



# Pen City Current

Wednesday, Jan. 23, 2019 | 15 pages | Volume 3 • Issue 33

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## Monday blaze destroys Hawkins Auto Service

*Rick Hawkins said he wasn't ready to retire; future unknown*

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A late Monday evening fire that lasted well into Tuesday morning, has left 65-year-old Rick Hawkins contemplating his future.

Hawkins is the owner of Hawkins Auto Service at 1602 Avenue E. The service center was destroyed by fire overnight Monday.

Fire officials said the fire started in the upper ceilings of the structure, but took a while to show itself in cold, crisp air with a wind blowing from the south-east.

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Fire Chief Joey Herren said that helped protect property directly behind the building.

"We didn't even have any blistering on the home behind the property," he said.

The weather conditions and materials being burned made fighting the fire difficult.

Captain Eric Kerns, who had command at the scene said the smoke from the fire was so heavy it bogged down the department's chainsaws so accessing the roof was difficult.

"The smoke was so heavy the chainsaws wouldn't run. There was a double layer ceiling and we couldn't find where the seed of the fire was. The whole time it



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Rick Hawkins, left, assesses the destruction of his 24-year old business Hawkins Auto Service at 16th and Avenue E in Fort Madison. The building was destroyed by fire overnight Monday.

was building up above."

Kerns said firefighters went looking around for about the first hour putting out flare ups that kept cropping up around the roof the building.

"We went in kinda looking around and there was a seam over the garage part and we could see an orange glow running front to back and from that point we went into defensive mode. It wasn't even two minutes later when it all went through."

He said at that point, all the firefighters were out of the building and they began fighting the fire from the exterior and above.

"We don't have a cause yet," he said. "We'll be here for a while investigating it."

Herren said the attic was several layers thick and the flames took some time getting through to the

See FIRE, page 3

## Inmates ransack juvenile detention center Monday

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

MONTROSE – Staff at the Southeast Iowa Juvenile Detention Center in Montrose had to deal with a second incident in less than six weeks involving criminal activity at the center.

Lee County Sheriff's deputies had to respond to an incident Monday at around 9 p.m. LeeComm dispatch sent sheriff's deputies to the scene, including a K9 officer, and paged out Des Moines Township Fire & Rescue and Montrose Fire & Rescue to the scene to help clear out the air in the center after several fire extinguishers were released as part of the melee.

Iowa State patrol officers also responded to the scene Monday night.

According to chatter over LeeComm radio channels from local law enforcement, one deputy called for fire assistance saying everything was "Ok, but it's destroyed in here."

Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber said a window was broken out and the offender area suffered heavy destruction including the fire extinguishers that were sprayed all over the center.

According to the sheriff's reports, two of the juveniles were 16- and 14-year old females, one from Burlington and the other from Davenport. The other two involved were 14-year-old males, also from Davenport.

Officials with the Southern Iowa Crime Commission

See RIOT, page 4

## Supervisors continue to look for more budget cuts

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

MONTROSE – As Lee County supervisors grapple with the next fiscal year budget, several departments including secondary roads, the sheriff's department, and county employee hours were on the table on Tuesday.

At a workshop following Tuesday's regular meeting of the Lee County Board of Supervisors, County Engineer Ben Hull tried to find ways to cut into \$1.2 million of deficit spending.

Hull pointed out to the supervisors, that the second-

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# Obituaries/Current-Lee

## OBITUARIES

### SHARRAN A. FREEMAN

Sharran A. Freeman, 79 years, of Fort Madison, Iowa died peacefully with her family by her side at 9:22 p.m. Monday, January 21, 2019 at the Fort Madison Community Hospital, Fort Madison. She was born March 7, 1939 in Powers Lake, North Dakota, a daughter of Ernest Otto "August" and Hazel Gladys (Ramsdall) Quitt. Sharran grew up and attended school in the Powers Lake area. She later moved to Iowa with her family. She earned her GED and furthered her education as an older adult. She married Lyle Christianson, and they had four children: Sharran, Earl, Annette, and Christ. They later divorced. She married William "Bill" Freeman, and they had two children, Shannan and Shellie. They later divorced.



FREEMAN

Sharran was a homemaker who also worked outside her home. She worked at several factories and businesses in the area, retiring from Metromail. In early years, Sharran enjoyed bowling, dancing, playing pool, spending time with her family and friends. In later years, she liked puzzles, playing cards, math, old western movies, and older country music.

She is survived by two sons: Earl (Rita) Freeman of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa; Christ (Marilyn) Freeman of Hillsboro, Iowa; four daughters: Sharran (Frank) Hermes of Revere, Missouri, Annette (Ernie) Steffensmeier, Shannan Freeman, and Shellie Piles (Joey Russell) all of Fort Madison, Iowa; grandchildren: Billie-joe Husted, Bobby Husted, Ernest Steffensmeier, Andrea Steffensmeier, Stephenie Genck, Resa Newton, Jarred Freeman, Payden Jones, Amanda Jones, Trevor Piles, Tyler Piles, and Trinity Piles; great grandchildren: Colton Stepp, Briley Husted, Callie Thompson, Gunner Husted, Anson Husted, Jasmine Seitz, Sebastian Newton, and Aubrey Piles; and one sister, Evelyn Issaacson of Rainier Oregon. She was preceded in death by her parents, siblings: Myrtle Nichols, Edith Quitt, Earl Cannon, Emmitt Cannon, Rose Thompson, Roy Quitt, Fred Quitt, Melvin Quitt, and Elvin Quitt; and special companion of 27 years, Gordon E. "Gordie" Wendland.

Visitation will be held from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Friday, January 25, 2019 at the Barr Memorial Chapel, Fort Madison. Funeral services will follow and begin at 11:00 a.m. Friday at the funeral home with Pastor Preston Smith officiating. Burial will be at Oakland Cemetery, Fort Madison. A memorial has been established, contributions may be made at the Barr Memorial Chapel, Fort Madison. Online condolences to the Family may be made from the Barr Memorial Chapel, [www.barrmemorialchapel.com](http://www.barrmemorialchapel.com).

#### Pen City Current obituary policy

The Current runs obituaries 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.

## CURRENT-LEE

FORT MADISON – The following is a list of events and happenings going on in Fort Madison as submitted to Pen City Current.

### Budding Artist Exhibit

The Budding Artist Exhibit is on display now at the Fort Madison Area Arts Association through the end of January.

### Children's Immunization Clinic

The Lee County Health Department will be holding a children's immunization clinic with free lead testing on Thursday, Jan. 24 at the LCHD's facility at #3 John Bennett Drive in Fort Madison from noon until 5:30 p.m. The clinic is open to children with no insurance, those insured by Medicaid/MCO or those with private insurance that doesn't cover vaccines. No appointment is necessary. Call 319-372-5225 for more information.

### Community Blood Drive

Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center will hold a drive at Lincoln Elementary School on Thursday, Jan. 24 from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. in the school gymnasium. To donate call LeAnn Cashman at 319-372-2896.

### Cake Auction

The Fort Madison Bloodhound Boosters will hold a cake auction on Saturday, Jan 26 at breaks during the varsity girls and boys basketball games.

### Nerf Wars at FM YMCA

The Fort Madison YMCA will be the site of another round of Nerf Wars on Sunday, Jan. 27. From 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. boys and girls ages 1 through 6 will compete in Nerf Wars in the gymnasium. Children must bring eye protection, their own Nerf guns, darts/bullets/balls. Cost is \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members. For more information contact program director Noah Dean or visit the YMCA's Facebook page for more information.

### Local artist on display at SCC

Lori Illner Greene will have her art work on display at the Southeastern Community College Art Gallery, 1500 W. Agency Road in West Burlington from Jan. 28-Feb. 15. The gallery showing will feature her "Raptors and Other Birds of Prey" series.

### Evening with Chuck Long

Former Iowa standout and NFL quarterback Chuck Long will be at Sheaffer Memorial Golf Course on Tuesday, Feb. 12 for presentation, including a social hour and dinner with doors opening at 4:30. The social hour and dinner will be from 5 to 6 and Long will speak at 6 p.m. with a question and answer to follow. For more information, contact Ryan at 319-528-6214 or by email at [mcmillan@sheaffergolf.co](mailto:mcmillan@sheaffergolf.co)

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## Pen City Current

Founded in 2016



P.O. Box 366 | Fort Madison, IA

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**For the Record/From the Front**

# Official says fire was tough to get at early

**FIRE** - Continued from Page 1

surface.

Hawkins said the original office on the lot was built in 1922. It had an office area with a pump island and two gas pumps on it.

“The guy that had this before, his uncle named it “Studies”. I bought it 1994, they had gas originally, but that was all gone when I bought it.”

Hawkins said the only thing he wanted out of the building was the safe and said the building is a total loss.

“I don’t know what I’m gonna do yet. I planned on working another four or five years, but I’m just going to see where I’m at with the insurance. The only thing worth saving in there is the safe.”

Kerns said there were vehicles and several flammable materials in the building, but there were no explosions or other potentially dangerous situations, aside from the fire itself.

“These are some of the worst kinds of fires because you don’t know what’s inside. Not only were we wary of explosives in a garage, but also we had to feel around for pits where someone could fall in,” Kerns said.

Hawkins, who lives near Argyle, got a call at about 10:30 from a buddy who informed him of the fire.

Hawkins said he closed up the office at about 4:30 on Monday and said he wouldn’t have even opened considering it was the holiday, but was, ironically, scheduled to meet with a new property insurance rep.

“I probably wouldn’t even have been here yesterday, but I changed insurance companies and the new agent wanted to meet here to sign the paperwork and pick up a check,” he said.

Firefighters were on the scene for nearly five hours with the last crews coming back to the firehouse at about 3 a.m.. The call came into LeeComm dispatch just before 10 p.m. with a report of flames being seen by a passerby through the window and smoke coming from the building.

Fire officials quickly made an all-call for all off-duty personnel and then requested mutual aid from Denmark Fire & Rescue for manpower and air supply.

Firefighters used a water/foam mixture from the ground and then called the ladder truck to the scene where they worked on the roof from the north side of the building before moving to the east side on 16th Street just before the fire broke through the ceiling and roof.

“We were going through so many airtanks that we called in Denmark because they have a mobile cascade system to fill airtanks for some manpower,” Kerns said.



**Click here to watch firefighters battle the blaze.**

On Tuesday morning, fire officials were back on the scene investigating the fire and helping Hawkins recover paperwork, and other items, that were well protected in a safe that was almost 100 years old.

**For the Record**

**Fort Madison Police Report**

01/21/19 – 5:34 a.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 5400 block of Avenue O.

01/21/19 – 12:44 p.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1700 block of Avenue G.

01/21/19 – 1:48 p.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 3700 block of Avenue L.

01/21/19 – 2:35 p.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1600 block of 27th Street.

01/21/19 – 7:00 p.m.

– Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a stolen vehicle in the 600 block of 8th Street.

01/21/19 – 8:30 a.m.

– Fort Madison Police arrested Eric Roger George Demuynck, 53, of Fort Madison in the 1200 block of Avenue G, on a charge of violation of a protection order. He was taken to the Lee County jail and held.

01/21/19 – 8:30 a.m.

– Fort Madison Police arrested Cody Sheridan Collins, 28, of Fort Madison in the 1200 block of Avenue G, on a charge of

violation of a protection order. He was taken to the Lee County jail and held.

**Lee County Sheriff's Report**

01/21/19 – 8:40 a.m.

– Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Chelsea Nacole Smith, 20 of Donnellson, at the sheriff's office on a charge of unlawful possession of prescription drugs. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

01/21/19 – no time given

– Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested a 16-year-old female juvenile from Burlington, at the sheriff's office on charges of 2nd-degree criminal mischief and participating in a riot.

01/21/19 – no time given

– Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested a 14-year-old female from Davenport, at the sheriff's office on charges of 2nd-degree criminal mischief and participating in a riot.

01/21/19 – no time given

– Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested a 14-year-old male juvenile from Davenport, at the sheriff's office on charges of 2nd-degree criminal mischief and participating in a riot.

01/21/19 – no time given

– Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested

a 14-year-old female juvenile from Davenport, at the sheriff's office on charges of 2nd-degree criminal mischief and participating in a riot.

01/21/19 – 8:55 a.m.

– Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident at the intersection of 310th Street and 260th Avenue.

According to the report, a vehicle driven by Logan Jose Granera, 29, of Keokuk, lost control on snow-covered roadway and struck a telephone pole, causing his vehicle to catch fire. No injuries or citations were reported at the scene.

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

**Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report**

01/18/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to one medical call.

01/19/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to two medical calls.

01/20/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to three medical calls, one report of gas odor.

01/21/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to four medical calls, three fire alarms, and one structure fire, and one porch fire.



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## Area News/Weather

# Gov. says state has nation's best jobless mark

*IWD says 2,300 Iowans went to work in December*

DES MOINES – Gov. Kim Reynolds released the following statement today in response to the news that Iowa has the lowest unemployment rate in the country according to this month's unemployment information released by Iowa Workforce Development:

"Iowa's economy

continues to show significant strength in the New Year," said Gov. Kim Reynolds. "More Iowans than ever are working, which reflects the opportunities that exist in our state. Having the lowest unemployment rate in the U.S. reaffirms that what we're doing to grow our economy and bolster our

workforce through efforts like Future Ready Iowa, Home Base Iowa and Registered Apprenticeship are paying off."

On Friday, Iowa Workforce Development announced that in December an additional 2,300 Iowans entered the workforce, creating the total number of employed Iowans to 1,651,300, the most in history. Manufacturing ended 2018 as the top sector for creat-

ing jobs, ending the year 7,600 jobs higher than December of 2017. Iowa's unemployment rate for December remained at 2.4 percent, while Hawaii increased to 2.5 percent, allowing the Hawkeye State to take over the number one ranking.

The number of Iowans who have claimed unemployment benefits dropped below 100,000 for the year, the lowest since 1998

# Incident was second in 2019 involving Scott County youth

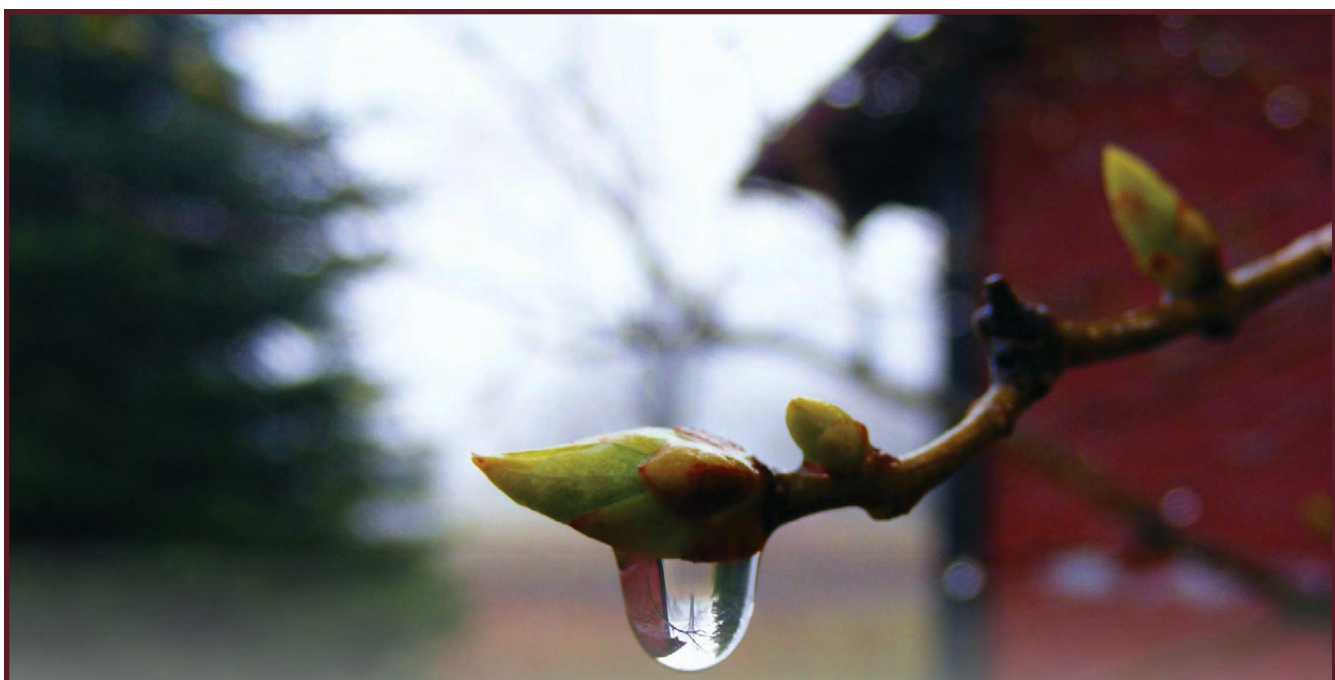
**RIOT** - Continued from Page 1

that oversee the operations at the detention center, declined to comment on the incident this morning.

A spokesperson at the commission's office in Fairfield indicated a press release would be issued later in the day but as of 5 p.m. no release had been issued.

On Jan. 7 of this year, an argument between two correctional officers and a juvenile began before 9 a.m. and the inmates were ordered to their cells as part of lock-down procedures, but two other juveniles disobeyed the order and came back to the day room and a fight broke out between the two officers and the three juveniles.

One of the officers on hand suffered an injury to the head in that incident and had to be taken to the hospital for treatment.



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## 5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

WED 23 Jan

Light Snow  
High- 22.7° F | Low - 5.1° F

THU 24 Jan

Light Snow  
High- 12.9° F | Low - -6.6° F

FRI 25 Jan

Snow  
High- 12.5° F | Low - 0.5° F

SAT 26 Jan

Light Snow  
High- 10.5° F | Low - -12.0° F

SUN 27 Jan

Snow  
High- 23.3° F | Low - 11.9° F

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## From the front/Lottery Numbers

# Supervisor wants to know more about Steil's dismissal

**BUDGET** - Continued from Page 1

ary roads department

One of the items under scrutiny is a new maintenance building for the secondary roads department that was cut from the budget last year.

Hull had included \$280,000 for the new building, but said he could possibly cut \$100,000 out of that project and then spread the remaining cost of the building over the two years to help ease the strain.

He said Secondary Roads budgets for long winters and \$4/gallon diesel which helps them come in under budget if seasons are mild and prices stay low.

"For the past several years we've been hundreds of thousands of dollars under budget and we have a strong fund balance right now. So I respect this process and recognize the important of sharpening our pencils, but we consistently come in under budget."

In the most updated budget numbers, Secondary Roads had deficit spending of \$1.26 million and is projected to have \$2.33 million in its fund balance at the start of the 2019/20 fiscal year begin-

ning July 1, 2019.

The board also pushed Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber to find ways to cut from his budget.

Weber said the department might be able to winnow some money from fuel and inmate food but that might amount to roughly \$148,000.

Board Chair Gary Folluo asked how important it was to backfill an 18th deputy that Weber had moved 3/4 time to Central Lee Community Schools.

"It's pretty important. I view it as kind of a bargain as Central Lee is picking up the lion's share of his salary. I discussed with Gary, I think as long as you're okay with that if they were to pull out of the 28E agreement with us because they pass a bond and decide they don't need armed security, I would be willing to attrition that position away," Weber said.

"I was elected sheriff and my kids go to that school and I listened that they were the only school around that didn't have an SRO (School Resource Officer). I just think it's a symptom of a problem. The county attorney's office is growing as well.

To me, I saw this coming 10 years ago."

Weber said he did see light at the end of the tunnel as far as equipment because things are getting replaced, but last year he cut out two replacement vehicles.

"You either pay for these on the front end, or on the back end with repairs. It was not unusual when I was a deputy to drive a car with more than 250,000 miles on it. But as sheriff, I'm not going to do that. Not going to put people behind a vehicle that old and I'd hope you wouldn't want me to."

Supervisors also reviewed their own budget and discussed pulling \$50,000 from contributions to Lee County Economic Development Group.

Folluo started the conversation at asking to pull \$100,000 from the budget and moving \$50,000 into county economic stimulation funds. Folluo said the LCEDG is on their second five-year funding campaign and set a five year goal of \$1.5 million.

"That funding comes in over five years and, quite frankly, some people don't always pay. And I think



PFLUG Lee County should always be involved in economic development, but to what level is my only question," Folluo said.

Matt Pflug said originally that the LCEDG was at some point supposed to be self-sustaining. He also noted that the group recently parted ways with former executive director Joe Steil.

"I'd like to know more about why he's no longer with the group," Pflug said. If they cut \$130,000 in salary, maybe we should cut our contribution that much."

Supervisor Rick Larkin said he thought the elimination was a budget issue and a cost savings. He said the contribution should remain the same because the LCEDG is doing good work.

"If they cut that for cost

"I'd like to know more about why he's no longer with the group. If they cut \$130,000 in salary, maybe we should cut our contribution that much."

-Matt Pflug, Lee County Supervisor

savings and we cut the budget, they didn't save anything," Larkin said. "I think we should leave it the same. This organization is working well and if you do it this year and then again next year, pretty soon you've got it down to nothing."

Supervisors Rich Harlow and Ron Fedler both agreed that the current contributions should be left in the budget. With three of the five thinking it should stay the same, Pflug and Folluo agreed to leave it in the preliminary budget.

Also in the budget is county staff salaries. Lee County Auditor Denise Fraise and Recorder Nancy Booten both advocated for their staffs to go from 35 hours to 40 hours. Cur-

rently the Mental Health, County Attorney and Secondary Roads departments' staffs all work 40 hours, but the rest of the staffs work 35 hours.

Booten said the employee classifications between those departments and hers are the exact same, but the employees in the other departments make more money.

"That's not fair. It's just not fair. We have the work to do and my staff will work 40 hours. If you're not going to do that, then everyone should go back to 35 hours across the board," Booten said.

Another budget strategy session was set for Monday, Jan. 28 at 2 p.m.. The budget has to go through a public hearing and certification by mid March.

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