

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Thursday, September 3, 2020 | 8 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 162



www.pencitycurrent.com

County OKs jail camera upgrade

OUT OF DATE: Inspector says county needs upgrade for better coverage of inmates

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – County supervisors approved a move Tuesday to upgrade the camera system in the Lee County Jail with a price tag of just over \$320,000.

Lee County Jail Administrator John Canida said the system is outdated and has been a pointed out on the last several state jail inspections as being insufficient for coverage and software.

The Lee County Board of Supervisors approved the purchase and installation from Mohrfeld Electric, 4-1 after tabling the issue a week ago to take a closer look at the only bid received for the work.

Supervisor Rich Harlow voted against the purchase because the

county had already approved adding six full-time correctional officers to the staff, and staff was better than cameras.

“Cameras are no substitute for staff. Everybody, I submit to you that now we do have more staff. We’ve gone from part-time to full-time officers and the cameras are no substitute for a good staff,” Harlow told the board.

Todd Peterson, an engineer with Ericson Ellison and Associates of St. Paul, Minn., drew up the engineers estimate, which supervisors said was about \$100,000 below Mohrfeld’s bid.

“First of all, it is correct that the current camera system is out of support and parts are difficult to get so that needed to be replaced,”

See **JAIL**, page 5



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Fort Madison City Hall is getting a new parking lot on the back side of the property. The new parking lot is being paid for with interest refunded to the city by the state on the bonds used to pay for the city’s upgrade to the waste water treatment plant in 2016. The parking lot will be built to allow storm water to penetrate the parking lot and be mostly absorbed before the remaining amount gets put back in the system.

CARES Funding

Governor puts \$5 million in First Ready Iowa program

DES MOINES - Gov. Kim Reynolds announced \$5 million in funding from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to support the Future Ready Iowa Employer Innovation Fund. Grant applications open today and will provide funding opportunities for employers, employer consortiums, community organizations and nonprofits, to provide

training, books, tools and wrap around support for Iowans engaged in training programs in high-demand careers. The grant program will focus on Iowans whose jobs have been affected or eliminated because of the pandemic. The application process opens on Wednesday, August 26th and will be open until September 16th. Recipients

will be notified of awards by September 23rd, 2020. No matching funds will be required from applicants and the maximum available award will be \$100,000 per applicant.

“The Employer Innovation Fund empow-

See **FUNDS**, page 5

COVID-19

County’s virus numbers slide to start week

State site shows 0 positive tests on Tuesday; positivity rate down to 17%

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – The coronavirus positivity rate for Lee County for Wednesday has dropped to 17% from all time high of more than 18% last week.

The county still ranks as the seventh highest county in the state with regard to the positivity rating, but for the first time since Aug. 2, the state website didn’t report a positive case for a 24-hour reporting period on Tuesday.

The Lee County Health Department, however reported 18 additional cases from 3:30 p.m. Tuesday to 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Both departments reported 446 total cases for the county on Wednesday at 3:30 pm. Tuesday’s LCHD report indicated 10 new cases for the 24-hour period from 3:30 p.m. Monday to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday.

The 14-day rolling rate of positive cases was 221 on Wednesday, down from 245 on Tuesday.

Governor Kim Reynolds said at her press conference Wednesday that last week Iowa had the highest rate of increase in the nation, and had the 5th highest positivity rate in the country.

When questioned by a pool reporter as to why the Governor isn’t following recommendations from the White House Coronavirus Task Force, Reynolds said she still believes those decisions fall to the states.

“We are doing some of the things, but I believe its up to the governors and various states to make those decisions,” she said.

Reynolds also said the federal agencies may not be aware of all the things the state is doing on its own to mitigate the



REYNOLDS

See **VIRUS**, page 2

INDEX

Business Directory.....P.6
CLASSIFIEDS.....Ps.6-7
Conagra Brands.....P.7
FOR THE RECORD.....P.3
Fort Madison Community Hospital.....P.2
Fort Madison Family YMCA.....P.2
FROM THE FRONT.....Ps.2,5
GradsOfLife.org.....P.7

Great River Regional Waste Authority.....P.3
HEALTH NEWS.....P.2
IOWA NEWS.....Ps.2,5
Lee County Health Department.....P.8
LEE COUNTY NEWS.....Ps.2-3,5
OBITUARIES.....P.2
• Donna Martin-Netherton, 78
• Betty Thannert, no age given

Pen City Current.....Ps.4,6-7
Pilot Grove Savings Bank.....P.5
Pothitakis Dentistry.....P.4
Small Grand Things.....P.5
SPORTS.....P.4
Tri-State Outdoor Products.....P.2

WEATHER

OpenWeatherMap
THU 03 Sep.....Clear, Warm, 82° F/ 57° F
FRI 04 Sep.....Clear, Warm, 82° F/ 54° F
SAT 05 Sep.....Light Showers, 83° F/ 59° F

IOWA LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS 09/01.....15 25 26 38 47, Mega Ball: 22 Megaplier: 4
PICK 3 09/01 MIDDAY.....5 6 8
PICK 3 09/01 EVENING.....9 5 6
PICK 4 09/01 MIDDAY.....16 7 0
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Obituaries/From the Front

OBITUARIES

DONNA MARTIN-NETHERTON

Donna Martin – Netherton, 78, of Farmington, Iowa, passed away at 4:59 p.m., Sunday, August 23, 2020, at the Great River Medical Center in West Burlington, Iowa, after a long life and successful career as a nurse, nursing supervisor and nurse practitioner.



NETHERTON

The world lost a perfect wife, a loving mother, a devoted sister, a dedicated health care worker and a friend of many.

Donna was born on March 9, 1942, the daughter of Homer and Donna (Huston) Stroud. She was married to Russ Martin for eighteen years, having three boys and an adopted daughter. In April of 1994, she married Dale Netherton and they had twenty-six years of happiness.

She is survived by her husband: Dale; two sons: Russell (Becky) and David. She was preceded in death by her parents and one son: Dale Wayn. Her body has been entrusted to Schmitz Funeral Home for cremation. A Memorial Service will be held at a later date.

A memorial has been established in her memory and can be mailed to the family at: Schmitz Funeral Home, P.O. Box 56, Donnellson, Iowa.

Schmitz Funeral Home of Farmington is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.schmitzfuneral-homes.com.

BETTY THANNERT

The memorial mass for Betty Thannert will be held on Saturday, September 5 at 11 AM at Ss. Mary & Joseph Church. The family will meet with friends from 10 AM-11 AM at the church.

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.

Reynolds said Iowa State game can be attended safely with 25,000 fans

VIRUS - Continued from Page 1

spread, including closing bars, taverns, and breweries in six counties.

The state has also re-opened the small business grant program for two weeks to allow those businesses closed to apply for a one-time grant for up to \$10,000 to help offset losses during the closures.

Reynolds again pointed to college age adults 19-24 as the main reason for the state's increase in positive cases. She said in Johnson County between 8/23 and 8/29 the county had a positivity rating of 29.7% with 91% of the new cases being in the 19-24 age range.

Iowa State kicks off the football season next Saturday and will allow 25,000 people into Jack Trice Stadium.

"If you have underlying conditions and are part of a vulnerable population, maybe you don't go to the Iowa State football game next week," she said.

"There allowing 25,000 into a stadium of 65,100. It's outdoors. You should wear a mask, and I think if we put mitigation steps in place, we can continue to move forward. We're playing football on Friday nights. we played softball and baseball all summer... If you don't think it's safe – don't go."

When the reporter tried to press the governor on the student population at the game, considering that age bracket is the highest transmission demographic, Reynolds said she'd answered the question and moved on.

She said the decisions to close businesses are not taken lightly, but said some owners are not adhering to guidelines and after repeated efforts to educate and warn of future penalties, she decided to shut them down.

"It has really been a tough year. I don't take these decisions lightly and they are based on the data and the numbers we've

been seeing.

When asked why Iowa was seeing such a dramatic increase in positive cases at state universities, when other states aren't seeing the same impacts, Reynolds said she'd been watching the news and she believes those states will eventually see similar results.

With regard to data and inconsistent reporting from counties and clinics feeding into the state's website, Reynolds said in part the confusion is that the state doesn't get complete information, including addresses, that feed into the system.

"So by the time we get that information, there's an adjustment from the county that it came from," she said.

The coronavirus.iowa.gov site went through some scheduled maintenance over the weekend, so that caused a few disruptions, she said, calling the state's reporting system antiquated.

FMCH Pediatrics Welcomes Dr. Bryan Blacker



Fort Madison Community Hospital is pleased to welcome Dr. Bryan Blacker. Dr. Blacker is a Board eligible Pediatrician and will join the FMCH Pediatric Clinic on Monday, August 3, 2020.

Dr. Blacker is coming to FMCH after completing his Pediatric Residency at the University of South Dakota. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Nutritional Sciences from Brigham Young University and his Doctor of Medicine degree from the University Of New Mexico School Of Medicine.

Pediatricians specialize in the health care of children from preventive to diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic diseases. They collaborate with the child's parent or guardian to deal with the physical, emotional and social development of their children.

Dr. Blacker will see patients from newborn through the teenage years in the clinic along with Dr. Kolleen Burnett, Dr. Libby Balbort, Dr. Greg Gorski and Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, Susan Holtkamp.



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"I love to watch my patients grow, learn and change from year to year. The most rewarding part of my day is empowering and educating parents. Most parents work hard to be the best they can and do the right thing for their children. My job is to help give them the tools and knowledge to keep their kids healthy."
- Dr. Bryan Blacker

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PEN CITY CURRENT
It's Black & White and Read all over

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For the Record/Lee County News

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

08/27/20 – 1:28 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 300 block of 12th Street.
 08/27/20 – 3:04 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2700 block of Avenue I.
 08/27/20 – 8:46 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Wayne Andrew Hayes, 38, of Fort Madison, in the 2700 block of Avenue K, on a charge of driving under suspension.
 08/28/20 – 9:32 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 900 block of Old Denmark Hill.
 08/29/20 – 4:49 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 500 block of 4th Street.
 08/29/20 – 10:07 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1900 block of Avenue E.
 08/29/20 – 4:57 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 1100 block of 48th Street.
 08/30/20 – 11:46 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 2800 block of Avenue K.
 08/30/20 – 1:22 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in

the 500 block of Avenue F.
 08/30/20 – 8:10 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Melissa D. Nelson, 37, of Fort Madison, in the 1900 block of Avenue G, on charges of interference with official acts and aggravated domestic assault. She was taken to Lee County Jail and held.
 08/30/20 – 11:30 a.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Justin Michael Barnes, 33, of Fort Madison at the police department, on a warrant service. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
 08/30/20 – 4:11 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Heather Michelle Hayes, , no age listed, of Fort Madison, at the police department on a charge of driving while barred. She was released on a promise to appear.
 09/01/20 – 1:52 a.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested William Paul Cochenour, 27, of Fort Madison in the 1700 block of Avenue I, on warrants for failure to appear and a charge of driving while barred. He was taken to Lee County Jail and held.
 09/01/20 – 6:47 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1300 block of Avenue E.
 09/01/20 – 1:02 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded

to a report of vandalism in the 800 block of Avenue G.
 09/01/20 – 1:04 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 600 block of Avenue G.
 09/01/20 – 1:51 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 2000 block of 303rd Avenue.
 09/01/20 – 3:10 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1900 block of Avenue G.
 09/01/20 – 3:28 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of hit and run in the 200 block of Avenue E.
 09/01/20 – 10:05 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Kevin Scott Royer, 57, of Fort Madison, in the 3000 block of Avenue O, on a warrant for failure to appear.
 09/02/20 – 1:38 a.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Kai Luv Kempker, 27, of Fort Madison, in the 1500 block of Avenue M, on a warrant for failure to appear, and charges of possession of controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

08/27/20 – Lee County Sheriff's deputies cited Jerry Richard Thorn, 74, of Alexandria, Mo., at the

sheriff's office on a charge of accessory to misdemeanor.
 08/30/20 – 06:13 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Ridge Dawson Spearman, 23, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on warrant for leaving the scene of an accident. He was taken to Lee County Jail and released on bond.
 08/30/20 – 9:49 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Charles Zachariah Bittner, 41, of Keokuk, in the 3400 block of 243rd Street in Keokuk, on warrants for violation of parole and 3rd-degree theft. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
 09/01/20 – 11:00 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Shalamar Marquy Holloway, 19, of Burlington, at the Des Moines County Jail on a warrant for failure to appear. He was held in custody.
 09/01/20 – 8:20 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Brooke Sue Peterman Winn, 41, of Fort Madison, in the 400 block of Main Street in Donnellson, on a warrant for violation of parole and charge of interference with official acts. She was taken to Lee County Jail and held.
Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Bridges program looking for county mentors

LEE COUNTY - Sue works full time for minimum wage and struggles to make ends meet. She wants a better life but years of generational poverty has created a difficult set of circumstances. Unexpected expenses, medical challenges and lack of support have a cyclical effect on her life. Predatory lending has resulted in her car being repossessed so she now faces the additional challenge of getting her children to day-care and school. Where can Sue go for help?

Bridges out of Poverty helps people like Sue break the cycle of generational poverty through Getting Ahead workshops, community resources, and support to obtain the tools and gain the confidence she needs to overcome her challenges. Bridges does not give a hand out but rather a hand up.

Sue learns of the Getting Ahead workshops and quickly enrolls. Participants in the Getting Ahead workshops are known as 'Investigators'. As an Investigator, she attends 17 weeks of workshops where she learns about managing finances, develops a positive support system, interviews community members, and other skills to assist her on her journey to self-sustenance. Getting Ahead provides child care for her children, supper for the family, and transportation to and from the workshop location.

Once she successfully graduates Getting Ahead, she will continue with Staying Ahead. She will team up with a Mentor who will watch and help her put into practice what she learned in the Getting Ahead workshops. The Mentor provides positive, pro-social guidance with issues that may arise in her life. The Mentor and Sue will meet the first Monday of the month for a couple of hours at Staying Ahead, and then weekly via phone, Zoom or meeting in person.

So how can you help Sue and others like her? Become a Mentor! There is flexibility in the weekly visits and you will have the opportunity to impact someone's life, and the community, in a positive way.

For more information contact Shayla at sblackburn@younghouse.org or by calling (319) 371-7565.

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Sports

Lady Hounds get late start to volleyball season

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – The Fort Madison Lady Hounds volleyball team got caught in the coronavirus net out of the gate this year and hit the gym for the first time in two weeks on Saturday.

Head Coach Kent Bailey said the girls will lean on some experience and athleticism to compete to try and compete for a Southeast Conference win this year.

The Bloodhounds finished second in the Southeast in 2019 with a 6-3 mark behind champs Burlington who finished perfect at 11-0. The Hounds struggled outside loop play and finished the year with a 15-24 mark.

This year's squad will be anchored by third year started Lauren Bailey, a senior who led Fort Madison with 551 assists and 252 digs a year ago. But the Hounds lose Class 4A Southeast All-District Jillian Wiseman who had a solid year at the net with 382 kills and 33 blocks.

Kent Bailey said the competition is pretty heavy for middle and outside hitter roles, with Bailey locking up her role in the middle of the offense.

"Lauren's coming back as a two-year starter and her third as the setter. The rest of the kids feel very comfortable with her in that role," Bailey said.

"We've got three vying for outside hitter with Logan Johnson, a junior, and two seniors in Reyna Lampe and Kylee Cashman, and there's a good competition there right now.

Lampe is a jumper at just 5'4" hitting from the



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

The Fort Madison Bloodhound volleyball team is getting a bit of a late start this year due to a 14-day coronavirus quarantine. The Hounds got in the gym Saturday and are looking on building on last year's 15-24 mark.

corner. She had 445 attacks last year as a junior, and recorded 99 kills, which was second best on the squad. Cashman had 21 kills on 112 attacks last year. Johnson played sparingly last year in just 17 sets, but had 10 kills in 52 attacks.

Bailey said Johnson's coming off a solid year of softball and is gaining confidence.

"Logan came in in very good shape. She's looked good. I wouldn't put her heads and tails above everybody else, but she's one that's surprised me so far," Bailey said.

In the middle, the Hounds will be looking to seniors Kailyn Guzman and Lauren King, and junior Eve Ruble, with junior Alaina Simpson and Cashman battling for the other outside hitter spot.

Guzman was a starter as a junior last year and had 83 kills from the middle.

Bailey said King has been another surprise and has hit well as middle net in limited practices.

In the back and working for the libero and defensive specialists spots are seniors Nadia Boeding, Taylor Barnes, Ally Helmick and Kendall Beebe, and a junior Maddy Pirri.

Coach Bailey said the coronavirus pandemic has taken its toll on aspects of the Hounds preseason preparation, but he said the girls are relying on experience and athleticism to carry them through.

"We lost two solid weeks of practice and a tournament on Saturday where we would have picked up six matches," Bailey said.

"And then we would have been playing Fairfield this week and it got pushed back a couple weeks."



BAILEY

"It's had its impact, but it's impacting others as well. But our kids got enough open gyms so they know the basic ideas of what we want to do. It's now just getting those muscles back where they need to be."



CASHMAN

Lauren Bailey said with the two weeks lost, the team is just looking to play hard and work together, because they don't know how long the season could last.

"We just want to go out and play our hardest and compete," the senior said. "We want to play like it's our last game every game, because we just don't know."



LAMPE

Coach Bailey said the conference will probably favor Fairfield again as a perennial power, but Burlington surprised everyone last year with their athleticism. But he said things have evened out and the Bloodhounds have enough experience to run at the title.

"We feel confident with our experience with our kids that have played a lot of volleyball," Coach Bailey said. "Fairfield is always good, and Burlington is the defending champions and they're gonna battle. Then obviously, Washington Mt. Pleasant, and Keokuk keep improving every year."

The Bloodhounds are schedule to start the year on Saturday at a tournament at Burlington Notre Dame. The Hounds open the home season Tuesday with a visit from Burlington.

Happy
LABOR
Day



Pen City Current will not publish an e-Edition
Monday & Tuesday, September 7 & 8
due to the Labor Day holiday

Breaking news will continue to be published to our website
www.PenCityCurrent.com
and through our social media channels as it happens.

The e-Edition will resume publication
on Wednesday, September 9.

Please celebrate safely.

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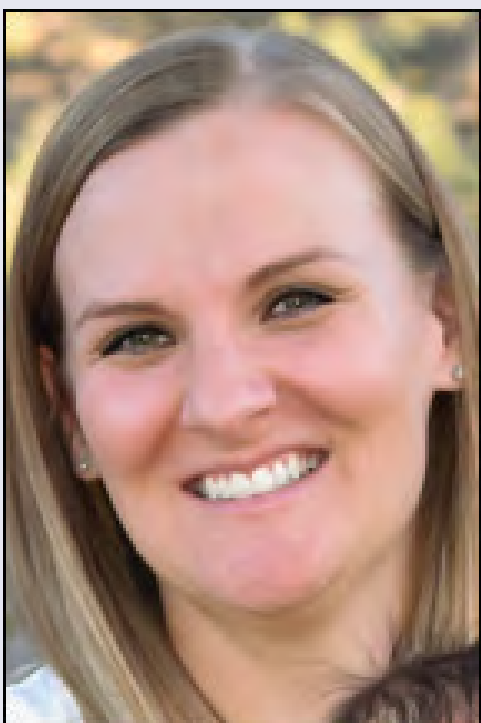


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From the Front

Software, extra cameras push project to \$321,000

JAIL- Continued from Page 1

he said.

“The other thing this project did was to address blind spots in the current jail. Those were cameras not included in original construction of the jail and staff has identified problem areas for coverage.”

Peterson said the increased costs included the additional cameras to allow better coverage of the jail. He said he agreed that cameras are not replacements for employees, but said they are critical for incident reconstruction.

He also said COVID has had a direct impact on supplies and pricing.

“Back to the estimate, I put it together based on some pricing that a vendor assisted with earlier in the year. Since that time COVID did have an impact on the cost of materials,” Peterson said.

“There was also a software upgrade in a couple versions that did not trigger us into a full upgrade, but unfortunately now those upgrades are in place.”

Peterson said he admitted there were a couple parts of the estimate where he underestimated the cost.

Peterson said Mohrfeld’s bid for the work is a current bid and is not the Cadillac of systems, but more of a middle of the road product.

“But there is nothing in here you can cut out that just increased the cost of the bid,” Peterson said. “My review of that bid seems valid and reasonable per industry standards.”

Canida said the state inspector told him

during the last inspection that the county needed to get on top of the aging system.

“He said our system’s outdated and if we don’t go ahead and get on top of it and do some upgrades, we’re going to be without a system,” Canida said.

“You can’t get parts for it and he’s seen it happen across the state and doesn’t want us to be in that situation.”

The county had to go out for bids because of the estimated cost of the upgrade, but only received one bid and that was from Mohrfeld Electric.

Larkin said it puts the county in an unenviable position when they only get one bid. But he said rebidding the project would give unfair advantage to Mohrfeld competitor’s who didn’t bid the project initially.

“Makes it difficult when we put it out for bids and what we end up with was one bid,” he said.

“If we don’t accept that bid and we go back out, it puts the company that put in the original bid at a disadvantage. And I can’t feature them lowering it much. That’s something to think about.”

In other action, supervisors:

- approved a resolution to request reimbursement from state CARES Act funding for eligible costs related to the COVID-19 public health emergency in the amount of \$426,703.69.

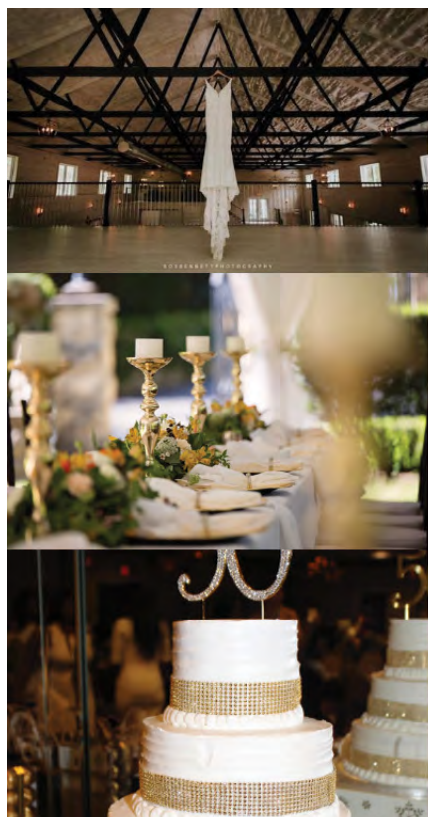
- approved moving five part-time sheriff’s deputies to full-time status and hired a temporary election clerk.

Grant to help restore workforce

FUNDS- Continued from Page 1

ers employers and communities to find creative ways to help workers most affected by the pandemic by identifying local workforce needs and then creating programs that will quickly get people into and out of training to meet those needs,” said Director Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development. “As Iowa’s businesses reopen, the grants will help Iowans gain credentials in high-demand jobs that support a good quality of life for themselves and their families. It is a tremendous investment in our workers and our recovery.”

The \$5 million investment from the CARES act Coronavirus Relief Fund will jump-start the creation of training opportunities for Iowans most affected by the pandemic. Grants can be used to cover the cost of training and supplies as well as provide much needed wrap around support that addresses the other barriers some Iowans face when trying to obtain skilled training. Support services can be used to cover expenses related to childcare, transportation and provide stipends to meet basic necessities while in training.



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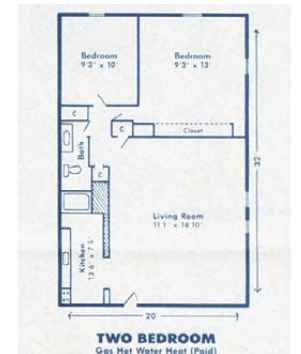
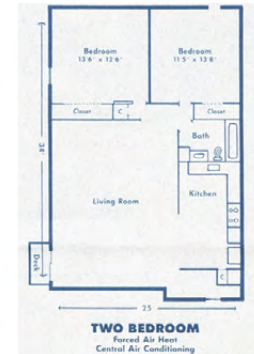
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