



Pen City Current

Thursday, March 21, 2019 | 7 pages | Volume 3 • Issue 77

City gets update on Hwy. 61 rehab project

SHIPO guidelines could slow project if artifacts found

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A representative from the engineering firm overseeing the rehabilitation of Highway 61 through Fort Madison said if everything goes to schedule, the first phase of the project could

be completed by November.

Tim Cutsforth, a project manager for HR Green, told the Fort Madison City Council at its regular meeting Tuesday, that some miscommunication and delays between the State Historical Preservation Office and the Iowa Department of Transportation have continued to push the work schedule back.

“SHIPO is a very big player in this project,” Cutsforth told the council.

“But we’re very late in the schedule at this point. If the DOT allows us back in the bid letting schedule,

we’re looking at a July 16 letting date. If the work were to begin shortly after that, we would be looking at November for completion,” Cutsforth said.

The east end of the project goes through some historical Fort Madison property where the original fort used to stand and historical officials believe the project could possibly unearth historical items.

The project is funded with the money the city received from the state to take over the maintenance

See ROAD, page 7

LCEDG capital campaign hits \$1.4M



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

LCEDG Chief Operating Officer Dennis Fraise gives an update on the economic development group’s efforts and capital campaign Wednesday morning at Quality Inn and Suites.

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – The Lee County Economic Development Group fed about 20 people breakfast Wednesday morning and updated them on how a recent fundraising campaign had shaken out.

Dennis Fraise, Chief Operating Officer, told those in attendance the group’s second five-year fundraising campaign has surpassed the \$1.4 million mark.

The campaign generates operating funds for the LCEDG through 2023. The funds are a combination of private and public contributions.

The cities of Keokuk and Fort Madison are currently contributing \$25,000 each annually and Lee County

Supervisors add another \$200,000 annually. All three entities have reduced contributions in the past two years.

“We currently have 52 investors and we’ve seen \$394,000 in new contributions to this campaign,” Fraise said.

Dana Millard, the group’s Economic Development Project Developer said the group is fully involved in helping existing businesses, attracting new business, and trying to fill skills gaps that have county manufacturers looking for employees.

“We’re working hard to help create a pipeline of employees and remove the bottlenecks that are present

See BREAKFAST, page 5



Beside The Point

Chuck Vandenberg,
Pen City Current - Editor

Emotions high on school bond vote

Tony Baxter told me he doesn’t seek out the media. He said he got burned a couple years back and tries to stay away from the press. After a couple different times of trying to reach him for one article or another, I had no trouble believing that when I finally had a chance to talk with him on Tuesday.

We’ve all heard by now that he pulled the Baxter Foundation’s funding for 2019 and possibly further into the future because of the Fort Madison Community School District’s decision last fall to go with Carl A. Nelson out of Burlington as construction manager if the April 2 bond vote passes to build a new PreK-3rd grade elementary school next to the middle school on Bluff Road.

The district needs 60 percent plus one vote to break ground on the new school that Superintendent Erin Slater said would be operational by 2021.

I asked Tony what he would say to the people that say this is sour grapes.

“What do I say... ? Am I upset that I didn’t get the project... Yep.”

Baxter called the decision a let down and wasteful spending. He said he offered a program that would have cost less and resulted in tax dollars staying in the community, not to mention potential donations to upgrade fields at the Sports Complex to be high school compliant to solve some of the athletic facility issues at

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Obituaries/For the Record

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

03/19/19 – 1:10 a.m. – Fort Madison police arrested Sonya Lynn Daniels, 41, of Fort Madison in the 1600 block of Avenue M on a warrant for contempt of court. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
 03/19/19 – 4:24 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a shoplifter in the 4800 block of Avenue O.
 03/20/19 – 8:56 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1100 block of 48th Street.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

03/19/19 – 2:18 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Jason Tod Willits, 28, of Fort Madison, at the corner of Ninth Street and Avenue G, on a charges of assault with injury on a law enforcement officer/others, and interference with official acts. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
 03/19/19 – 6:20 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Joyce Lee Boley, 37, of Keokuk, at the

sheriff's office on a warrant for failure to appear. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
 03/19/19 – 8:07 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Layne Jonathan Daskalos, 19, of Hamilton, Ill., on charges of possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of a controlled substance. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
 03/19/19 – 8:15 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested a 16-year-old juvenile male from Carthage, Ill., in the 3300 block of Hwy. 61 on a charge of possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was released to a parent.
 03/19/19 – 9:30 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested a 13-year-old juvenile male from Fort Madison at 2855 Hwy. 103 on a charge of domestic assault with bodily harm. He was taken to the Juvenile Detention Center to await a court hearing.
Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Key Club holding 50th anniversary event

Former club and Kiwanis members invited to attend

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – The longest running service club at Fort Madison High School is turning 50. The Fort Madison Key Club began at Fort Madison High School in 1969 and the students currently in the program are holding a 50th anniversary celebration to honor all past and present members as well as Fort Madison Kiwanis members. The event will be held at the high school on Sunday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the media center.

Join us for the celebration of *50 Years of Key Club* at Fort Madison High School

March 24, 2019
2pm- 4pm (or end)
Fort Madison High School Library

Original Group of 1969

We invite all past members of our organization and Kiwanis members as well!

Raffle and baskets to support local groups and charities!
to RSVP Call 319-372-1862 and ask for Sarah Kohl

2017 Group of Key Clubbers

2019 Key club member Zina Johnstun said the anyone connected to the Key Club, which is a sponsored by the Fort Madison Kiwanis, and Kiwanians themselves are encouraged to attend. "We're inviting all the past members of the organization and Kiwanis

members as well," she said. "We are having several raffles that include automobile theme, paper-yourself theme, Starbucks theme, and Family Video themed baskets." Proceeds from the groups will go to help support local charities in-

cluding the Fort Madison Food Pantry. Joe Bowen, a member of the 1969 original Key Club, will be a speaker at the event as will former Fort Madison High School physical Education teacher Ken Steeples. Snacks and refreshments will be provided.

DEATH NOTICES

WENDY SIMMONS

Wendy Simmons, 48, of Fort Madison, died on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at her home. King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory is assisting the family.

GARY FROST

Gary R. Frost, 77, of Fort Madison, died on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at his home. King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory is assisting the family.

Lee County Health Department Hospice Volunteer Training

April 2 - April 23, 2019
4 Tuesday Evenings
6:00pm-9:00pm
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Pen City Current
Founded in 2016



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Opinion

Baxter move impacts youth, bond issue

VOTE - Continued from Page 1

FMHS.

To hinder the youth in order to upset the voting booth is a move probably only Baxter could make. When you've given for decades to a school that goes outside the area for a large project, for whatever reasons, your consternation is outside our judgment.

But it leaves a bad taste in our mouth for sure. Not unlike the one Baxter probably had last fall when hearing his company didn't win the project.

We don't know what dollar value would have been attached to the Foundation donations in 2019. We don't have the right to assume any. We don't know what programs are going to be hurt. Inevitably, something, and more importantly someone, is going to suffer.

We're not entitled to be upset with Baxter because he was funding the Foundation out of his own pocket, yet we find ourselves fighting that instinct. That's goofy behavior modification, but no one's entitled to someone else's philanthropy. Or is that how far we've come?

There are many families in Fort Madison that give... and give... and give. Names like Baxter, Pothitakis, Denning, Scoville, Mohrfeld, Rashid come quickly to mind. But many...many others do as well, and some don't even want their name out there.

It's our experience from being around these people that they give because they feel a greater purpose and sense of community... and they've cultivated resources to be able to give back. We think the district erred in not seeing that same sense of community. It was a tight vote 4-3. And the current board probably would have voted 4-3 the other way.

Did Baxter's pull the right arrow from the quiver? From the reaction to our story, it certainly hit its

target.

Baxter said he sincerely hopes a new school gets built, but wants this referendum to fail because there are better programs out there that can benefit the community and possibly cost less than the one in front of the board.

Aside from Baxter's decision, which will effect some votes and some not, our issue is not with the Foundation decision. Our issue is a matter of transparency.

The district is saying the tax impact of the bond is 16 cents per \$1,000 of taxable valuation. A closer look at the district's levy worksheet will show that 16 cents is what you will be paying over and above what you paid last year to the school district. A steal for a new school, but not totally transparent.

The actual tax impact of the bond is \$2.70/\$1,000 taxable value. That's called a debt service levy and that levy of property tax dollars is used to pay back the bonds over 20 years. The debt service for \$30 million on your tax bill will be \$2.70 of the district's proposed \$14.60 2019 fiscal year levy. If the bond issue doesn't pass, that debt service levy will not be included in the approved budget.

Telling the average homeowner they are going to pay just under \$9 per year and get a new building is disingenuous to the district tax payers, in our opinion. Actually you're going to pay \$9 more per year to get a new building than you paid in fiscal year 2018. Again...a steal at twice the price.

Granted, the district didn't have a \$30 million debt service levy attached to the 2018 levy, but due to the increased valuation in the county, state mandated formulas pushed the district's operational levy down this year to around \$11.90.

Building the debt service back into the picture



pushes the levy back up to \$14.60. So in plain vanilla language, the average homeowner is going to pay \$2.70/\$1,000 of taxable value yearly to build that school, but because of increased valuations to the county, the total increase in the district levy would be just 16 cents per \$1,000.

Pen City Current wrote an article on the levy on March 3 that explains this in greater detail. Those numbers were verified by school officials before the story ran.

We can't wait much longer to get this done, but we have to be transparent. People have a right to know the reality of what they're paying for and how much they are paying. This school needs to be built. Our current and future students need it to go up...whether it's Nelson or eventually Baxter, or someone else who builds it, it needs to go up.

Absentee voting is on going. Voting is taking place Friday before Dinner Theater from 12:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Fort Madison High School and on March 29 from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Foggy Conference Room at Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Oh...and you can vote at the polls on April 2, too... but that's quickly becoming Beside the Point.



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From the Front/Health News

LCEDG trying to clear workforce hurdles

BREAKFAST - Continued from Page 1

now," she said.

She presented a chart that showed in 2013 45 students participated in STEM and career-oriented programming by LCEDG in partnership with other regional economic development groups and area industries.

"Last year that had grown to 3,797 and this year we're shooting for 4,000. We're about half way through this year's programs and we've had 2,150 kids participate," she said.

Fraise said the Bridges out of Poverty program that is building steam in Lee County will be another way to help remove some of the hurdles facing the county, which is third in the state in generational poverty.

He said the workforce situation continues to be an obstacle and it takes everyone to get the ball rolling.

"These next 10 years could be the most challenging as far as workforce, that we've seen," he said.

Dr. Michael Ash, president of Southeastern Community College, said efforts need to be enhanced to create a shorter path to trade certifications. He said the college will continue to work with LCEDG and its partners and area educators to try to figure out what that looks like.

"We need to focus on certifications that aren't just a piece of paper, but are recognized nationally," he said.

Flu hitting Lee County as season winds down

From Lee County Health Department

LEE COUNTY - As Iowa is experiencing widespread flu activity, Lee County Health Department encourages taking preventive steps to protect you and your loved ones from the flu. Influenza or "the flu", is a contagious illness caused by an influenza virus. Cases of the flu vary from mild to severe, with signs and symptoms appearing suddenly and generally include fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, and head and body aches. Children may also experience nausea and vomiting. Serious cases of the flu may require hospital-stays and can even lead to death especially among vulnerable populations. Young children (under 5), pregnant women, adults over 65 years of age, residents of nursing homes, and individuals with compromised immune systems are more likely to experience

severe cases of the flu.

The flu virus is passed from person to person through talking, sneezing and coughing, and an individual can still pass the virus on to others while they may feel no symptoms themselves. The virus can also be passed from individuals approximately six feet apart. Practicing good personal hygiene habits can help limit exposure to the virus, however, the best protection against the flu is the flu shot.

In addition to getting your flu shot, there are other things you can do to help further protect yourself, family, friends, and co-workers. For individuals with children under the age of 5, it is especially important to keep you and your family away from people who are sick. We also encourage good hygiene by covering the nose and mouth when coughing and

See FLU, page 7

the classifieds

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All applications should be directed to Lee County Conservation, 2652 HWY 61 Montrose, IA 52639. Deadline to apply is 4:30 p.m. Friday, March 29, 2019. Applications are available online at www.leecounty.org.

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COMMUNITY GARDEN COORDINATOR NEEDED

RSVP/United Way of the Great River Region is seeking a Community Garden Coordinator

Do you like to garden and work outdoors? Do you like to plan, plant and harvest food?

We are seeking an individual this Spring who will plan, plant, cultivate, harvest and lead other volunteers in our Community Garden (garden is located at 2606 Avenue L, Fort Madison, Iowa behind Hy-Vee).

Must enjoy working outside, gardening and harvesting. Will direct garden activities with other volunteers and may require some bending, stooping and lifting of 10 lbs. or less...Times: 1 hour, 2 times per week.

If interested and for more information, please call – Tammy at 319-372-8043.

United Way of the Great River Region supports non-profit organizations and agencies that provide programs addressing needs in health, education and financial stability to residents in Clark, Hancock, and Lee Counties.

United Way of the Great River Region serves all of Lee, Hancock, and Clark Counties. All donations are tax-deductible.



United Way of the Great River Region

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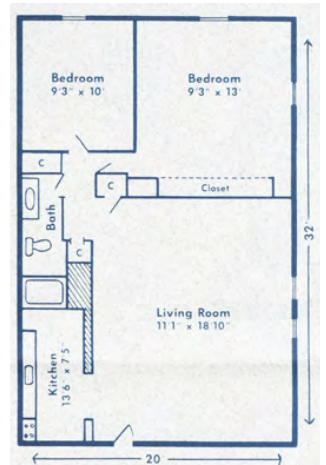
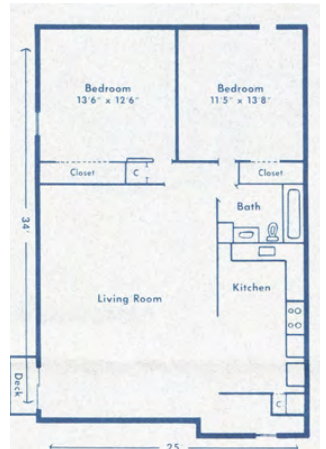


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Thank you for reading!



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Lee County News/Weather

Council approves TAP grant for PORT Phase 3

ROAD - Continued from Page 1

of the highway within the city limits. The city has broken the project down into segments, but over time those segments have changed.

The state turned over jurisdiction of the corridor to the city in exchange for \$13.9 million dollars when the bypass was constructed. Plans included redoing several intersections including the 27th Street and Avenue L intersection, which was completed in 2018. Plans also included redoing the intersection at Avenue O and Ortho Road.

Original plans called for four segments starting on the west side of the city and working east. However, plans changed and the city decided to go from the east and tackle 2nd Street to 6th Street, moving progressively west. The city had originally planned to have the entire stretch rehabbed by 2027.

Cutsforth said SHIPO reps will be on hand as the old highway is pulled up and crews start to peel off the subsurface in case any historical artifacts are discovered.

He said if anything were to be found and it was nothing that required additional searching or expanded digging, costs could be kept to a minimum, but if something is found and the project is stopped to make a more comprehensive search, the cost would be on the city to bear.

Public Works Director Larry Driscoll said that cost will be around \$25,000 minimally, but could exceed \$100,000 if extensive digs are conducted or required.

Cutsforth said if the city can't get into the July bid letting, the project will be pushed out until the spring and another year and will take about five months to complete.

In other action, the council:

- approved a federal aid agreement for a Transportation Alternatives Program, or TAP grant, to help finance Phase 3 of the PORT Trail project which will connect the west end of Phase 2 with Fort Madison Community Hospital. The council also approved an agreement with Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission for \$5,000 to perform administrative work on the TAP grant.

- approved a first reading to amend the definition of "Rental Housing Unit" in city code allowing inspections of some non-occupied properties that aren't currently being inspected as defined in city code.

- approved a first reading of an ordinance amending plumbing permit fees under Chapter 2 of the city code.

Conservation District holds public events this week

PCC STAFF

LEE COUNTY – Lee County Conservation is hosting three more free public programs this week.

One event is an evening prairie burn at Wilson Lake starting at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 21.

During this program, the public will learn more about fire as a habitat management tool and see how a control burn is conducted. Event goers should watch the LCCB's Facebook page as this event could be cancelled due to changing weather conditions.

The second program will be a woodcock walk starting at the Lee County Conservation Center at 6:45 p.m. on Friday, March 22. A LCCB Naturalist will

teach event goers about these mysterious critters with a short presentation inside, then head to the prairie behind the conservation center to look and listen for birds. Attendees willing to sit or lay quietly in the grass are likely to have the best seats to the sky dance show. Participants are encouraged to

bring a mat or pad to sit on out in the prairie.

The final event is a director's hike starting at 9:30 a.m. at Wilson Lake

on Saturday, March 23. The hike will be led by the LCCB Director.

5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

THU 21 Mar



Clear
High– 46.4° F | Low – 38.5° F

FRI 22 Mar



Clear
High– 47.5° F | Low – 32.3° F

SAT 23 Mar



Clear
High– 44.1° F | Low – 38.1° F

SUN 24 Mar



Light Rain
High– 52.9° F | Low – 44.7° F

MON 25 Mar



Moderate Rain
High– 55.9° F | Low – 50.2° F

[OpenWeatherMap](#)

Flu symptoms should be reported to physicians

FLU - Continued from Page 5

sneezing and routinely washing hands. Regularly clean and disinfecting commonly touched household objects such as door knobs, tv remotes, etc. are also great methods.

Flu symptoms typically begin to appear anywhere from one to four days after the virus has entered the body. This means an individual can spread the flu for several days before becoming aware that they are sick. Once sick, the flu can still be passed onto others for an additional five to seven days, and even longer for children and individuals with weakened immune systems. If you have the flu, check with your health care provider when it is okay for you to return to work, school, or other public places to reduce the spread of flu to others.

If flu-like symptoms appear, contact a doctor right away. Complications from the flu can be serious and can include pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections, among others. Although there is no cure for the flu, antiviral medications are available for certain types of flu. These medications are available for both children and adults and can lessen the severity of the case of the flu or shorten the duration of the illness. These medications are most-effective when started as soon as possible, so immediately discuss with a doctor if these treatments may be right for you or your family.

Help contain the flu and remember the three C's- Cover your coughs and sneezes, Clean your hands frequently, and Contain germs by staying home when ill.



IOWA LOTTERY WINNING NUMBERS

Lotto Drawings

Game	Draw Days	Sales Cutoff Time	Approx. Drawing Time
Lucky for Life®	Mon & Thu	8:30 pm	9:38 pm
Mega Millions®	Tues & Fri	8:59 pm	10:00 pm
Powerball®	Wed & Sat	8:59 pm	9:59 pm
Lotto America™	Wed & Sat	8:59 pm	10:00 pm
Pick 3 - Midday	Daily	Noon	12:20 pm
Pick 3 - Evening	Daily	9:40 pm	10:00 pm
Pick 4 - Midday	Daily	Noon	12:20 pm
Pick 4 - Evening	Daily	9:40 pm	10:00 pm



3/19
10 42 53 67 68
Mega Ball: 15
Megaplier: 3



3/19 MID-DAY
4 6 1
3/19 EVENING
4 5 0



3/19 MID-DAY
5 7 4 5
3/19 EVENING
4 5 8 7

Pen City Current encourages you to play responsibly.

Hello, Spring!

Spring silks, home decor, house plants, soaps, lotions, gift items, Jams/Salsas/Relishes, Fancy Favor Cookies, and Swed Coffee

HARVESTVILLE FARM MERCANTILE

Open Tu-F 10am-5pm & Saturdays 10am-2pm
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