning South (left) onto 7th Street and proceeding to Avenue H (end of detour). The City of Fort Madison will be assessing the traffic on the detour and placing “no



parking” signs as needed to help with the flow of traffic.

This project is a full reconstruction project converting the existing four-lane roadway into a three-lane roadway. This is one of several projects planned for the Highway 61 Business Route. Avenue H from 2nd to

6th Street will be closed during the reconstruction project. Weather permitting, this project should be open to traffic by November 15, 2020. The project has been designed to allow for access to Riverview Park and for traffic to cross the BNSF Mississippi River Bridge during construction.

United Way to keep funding closed agencies

The following is a Monday, March 23 press release from the United Way of the Great River Region regarding operations during the coronavirus outbreak. It is printed in its entirety.

In order to ensure the health and well-being of our volunteers and staff, we are implementing contingency plans regarding the agency’s operations and programs to minimize risk and exposure from COVID-19. Contingency plans are based on information we have to date as we navigate this ever-changing situation.

All volunteer programs and activities have been suspended until further notice. This includes Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) workstations and Literacy program volunteers. Volunteer duties will resume when restrictions have relaxed. Please continue to monitor CDC, IDPH and LCPH websites for accurate and up-to-date information.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program will be suspended until at least April 6 or until such time that we are directed to resume service. The federal filing deadline has been extended until July 15 and we will announce revised program dates when we receive more information.

United Way of the Great River Region will continue to connect with funded partners and community organizations to assess needs in the tri-state area and how volunteers might be of use within governmental restrictions. In conjunction with our state and federal grant partners, we are in the process of putting together best practices/safety protocols.

The United Way also announced they will continue to stand with 2020 partner agencies and will continue to provide funding regardless of the agency’s operations during the COVID-19 outbreak.

“We have partner agencies that are feeding seniors, families, and children. We have partner agencies that are helping people deal with the stresses that isolation and social distancing are creating in their lives,” said director Karen Siefken, UWGRR director.

“We have partner agencies that provide all types of resources that communities need. All we ask is that our communities and donors remember United Way is here and active in your community.”

Siefken said donations will be needed now more than ever before, and to please consider donating to United Way of the Great River Region.

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

 **Fort Madison**
COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
www.fmchosp.com



Amy Fogarty, the nutritional services director for Central Lee Community Schools, finishes filling meal bags Sunday night for delivery Monday to students attending Central Lee school district. The meals are open to any student in the district regardless of family income. Anyone interested in getting the meals should contact the school.

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For the Record/Iowa News

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

03/20/20 – 3:14 p.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 2400 block of Henry Lady Drive.
 03/20/20 – 6:06 p.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 1100 block of 14th Street.
 03/22/20 – 5:48 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Robert John Blindt, 38, of Fort Madison in the 1200 block of Avenue D, on a warrant for failure to appear. He was released on a promise to appear.
 03/23/20 – 6:21 a.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1100 block of 26th Street.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

03/20/20 – 3:58 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Ashley Renee Lawson, 32, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office, on a warrant for being a fugitive from justice. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

Hancock County Sheriff's Report

03/17/20 – Keith A Graham, age 59, of Warsaw, IL was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging him with Petition to Revoke Probation for Driving While License Revoked. Graham was released on his own recognizance and given a future court date.
 03/17/20 – Susan K Smith,

age 36, of Carthage, IL was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging her with Failure to Appear on original charges of Unlawful Possession of Methamphetamine. Smith was released on her own recognizance and given a future court date.

03/17/20 – Lathem D Paulson, age 25, of Hamilton, IL was arrested and charged with Criminal Damage to Property. Paulson was released after posting the required bond and given a future court date.

03/17/20 – Joshua A Miller, age 43, of Warsaw, IL was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging him with Failure to Appear on original charges of Domestic Battery, Driving While License Suspended, No Proper Evidence of Registration, and Improper Certificate of Title. Miller was released after posting the required bond and given a future court date.

03/19/20 – Daniel C Murphy, age 21, of Hamilton, IL was arrested and charged with Driving Under the Influence. Murphy was released after given a Notice to Appear at a future court date.
 03/20/20 – Brandee N Chockley, age 28, of Plymouth, IL was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging her with Obstructing Justice. Chockley was released after posting the required bond and given a future court date.

Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

State unveils more small business help

DES MOINES – Governor Reynolds Monday announced the launch of a new Iowa Small Business Relief Program that will provide financial assistance to small businesses that have been economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program offers eligible small businesses grants ranging from \$5,000-\$25,000 in addition to offering Iowa businesses a deferral of sales and use or withholding taxes due and waiver of penalty and interest. “Small businesses are the

source of thriving main streets and community pride across Iowa,” said Gov. Reynolds. “The Small Business Relief Grant Program is another way we can support our small businesses during this unprecedented time.”

To be eligible for a small business relief grant, eligible businesses must:

- Be experiencing business disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Have employed between 2-25 people prior to March 17, 2020

The Small Business Relief Grants will assist eligible businesses in maintaining operations or reopening business following the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds may not be used to pay debts incurred prior to March 17, 2020.

The Iowa Economic Development Authority will review grant applications for eligibility and will determine the grant amount by the level of impact including loss in sales revenue and employees. Notification of award decisions and disbursement of grant funds will be

expedited.

Tax Assistance:

The Iowa Department of Revenue will review each application as applicable, to determine if it is appropriate to grant a deferral of the eligible taxes and waiver of penalty and interest.

The dual application for grant assistance and tax deferral is available at iowabusinessrecovery.com. The deadline for applications is March 31 at 12:00 p.m. (noon). The program may be restricted due to funding availability.



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

Here are just a few ways you can help:

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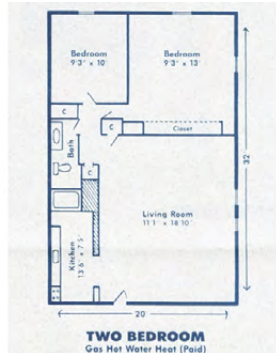
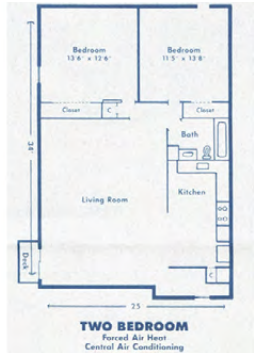
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Daily service checks still being done

WEST POINT - Continued from Page 1

“We’re not going to have them riding around in trucks side by side together.”

If there were to be a power outage due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, McGregor said utilities crews will be ready to handle those situations.

He said the city’s office staff is still available by phone, but most of them are working from home as well.

“Our office is available and we’ve posted our number on the door



MCGREGOR

and on Facebook. We’re still here, taking phone calls and can do business if needed by appointment,” he said.

Trash service is a private service in West Point and McGregor said anyone wanting to pay water or electric bills can still do so by dropping them in the box at City Hall or mail to city offices at P.O.

Box 69, West Point, Iowa 52656.

McGregor said he’s trying to be optimistic about the impact of the coronavirus, but fears things will get worse.

“I don’t know, I’m kind of like everyone else. From what I can see across the nation. Things will get far worse before they get better. I don’t foresee Lee County staying out of this, and if it does reach Lee County you’ll see more shutdowns of businesses than you’re seeing right now,”

McGregor said.

“Everybody here in town is doing their best to be safe. I don’t think I’ve seen the streets of West Point so empty.”

McGregor said he talked with West Point Mayor Paul Walker Monday morning, who was delivering in the Chicago area.

“He drives for Merschman Seeds and he was in Chicago this morning. He said it was eerie. No traffic to speak of, it was unlike anything he’s ever seen.”

GRH creates call, respiratory centers

WEST BURLINGTON – Great River Health has established a 24-hour public call center to provide answers to questions about COVID-19 and direct callers to health system resources. The telephone numbers are 800-371-3313, toll-free, or 319-768-1009.

The call center is staffed by registered nurses who

can answer questions about respiratory symptoms and potential exposure to the illness.

Callers who have a cough or difficulty breathing and a fever may be referred to the health system’s new Respiratory Center at Family Medicine-Great River Medical Center, 1201 W. Agency Rd., West Burlington. Ap-

pointments are required. Hours are 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Respiratory Center appointments also can be made through other Great River Medical Center and Great River Health primary-care clinics.

Family Medicine patients who need appoint-

ments for other acute symptoms will be seen by a provider at Family Medicine, Mercy.

Patients with symptoms that are tolerable are encouraged to remain at home and self-quarantine for at least seven days or until they are fever-free without medication and have no symptoms for three days.



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