

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Wednesday, March 11, 2020 | 6 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 52



www.pencitycurrent.com

13 Iowans now have COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS: Five more from Egyptian cruise test positive for coronavirus

BY PCC STAFF

DES MOINES – According to officials from the Iowa Department of Public Health, five more elderly Iowans have contracted COVID-19, the disease caused by the rapid-moving coronavirus, bringing the total in Iowa to 13.

According to an IDPH release Tuesday evening, testing at Iowa's State Hygienic Laboratory has indicated five additional presumptive positive cases of 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Iowa residents, a total of 13 presumptive positive cases. Fourteen additional tests were negative.

The five new cases are all older adults (61 to 80 years) from Johnson County who were on the same Egyptian cruise as

seven other presumptive positive cases. All are in self isolation and recovering at home.

A status report of monitoring and testing of COVID19 in Iowa provided by IDPH can be found here. In addition, a public hotline has been established for Iowans with questions about COVID-19. The line is available 24/7 by calling 2-1-1.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Those most at risk of the virus are older adults, and individuals with underlying health conditions.

Dr. Caitlyn Pedati, the state's medical director and epidemiologist, held a webinar Tuesday morning, but stuck the

See DISEASE, page 3

COUNCIL MEETINGS

County takes roadside mgmt. step

For now, a formal plan could trigger grant opportunities

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – A joint venture to kick start a county roadside vegetation plan was approved by two county boards Tuesday.

Lee County Engineer Ben Hull spoke with the Lee County Board of Supervisors Tuesday morning in Fort Madison, and then Lee County Conservation Director Nathan Unsworth spoke with the conservation board Tuesday afternoon.

The move is just an initial step in starting a program that would both control noxious weeds in county rights of way, as well as provide avenues to introduce more native Iowa vegetation in the county.

Hull told the board there would be no additional staff or resources required to get the ball rolling on the program, that was cut by the county due to budget restraints years ago.

"We won't be asking for any manpower or dollars for this at this point, but going forward it's something we would hope for," Hull told Supervisors at the Newberry Center in Fort Madison.

"But putting this plan together allows us to apply for some state grants that could provide for equipment and seed and those kinds of things."

Unsworth told his board that there would be no change in how the department is operating now.

"Basically we'll continue as is, but put it into a plan which will enable us to have benefits from the state," Unsworth said.

One of the main goals for Ben and I would be to try and get an inventory done on the roadside just to see where we need the most work so we can scope better where we want to go with that."

See COUNTY, page 4



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Milestone's Kelly Ripperger talks with Lee County Supervisors and members of the Newberry Senior Center in Fort Madison about meals services for elderly people in Lee and surrounding counties.

SUPERVISORS

Move by rail companies to shrink train crews draws ire

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A Lee County Supervisor is asking the public to get involved with legislation that could guarantee a minimum of two crew on freight trains moving through Iowa.

At Tuesday's regular meeting of the Lee County Board of Supervi-

sors, Gary Folluo took a moment during a time for supervisors to report on committee work, to express concern about the moves being proposed by the nation's rail haulers.

Railroads have been testing what they call Positive Train Control technology as early as 2004 on short runs, according to an article on Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainman's website.



FOLLUO

<https://www.ble-t.org/pr/news/headline.asp?id=16361>

According to a statement from the American Association of Railroads website:

"America's freight railroads continue to strive towards

See RAILWAYS, page 3

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WEATHER

OpenWeatherMap
WED 11 Mar.....Light Rain, 58.4° F/ 40.7° F
THU 12 Mar.....Broken Clouds, 46.1° F/ 38.7° F
FRI 13 Mar.....Snow, 36.2° F/ 32.3° F

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LUCKY FOR LIFE 03/09.....3 13 16 45 48, Lucky Ball: 13
PICK 3 03/09 MIDDAY.....117
PICK 3 03/09 EVENING.....262
PICK 4 03/09 MIDDAY.....0573
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Obituaries/For the Record

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

03/09/20 – 3:07 p.m.
 – Fort Madison Police arrested Jeanna A. West, 70, of West Point, in the 4400 block of Avenue O, on a warrant service. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
 03/09/20 – 3:19 p.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary on Alta Drive.
 03/09/20 – 4:45 p.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 500 block of Avenue E.
 03/10/20 – 12:34 a.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 1300 block of Avenue F.
 03/10/20 – 4:11 a.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Roger L. Schoene, 58, of Fort Madison, in the 2700 block of Avenue L, on a charge of driving under suspension. He was released upon citation.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

03/09/20 – 8:16 a.m.
 – Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a two-vehicle accident on Hwy. 218 and 255th Street
 03/09/20 – 12:41 p.m.
 – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Austin Dean Schuelka, 30, of Fort Madison, at the sheriff's office, on a warrant for escape from custody. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held. According to the report, a vehicle driven by Avreeana Elease Tweedy, 17, of Donnellson was slowing due to congested traffic and a vehicle driven by Grace Ann Fedler, 18, of West point struck the back end after hydroplaning on a wet surface. No injuries or citations were reported. Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

03/09/20 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to one carbon monoxide call.

OBITUARIES

RICHARD A. THOMPSON

Richard A. Thompson, 83, of Dallas City, IL passed away at 4:30pm, Saturday, March 7, 2020 at the Montebello Health Care Center in Hamilton, IL.

He was born January 13, 1937 in Durham Township, IL, the son of Allen and Dorothy Severns Thompson. On February 20, 1957, he married Mary Faye Cannell in Dallas City. She preceded him in death on March 17, 2002.

Richard was a graduate of the Dallas City High School and had worked at the IAAP for over 40 years. He served on the Dallas City Fire Department for more than 40 years and served as Fire Chief from 1992 – 1995. He served on the boards of the Dallas City Rural Fire Protection District and the Dallas City Park Board. He was a former member of Ducks Unlimited, Eagles and Moose Lodge. He enjoyed restoring antique engines and was a member of the Midwest Old Threshers and the Hamilton Old Threshers.

He is survived by two sons, Mike (Janet) Thompson and Carl (Anne) Thompson, all of Dallas City, five grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, five great-great-grandchildren and one brother, Larry Thompson of Macomb, IL.

He was preceded in death by his wife, parents, one brother, Gary Thompson and one sister, Geneva Tutwiler.

Services will be held at 11:00am Saturday, March 14, 2020 with Pastor Dianne Duncan officiating, at Banks & Beals funeral Home in Dallas City where visitation will be held from 9:00am until time of services. Memorials may be made to the old Threshers Foundation, Dallas City Fire Department of Blessing Hospice. To sign the guest book and leave a condolence, please visit Richard's obituary at banksandbeals.com.

OBITUARIES

TONY O. HAND

Tony O'Neil Hand, 63, of Alexandria, MO, died Friday, March 6, 2020 at Blessing Hospital in Quincy, IL.

He was born on December 23, 1956 in Keokuk, IA, the son of James and Phyllis VanTress Hand. He graduated from Keokuk High School with the Class of 1976.

Tony married Dawn Washburn on August 10, 1985 and they later divorced. To this union was born one daughter, Jennifer.



HAND

He had worked in electrical maintenance at Steel Casting, St. Louis Gear and for the City of Alexandria. Most recently he had been employed at Lexington Square in Keokuk.

Tony enjoyed boating on the river, fishing and deer hunting. He also enjoyed watching westerns, collecting things and going out to eat. He was very mechanically minded and could fix anything. Tony never knew a stranger and could strike up a conversation with anyone. He was a friend to many and generous to all. Above all he loved his family and his grandchildren were his pride and joy as well as his dog, Jersey. He was the best dad a girl could have and always told his daughter how special she was and to be careful on the road. At the end of every conversation he always said, I love you guys.

He is survived by his daughter, Jennifer O'Neil Richardson (Brad) of Carthage, IL, two grandchildren, Harper and Brilynn Richardson, his father, James O'Neil Hand (LaDonna) of Keokuk, one sister, Diane Cunningham (Curtis) of Montrose, one brother, James S. Hand (Ashley) of Keokuk, two nephews, Cody Cunningham of Chicago, IL and James Dru Hand (Emily) of Carthage, IL, one niece, Dannieka Joan Hand of Charleston, SC, as well as many aunts, uncles and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his mother, his grandmother, Viola Ward and his grandfather, James M. Hand.

A Gathering of Remembrance will be held on Saturday from 2 – 4 pm at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk with family meeting with friends at that time.

Memorials may be made to his grandchildren.

On-line condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.



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From the Front

State has 500 tests but can get more

DISEASE - Continued from Page 1

talking points of covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands, and staying home if sick.

As of Tuesday morning, the state had eight presumptive positives, seven of which were on the Egyptian cruise and one other was a person returning from California who had contact with an ill person there.



PEDATI

Pedati said the state originally has about 500 tests at the state hygienic lab less the tests already done. But she said the state has close communications with regional and federal partners to obtain more tests if the need arises.

“We continue to provide tests after consultation with clinical providers and with the public health departments,” Pedati said earlier Tuesday.

Experts have indicated the virus is spread via droplets that enter the nose and mouth from contact or close proximity with infected individuals. But Pedati stopped short of saying masks were a good defense.

“When we look over all the ways we can spread it, in general, what’s more effective is covering coughs, good handwashing and staying home when your sick,” she said. “The last part is most important. The fewer opportunities we give this virus to spread the better off we are.”

She said the state is anticipating that about 80% of those affected will have a mild illness, while 15 to 20% of older adults and those with underlying conditions will be more severely effected.

She also said that 22 Iowans on the Grand Princess Cruise line that docked in California are also being monitored.

Rail companies say PTC tech is safer than more crew

RAILWAYS - Continued from Page 1

an accident-free future through a tireless commitment to addressing the major causes of accidents — track, equipment and human error. Continued safety improvement in the years ahead, however, will become harder to achieve and require new and different solutions. Technology is one of those solutions. Widespread deployment of new technologies like Positive Train Control (PTC), designed to address human error, will open the door to an exciting new era of safety and efficiency improvement for U.S. freight railroads.

But Folluo and Supervisor Chairman Ron Fedler said reducing crews to just one is a dangerous proposition for Lee County and the state of Iowa.

Folluo said the legislation proposed last year – U.S. Senate File 1979, The Safe Freight Act, and House File 1748 – would guarantee a minimum crew of two on all trains.

“This is something that we don’t know about or talk about very often, but it effects our communities enormously. Especially Fort Madison with the number of trains running through,” Folluo said Tuesday.

“There used to be five people on a train and they have whittled that down, and now the railroads are lobbying to have one person on a train.”

Folluo said if that person would have a medical emergency it could prove disastrous. The new systems have a shut down if no one responds to certain warnings, but he said a lot of damage can be done before that shut down takes place.

“Our senators and representatives at the federal

level need to hear from us on this issue. You need to contact your senators and ask them to cosponsor this legislation,” Folluo said.

He said state elected officials are also looking at trying to accomplish something at the state level.

“This is federal legislation, but it involves the state of Iowa and we have a lot of rail that goes in and out of the state and our community,” he said. “We need to be paying attention to this as citizens of Lee County.”

Fedler said he agreed with Folluo.

“It’s not if something’s going to happen but a matter of when something’s going to happen, because we’re all human and at anytime we could be hit with a stroke or heart attack and with one person it would be a disaster,” Fedler said.

He said his last information indicates that close to 100 trains go through Fort Madison every 24 hours.

“That’s a lot of trains so we want to make sure they are taking safety precautions.”

In a June Kansas City Star article, U.S. Dept of Homeland Security officials expressed concerned with railroad hijacking, but rail officials countered saying the PTC would actually be safer, because if engineers don’t respond to warnings, the train would be shut down.

“With this system, if somebody were to get on, they wouldn’t be able to move the train,” Patrick Hiatte, a spokesman for Fort Worth, Texas-based BNSF Railway said in the Star article. “If that train didn’t have authority, it wouldn’t move.”



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Local News/From the Front

Iowa City volleyball coach headlines FMCH Woman's event

Free event set for Saturday, March 28 at FMCH lower level conference room

FORT MADISON Fort Madison Community Hospital will host their annual Women's Health Conference on Saturday, March 28, 2020 starting at 9:00 a.m. This year's conference is titled "Make Kindness YOUR Legacy" - will you be remembered for the lives you touched with kindness when you are gone?

This year's conference will present area women an opportunity to practice prevention with health screenings that include blood pressure checks, body mass index and blood sugar. These free screenings will be available



BRESNAHAN

from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. in the Out-patient Rehabilitation Services Center. Women will then be treated to a light breakfast and an inspirational presentation by Coach Kathy Bresnahan.

Iowa City West Volleyball Coach, Kathy Bresnahan, will inspire us all to be kind and Live Like Line. Caroline was a charismatic team leader who in death inspired the team to achieve a greater purpose. Coach Kathy Bresnahan has talked to thousands of young athletes and adults about the life-changing events that she and her Iowa City West volleyball players experienced in the fall of 2011.

Looking forward to defending their state volleyball crown, the death of their charismatic leader, Caro-

line (Line) Found, left the team reeling with grief and searching for a way to move forward. Coach Bresnahan's personal narrative explores how her school, community, and team worked together for a greater purpose in an effort to honor the legacy of Caroline - a young woman, who smiled large, gave huge hugs, played with passion, and embraced everyone! A young woman, who in death, taught us how to be kind and Live Like Line.

The conference will take place in the conference rooms of the Business Center, lower level east addition at Fort Madison Community Hospital. There will be door prizes and free childcare for children aged six months to ten years. Women of all ages are encouraged to attend this free event. For more information, call 319-376-2244 or visit the FMCH website www.fmchosp.com.



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Plan could give property owners options

COUNTY - Continued from Page 1

He said the conservation board's involvement will be having a staff member go out and help tackle vegetation issues but nothing more in depth than that at this point.

Hull said there would be options under the plan for property owners to opt out of mowing or spraying on rights of way that are up against their property. He said those property owners who wish to opt out would have to take measures to make sure noxious weeds are kept under control or the county would have the authority to step in.

"They would have to hold up their end of the deal and we would hold up ours," Hull said.

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Classifieds/Iowa News

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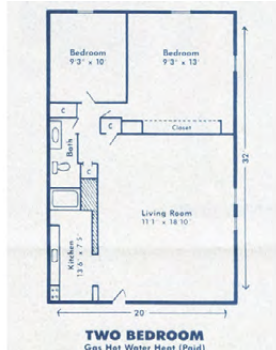
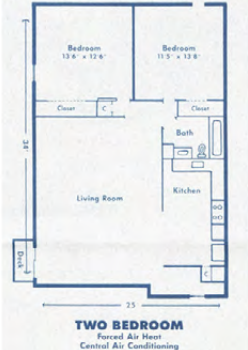
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Iowa's Miller warns against price gouging related to COVID-19

DES MOINES — Iowans should look out for price gouging and other scams related to the COVID-19 virus, Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller warns.

Gov. Kim Reynolds declared a state of disaster emergency for the entire state on Monday. A disaster declaration triggers the state's price-gouging rule.

Price gouging is defined in the Attorney General's Administrative Rule as raising prices unreasonably above the price at which the merchandise or service was sold in the usual course of business immediately prior to the onset of the emergency. The rule, which applies during the emergency declaration and "subsequent recovery period" up to six months, recognizes that prices may be higher because sellers also often incur increased costs.

"Price gouging is substantially raising prices for needed goods or services," Miller said. "This is illegal and is something our office will pursue."

The Attorney General's office has been in contact with Amazon, where high prices for hand sanitizer, protective masks and other products have been reported. Amazon says it has removed several products and high-priced offers and suspended the accounts of third-party sellers who have engaged in price gouging.

The Attorney General's Office also advises consumers to be wary of scammers who prey upon fear over coronavirus in other ways, including selling bogus products and engaging in scams related to phishing, charity solicitations and investment offers. See the AG website for more details.

SCC's Witte Hall site for high school science fair

WEST BURLINGTON – Southeastern Community College will host the 40th annual Southeast Iowa Superconference Science Fair on Thursday, March 12 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the John H. Witte, Jr. Hall of Sciences on the West Burlington campus. Judging will start at 9:15 a.m.

Gail Kunch is the event coordinator and science teacher at Danville High School. Under her direction, more than 160 students from area high schools will participate.

SCC Biology Professor Cathy Ziglar has helped Kunch organize the event at SCC. "SCC is very excited to host the Superconference Science Fair again this year," she says. "The new Hall of Sciences provides a great venue for the event, and it allows us to promote STEM in our own community."

After a keynote address inspiring the students to continue growing in their scientific endeavors, attendees will have lunch with SCC science faculty.

"We're eager to connect the students with our faculty. It's a great opportunity for students to talk about their interests," says Enrollment Coordinator Dana Chrisman. "We want them to know we support their interest in scientific studies."

Ziglar adds, "Meeting the students is my favorite part of the day. I enjoy watching them describe their projects. They work so hard, and they're proud of the what they present. It's a fun day for us all."

For more news or to learn about Southeastern Community College, visit: https://www.scciowa.edu/aboutsc/office_mktg_comm/news/archive.aspx

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