

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Thursday, May 7, 2020 | 7 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 94



www.pencitycurrent.com

Gov. further loosens state

DENTAL: Reynolds allows dental services to start again effective Friday

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds has opened dental offices around the state effective Friday in addition to other services like campgrounds, drive-in movie theaters, tanning facilities and medical spas.

The new order signed Wednesday, effective Friday, May 8, also allows social clubs to reopen at 50% capacity in 77 counties, provided preventative measures are kept in place including social distancing, limiting seated groups to six people or less, no self-service buffets or salad bars.

Meanwhile, the Lee County Health Department released a

17th confirmed positive in the county Wednesday afternoon. It is the first confirmed positive in four days, but the county has more than doubled its positive cases in the last 10 days.

A release from the Department of Natural Resources said state campgrounds will reopen effective Friday. DNR online reservations system will be accepting reservations at 9 a.m. Friday. DNR officials said reservations from May 8-14 will not be honored because refunds have already been issued for those dates.

“Parks staff will be closely monitoring these areas to avoid gatherings of groups larger than 10,” the release indicated. More information on the guidelines can be found at the site at www.dnr.iowa.gov.

See IOWA, page 7

2004 MURDER

New evidence prompts case reopening

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

KEOKUK – New testimony from witnesses and the sole suspect in a 2004 slaying of a Keokuk woman, has landed a Manchester man in Lee County Jail on first-degree murder charges.

Nathaniel Leo Ridnour, 33, Manchester, was picked up by Lee County law enforcement on Tuesday at the Delaware County Jail and transported to the Lee County Jail. He had an initial court appearance Wednesday morning in front of District 8B Judge Clinton Boddicker and is being held on a \$1 million cash only bond.



RIDNOUR

His preliminary hearing is set for May 15, at 11 a.m. in the South Lee County Courthouse.

Ridnour is charged with the murder of Bonnie Callahan, who was 73 at the time, sometime between June 14-15, 2004. Keokuk police were dispatched to the Mississippi Terrace apartments at 9:10 a.m. on June 15 for a missing persons report. At 3:45 p.m. Callahan's body was discovered along the Mississippi riverfront with signs of blunt force trauma, by a fisherman.

According to an affidavit filed at the South Lee County Courthouse on April, 30, 2020, Ridnour became a suspect as a result of the investigation. The affidavit said Ridnour, who was 17 at the time, was living with his father in the same apartment complex as Callahan.

The investigation revealed Ridnour was pursuing a relationship with Callahan's 15-year-old granddaughter, which Callahan didn't agree with. During the initial investigation, the affidavit indicates Ridnour gave inconsistent accounts about his location at the time Callahan went missing, and about his relationship with her granddaughter.

Ridnour is also listed on the Iowa Sex Offender Registry for a 2013 conviction of disseminating obscene materials to a female age 13 or under.

The affidavit also alleges that Ridnour stated he could “just not remember killing her”, but

See DCI, page 5

FMAAA gets Iowa Arts Council grant

Submitted article from FMAAA

FORT MADISON – Ft. Madison Area Arts Association was one of 14 art centers in the state granted a \$2,500 emergency grant from Iowa Arts Council in their first round of funding from its Iowa Arts & Culture Emergency Relief Fund, aimed at losses sustained during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The council considered 285 applications and handed out \$191,000 and FMAAA Director Brian Riggs said the money is welcomed but illustrates a bigger problem at the center.

See ART, page 4



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Fire drill

A Fort Madison firefighter shows how close firefighter Chuck Fullenkamp gets to a cone during some driving skills drilling Wednesday afternoon in the former Shopko parking lot.

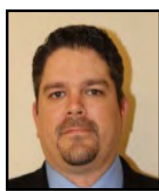
ABATEMENTS

Council getting impatient with nuisance properties

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Several members of the Fort Madison City Council pushed the city's building director on what's going on with nuisance properties in the city.

At Tuesday's City Council meeting, City Building Director Doug Krogmeier told councilwoman Rebecca Bowker and



KROGMEIER

councilman Mark Lair that the city's hands are tied on some properties due to no court proceedings happening in the wake of the coronavirus.

Bowker specifically asked where the city was in regards to the Humphrey Building at the corner of 8th Street and Avenue G.

“I know the courts are delaying things a bit, but as far as the Humphrey building have we heard from his contractor?” Bowker asked Krogmeier.

Krogmeier said he wasn't getting a lot back from the owner's contractor or engineer, but did see that a court date was set for September. An original court date was

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WEATHER

THU 07 May.....Moderate Rain, 63.3° F/ 48.7° F
FRI 08 May.....Partly Cloudy, 49.0° F/ 35.2° F
SAT 09 May.....Overcast, 54.5° F/ 46.7° F

OpenWeatherMap

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MEGA MILLIONS 05/05.....713 17 21 45, Mega Ball: 14 Megaplier: 2
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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

CONNIE FERRILL

Connie Ferrill, 89, formerly a lifelong resident of Dallas City, IL, currently a resident at Hickory Grove Assisted Living Center in Carthage, IL, passed away May 1, 2020. Because of the Covid restrictions, she was only blessed with the surrounding arms of son Greg and daughter-in-law Deana. She also heard over the phone the daily voices of the rest of her loving children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Connie was born May 7, 1930, the daughter of Virgil L. and Ruth Elma Nicol Logan. On December 24, 1948 she married Bobby H. Ferrill in Dallas City. He preceded her in death on March 30, 2000.

Connie was a gentle, happy soul who absolutely loved her big two-story white house in Dallas City, her husband of over 50 years Bob, her lively house full of five kids, and the ever present big yellow family lab dog.

At the age of 30 Connie taught herself how to paint with acrylic paints. Through the years she dove into the history of Dallas City and the surrounding area. She discovered pictures of old area buildings and landmarks, some no longer standing. She became an extraordinary artist and historian of this area, painting these buildings and landmarks, with her most tedious but beautiful being the once stately Dallas City High School. She had art exhibitions in Burlington, IA, Ft. Madison, IA, and Dallas City, IL. Many homes today display framed prints of her many, many prints of her beautiful paintings. She completed her last full length picture less than a year ago at the age of 88 and displayed it at her art exhibit at the Dallas City Festival, July 2019.

She was preceded in death by her husband Bobby Hill Ferrill and infant daughter Becky, son William Gerald Ferrill, and four siblings Jean Kukuk, David Logan, Jerry Logan, and Robert Logan.

She is survived by four children, Kathy (Dennis)

Brumbaugh of Dallas City, IL; Steven Ferrill of Maplewood, MO; Gary (Tina) Ferrill of Clifton, ME; and Greg (Deana) Ferrill of Dallas City, IL.

Also surviving are 16 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren, Bob Archibald (Kim) Tyler and Ty of Lincoln, NE; Jason Archibald (BreAnn) Dylon and Kevin, Fort Collins, CO; Ron Ferrill (Tiffany Todd) of Dallas City, IL; Megan Woodard (Ben Winke) Will Woodard, Tyler Winke and Brennen Winke, Burlington, IA; Connie Wiley (Bryan) Ashlynnne and Ryleigh, Carmen, IL; Todd Ferrill (Melissa) and Katelyn, Miffintown, PA; Eric Brumbaugh, Sadie, Joliet, IL; Amy Shengelia (Irakli) Nikolas, David and Max, Kirkwood, MO; Adam (Heidi) Brumbaugh, Aubrey, Jackson, Liberty and Annika, Geneseo, IL; Sara Ferrill (Damon Ferlazzo) Emma and Ella, Columbia, MO; Seth Ferrill, Asher and Wren Alice, St. Louis, MO; Kyle (Katharine) Ferrill and Asher, Eddington, ME; Travis (Katie) Ferrill, Amherst, ME; Laine Ferrill, Chicago, IL; Cody (Niciki) Ferrill, Easton and Reese, Danville, IA; Jacki (Chris) Wibbell, Hayden and Maci, Dallas City, IL; two sisters-in-law Norma Logan and Mary Logan; and numerous other special nieces, nephews and close friends.

A family graveside service will be held at the Myers Cemetery at 10:00AM on Saturday, May 9, 2020 with Pastor Mark Nichols. Others may pay their respects by driving to the cemetery but must remain in their cars during the service.

A memorial has been established in Connie's name. She loved Dallas City so much that the family will decide at a later date how best to use the memorial fund to honor her name in her dearly cherished town. Contributions may be sent to; Connie Ferrill Memorial Fund, c/o Banks & Beals Funeral Home, PO Box 70, Dallas City, IL 62330. To leave a condolence, please visit Connie's obituary at banksandbeals.com.

OBITUARIES

RODNEY J. BARTHOLOMEW

Rodney J. Bartholomew, 63, of West Point passed away on Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 10:03 PM at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics.



BARTHOLOMEW

He was born on April 7, 1957 in Ft. Madison to Paul J. and Joan M. Beger Bartholomew. Bart was a graduate of Ft. Madison High School. On June 6, 1995 he married Gina Marsh and they later divorced. Bart was a correctional officer for ISP and retired after forty-two years of service. He enjoyed hunting, fishing and his trucks. Bart was well known by so many and had countless friends. His greatest love was his boys and spending time with them.

Survivors include three sons, Tyler Bartholomew of Anamosa, IA, Shiloh Bartholomew of West Point and Josey Bartholomew of Dallas City, IL; two brothers, Robert Bartholomew of Ft. Madison and Ed (Kay) Bartholomew of Montrose; two sisters Cathy Grim of Tucson, AZ and Susan (Ray) Menke of Ft. Madison; several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Per his wishes, cremation has been entrusted to King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. The family will be holding a Celebration of Life at a later date. Online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

Pen City Current obituary policy

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

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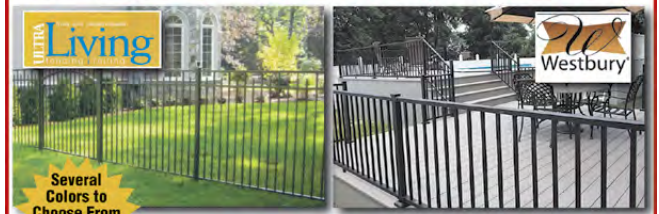
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From the Front

City has property list for courts

BUILDINGS - Continued from Page 1

set for March 30, but the coronavirus put those cases on hold.

"We're gonna try and continue to work with the contractor and engineer to keep moving forward, but there's not a lot we can do until we get in front of a judge," Krogmeier said.

Bowker pressed Krogmeier on why the city's still working with them, when they haven't been in communication.

"We need to be a bit more definitive," Bowker said. "I'm a bit frustrated with this."

Krogmeier said city staff was frustrated too, but the city has filed papers in North Lee County Court and the issue is in the hands of the court system.

Mayor Matt Mohrfeld said he was happy to even see a court date.

"If they don't cooperate,

it's until we get in front of a judge, but I'd be open to anyone's insight there," he said. "This continues to be frustrating. The street's open but it's nonetheless frustrating. And it's not the only frustrating one, I can tell you that."

Bowker asked what other avenues the city could take to move the process along.

"It's a dual statement," she said. "On one hand you're saying we're not hearing from them, and the other is we continue to work with them. If we're not hearing from them is there anything else we can do? It's an eyecore."

Krogmeier said he could continue to have attorneys send letters to the owner, but that would cost the city billable hours.

Overall, Mohrfeld said he was happy with the improve-

ment he's seeing around the city.

The city still has barricades on the 8th Street side of the building cordoning off sidewalks. It wasn't until March 6, that the city reopened 8th Street after an engineer for the building's owner Brian Humphrey told city officials the building was safe enough to reopen the street.

Lair said he has been talking with Krogmeier about another property, but didn't disclose where that property was located.

"Doug, we've been having conversations about one certain property, but I'm hoping this corona think is not going to lessen the amount of effort we're giving on getting these people going," Lair said.

"Some properties in particular, instead of getting things done, it only made them worse."

Raise the Roof fundraiser underway for art center

ART - Continued from Page 1

"FMAAA sees this as a good news/bad news scenario. Although very thankful to have received this funding, the organization was able to do so by showing that annual revenue has been over 30% negatively impacted from the year before. The current situation has been a perfect storm for a productive non-profit that reaches 40 years of age in Ft. Madison next year," according to director Brian Riggs.

The second major hurdle occurred for FMAAA during a dismally wet Art-in-Central Park in which the annual art fair was amazingly conducted by housing the artists vendors in the old Lee County Bank, the Kid's Zone in Dollhouse Dreams, and musicians and food at FMAAA.

For the stalwarts that did check out the scene they

noticed the bucket brigade collecting water leaking from the seams on the east side of the gallery, as the bands played on. That was a major rain, eight inches in two days. At this point FMAAA knew they had a problem larger than a hole created by the hotel/motel tax situation. The Board of Directors has been paying on a long-term contract for the property at 825 Avenue G for the last few years, choosing a permanent location for the cultural arts agency for the town. The organization has been caught by surprise on how quickly the leaking has moved to other sections of the interior of the gallery.

On March 17th the Board of Directors closed the doors to the daily programming offered by FMAAA to the public. Prior to this

FMAAA had been advertising another great chapter of Expressions Art Auction that was set for April 4th at Quality Inn. Expressions Art Auction is the primary annual revenue stream for FMAAA and the Board will release information regarding it's reschedule.

Last year the FMAAA lost 15% of anticipated revenue from the loss of percentage from hotel/motel revenue tax for that year due to an important push. All non-department funding was pulled from city budgets last year in order to complete the transaction of the Amtrak station being moved to the Sante Fe depot. Everybody would love finalization of this long-term city goal, especially the FMAAA which held sway for so many great years in the Burlington Northern depot bringing it to life. It is difficult to have that depot usage goal as yet unrealized.

All of these factors have led to a perfect storm that threatens the FMAAA's ability to perform their regular duties once the "all clear" is given. Ft. Madison SIRCC has generously awarded a matching grant to FMAAA in order to Raise the Roof. FMAAA will need to raise \$15000 in order to access the grant and can match up to \$25000. If FMAAA can match the higher tier the die is cast to Raise the Roof at 825 Avenue G. The Board of Directors will release word soon of our intentions. Any donations toward the Raise the Roof fund may be mailed to FMAAA at PO Box 565, Ft. Madison. As a 501(c)3 non-profit donations for the roof are tax deductible.

This was the first round of grants from the new Iowa Arts & Culture Emergency Relief Fund, which is administered by the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. Grants awarded through this fund are intended to support the Iowa artists and nonprofits that have suffered the most, serving as a bridge between severe financial loss and other state and federal assistance.

"Artists and community arts organizations have been hit particularly hard by this emergency and are some of the most vulnerable members of our industry right now," Iowa Arts Council Administrator David Schmitz said. "We want to help Iowa artists and these arts groups bridge the gap, so they can sustain a basic living until audiences and patrons return."

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Lee County News/From the Front

FM Fire Chief outlines cities' ambulance proposal

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – Proposals from Keokuk and Fort Madison fire departments to provide countywide ambulance service were waived off Monday by a committee putting together recommendations for the county.

The committee, comprised of two county supervisors, a Keokuk physician, and several members of rural county fire and rescue departments, and co is leaning toward a proposal from American Medical Response, a subsidiary of Global Medical Response out of Dallas, Texas. AMR owns AirEvac, the aerial medical provider with a base behind Fort Madison Community Hospital.

The company is asking for \$450,000 annually in supplemental funding from the county to bring a 3-ambulance service to Lee County starting July 1. A meeting has been set for Friday at 11 a.m. to question AMR on their proposal. That meeting is open to the public and can be accessed by calling 1-312-757-3121 using access code 128-262-933.

The committee also received proposals from Lee County EMS Ambulance, which currently provides service in the county, and both Keokuk and Fort Madison fire departments.

Lee County EMS Ambulance said they will need \$900,000 next year starting July 1, to continue service, but said even that would require a review six months into the contract.

Committee member Dr. Phillip Caropresa, a Keokuk surgeon, said the city's proposals weren't as professional, but

more importantly, city councils in those cities can vote the proposals down. Supervisor Gary Folluo said Tuesday he was expecting a single proposal.

Fort Madison Fire Chief Joey Herren said he'd told Folluo that the proposals would be submitted together, but would require a 28E agreement, because the cities are independent of each other, and separate federal and state licensing would be required for each city.

Keokuk City Administrator Cole O'Donnell, included a letter with the Keokuk proposal indicating although the submission is on behalf of the city of Keokuk, it was being submitted in conjunction with Fort Madison's proposal.

Herren said the committee isn't understanding the proposals from the city's are a combined proposal. He said billing for Medicare and Medicaid requires different licensing as does the state Department of Public Health, but the service would be a combined county service.

"I turned them in together, but we're two separate worlds." Herren said. "We would sign a 28E and it would be no different from our fire agreement now where they would come help us and we go help them."

Herren said the city's will have start-up costs that are close to a million dollars for the ambulance rigs, cots, and equipment and the proposals require initial loans to cover those costs that would be paid back over five years.

A budget prepared by city officials for north Lee County would be \$1.7 million annually.

Herren said he looked at a city service 12 years ago and he

said those costs are what scared city officials back then. But he said the two cities and the county can come up with a plan.

"If we would have all three sat down, Keokuk, Fort Madison and the county, just got in a room and done this as a partnership instead of just throwing it out there with no rhyme or reason – I've put a lot of man hours into this."

The Fort Madison proposal would require a \$966,720 annual county subsidy to Fort Madison in a five-year agreement, which he admitted was a large number.

"That seems like a rather large number, but it is important to remember that approximately 40% of Lee County's General Fund budget is paid by the citizens of the cities of Fort Madison and Keokuk," Herren wrote in the Fort Madison proposal.

He also pointed to a program called Ground Emergency Medical Transport under the Iowa Department of Human Services, that allows publicly owned or operated emergency ground ambulance transportation providers to receive supplemental payments that cover the difference between a provider's actual costs per transport and the Medicaid reimbursement.

He said that program, after two years of billable records, could bring that annual cost to the county in line with what Lee County EMS is asking for now. Herren said he questions how AMR can turn in a proposal with such a low commitment from the county.

"I don't think they're looking deep enough in the weeds there," he said.

Some Callahan family members happy with new charge

DCI - Continued from Page 1

said he went down to Callahan's apartment to discuss a disagreement he had with her and "make things right".

Investigators also learned that Callahan had recently undergone knee surgery and wasn't able to walk without the assistance of a walker.

Prosecutors weren't able to make a case in 2004 and current Lee County Attorney Ross Braden said he didn't have a comment on what held the case up.

"It's suspicious. She cer-

tainly didn't get down there by herself," he said.

But in 2017 the case was reopened during a cold case review by the Keokuk Police Department and the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation's Major Crime Unit.

"An arrest was never made and the case went cold," Braden said. "They've been working the case since I got to the county attorney's office and had some evidence develop that previously wasn't there."

Braden said he called in Scott Brown, an area prosecutor with the AG's office, to assist in reviewing the case with Keokuk police and DCI agents.

Patricia Hall, one of Callahan's grandchildren said she was thrilled to see the case reopened.

"The reopening of it was wonderful. It was good to see. Some of my aunts and uncles, my grandma's kids, were just like, 'Let it go,'" Hall said.

"But I'm not that person and my mom's not that person. I don't know how you

don't want closure. But some of the others were super excited about it."

During interviews conducted in 2018 with witnesses, investigators learned that Ridnour had allegedly told one witness that he needed to get out of town because he was a suspect in Callahan's death, and that he left town shortly after making the statement.

Another witness told investigators in 2018 that Ridnour was concerned about his fingerprints being found in Callahan's apartment.

In 2019 investigators spoke with Ridnour again about possibly being responsible for Callahan's death. According to the April 30, 2020 affidavit, investigators said Ridnour didn't deny killing her, but allegedly stated again that he could "just not remember killing her" and "I didn't mean it or want to hurt anyone".

Braden said Brown will be handling the case for the state.

"I asked for the attorney general's assistance with an area prosecution and Scott

Brown's taken the lead on it. He's one of the most experienced prosecutors in the state," Braden said. "They pitched Scott and myself and we decided to move forward."

There are no statute of limitation on charges for murder in Iowa.

Callahan had lived in Keokuk since 1960 and had been employed as a CNA at Montrose Health Care Center, retiring in 1988. She had family throughout southeast Iowa, Illinois, Washington and California.

HAPPY
Mother's
Day

Pen City Current will not publish an e-Edition Sunday & Monday, May 10 & 11 due to the Mother's Day holiday. Breaking news will continue to be published to our website and social media channels as it happens. The e-Edition will resume publication Tuesday, May 12.

Wishing you a very happy
Mother's Day

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
Darwin Bunger
Attorney At Law


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PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC NOTICE
PROCEEDINGS OF THE
SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE WEST POINT
CITY COUNCIL
WEST POINT, IOWA
52656
MAY 4, 2020**

Mayor Paul Walker called the properly noticed special meeting of the City Council of the City of West Point to order in the Public Library, 317 Fifth Street, West Point, Iowa 52656 on May 4, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. In addition to Mayor Walker, the following indicated Council Members were present: Joe Loving; Brian Meierotto; Will Stuekerjuergen; Dan Waters; and, Bruce Wellman. Absent: None. Tentative agenda was approved by consensus. Upon invitation, Joe Merschman representing Merschman Seeds addressed the Council regarding their request to vacate a portion of Avenue C between their buildings. On motion approved Resolution No. 779-20 to set and publish notice of public hearing on vacating a portion of Avenue C for May 11, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. On motion meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m., May 4, 2020.

/s/ Paul Walker, Mayor
Attest: Diane E. Smith,
City Clerk

HELP WANTED

FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER

Lee County Health Department is seeking a full-time Family Support Worker to provide in-home parent education and support services to families enrolled in our Healthy Families America home visiting program model. Bachelor's degree is required with knowledge/experience in early childhood development; skills in promoting positive parent-child interactions, and ability to use a family-centered approach with culturally diverse population. Extensive data collection and documentation is required. Please send or email resume to Missy Park, Program Manager at LCHD Box 1426, Ft. Madison, IA 52627 or to mmagee@lee-countyhd.org by May 15, 2020. LCHD is an EOE.

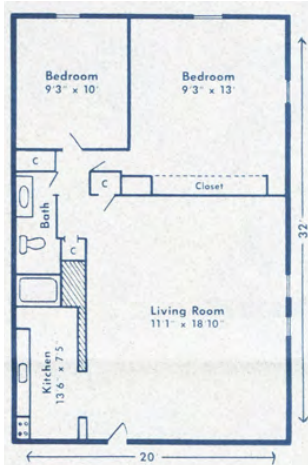
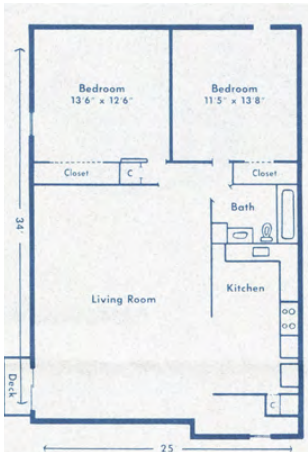


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Reynolds lightens more state restrictions

IOWA - Continued from Page 1

dnr.iowa.gov.

The governor also lightened restrictions in the 22 counties that were under tighter controls, including Des Moines and Henry counties in southeast Iowa.

Fitness centers are open by appointment only and can only allow a single patron at one time. Enclosed malls are reopened but at 50% capacity with no common area seating in

food courts and no play areas, with other preventative measures in place.

Most retail establishments are allowed to reopen at 50%, but the proclamation did not include restaurants and they must remain carry-out, delivery, or curbside pickup only.

The state saw 293 additional positive cases in the past 24-hour reporting cycle that ended Tuesday at 10 a.m. There were also

12 more deaths in the state bringing the total of deaths to 219.

LHCD officials are still highly recommending that residents continue to practice preventive measures to reduce transmission of COVID illness in the county by:

- Maintaining at least a six-foot physical distance apart from others when possible.
- Staying home when even mildly ill (the kind of illness that normally

wouldn't prevent you from your everyday activities)

- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow/upper arm.
- Consider limiting activities outside your home especially if you are older or have a chronic health condition
- Washing hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Calling your medical provider first if you need medical care and notify them of your symptoms.

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