



# Pen City Current

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## Local officials respond to Branstad's address

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

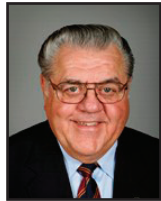
FORT MADISON - Elected officials in Lee County had different reactions to Gov. Terry Branstad's Condition of the State address Tuesday morning.

The 2017 legislative session got underway Monday morning and Gov. Branstad gave his annual speech on Tuesday morning drawing some criticism from Lee County's elected officials State Sen. Rich Taylor, D-Mt. Pleasant and State Rep. Jerry Kearns, D-Keokuk. It was Branstad's final address on Tuesday to the Iowa legislature before continuing the process of becoming the next U.S. Ambassador to China.

Taylor, who serves as ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, also serves on the Agriculture Committee, Labor & Business Relations Committee, and Administrative Rules Review Committee, said the Governor seemed to be sending mixed messages in the address.

"It seemed as though the governor was speaking out of both sides of his mouth," Taylor said. "(Branstad) said government is living within its means and then turns around and says most states are pressed with debt, but we have a surplus. Then he says we're going to be adjusting our budget because he's overspent by \$113 million. I don't know how that equates to living within its means. It just doesn't add up. Something's going wrong there."

Kearns also places the blame for the shortfall at the feet of the governor.



KEARNS

"That shortfall of \$113 million, in my opinion, is due to policies and legislation of the governor's party," Kearns said. "Now the coffers are going to be a direct target of that party. His party has given so much in tax credits that we had a surplus of \$109 million in 2014 that is now at \$0. And those tax credits are not directed at everyday Iowans but for the most part they were directed at corporate interests. I'm not surprised we have a shortfall."

Taylor and Kearns are both also disappointed at the focus on the governor's proposal to target all funding for agencies conducting or involved in abortions in the state, specifically Planned Parenthood.

"I already have a bill in the judiciary committee from Senate Republicans to defund Planned Parenthood," Taylor said. "Branstad spoke on that as well saying no groups will get funding that perform or help women obtain abortions. So now we're gonna look at having unsafe abortions in Iowa? Defunding people that are going to help you with your health care - that's not really a good idea."

Kearns said he was concerned with that discussion as well.

"I'm not in agreement with removing funding for Planned Parenthood. The governor specifically mentioned repealing all funding for anything to do with abortions and actually funds for Planned Parenthood don't go to abortions, but go to health care for women."

Another hot topic of the upcoming session will be health insurance for public employees. "Basically what (Branstad) said needs to happen is the state needs to have one health



GOVERNOR TERRY BRANSTAD

insurance plan for all government employees, not just state, but government - city, county, and schools but he failed to say how that would be negotiated..he didn't elaborate. But we think he wants to remove it from collective bargaining so a new health plan would be similar to the IPERS plan. But Republicans have said the IPERS is a bad system that doesn't work. Now they want to model a government health plan after a plan that doesn't work?"

Kearns said pulling health care negotia-

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**SPORTS**

### HTC girls fall to VB

PEN CITY STAFF

KEOSAUQUA - Shooting woes continue to plague the Holy Trinity girls varsity squad.

The Lady Crusaders lost to Van Buren Tuesday night 48-30 falling to 5-7 on the season and failed to have a player score in double figures.

Emily Box, Brett Schneider and Maggie Walker all had six points for Holy Trinity. Ali Randolph had 5, Taylor Boeding had three points, while Ashlyn Haas and Madison Mohrfeld each had two points.

HTC only got to the free throw line 6 times in the game converting just three and connected on just one 3-pointer by Boeding in the opening minutes of the game.

The Crusaders never had a lead in the game and were down 19-9 at the end of the first quarter, but outscored Van Buren 7-5 in the second quarter going into halftime down by nine. But the Lady Warriors put the game out of reach in the 3rd period outscoring HTC 12-4 and 11-8 in the final period.

Holy Trinity hosts WACO Friday.

## FMPD investigating Saturday morning armed robbery

PCC STAFF

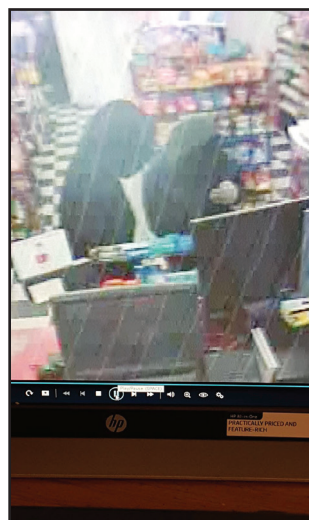
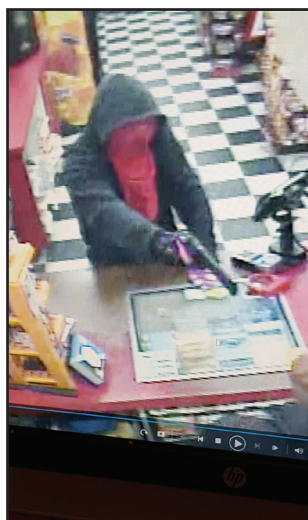
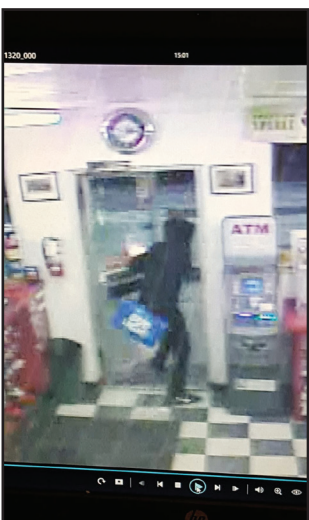
FORT MADISON - According to the Facebook page belonging to Fort Madison Police Department, on Saturday, Jan. 7, at approximately 3:00 a.m., three individuals entered the Garner Oil Co. (Phillips 66 station) at 2236 Avenue L in Fort Madison and robbed the clerk at gunpoint. They took an undis-

closed amount of cash, cigarettes, and a case of beer.

The suspects were wearing masks and hoodies to disguise themselves and their identity is not known at this time. They fled on foot towards the area around Hy-Vee. The three suspects appeared to be males, two appeared to be tall and thin one was shorter

and stockier. They were wearing black sweat pants, stocking masks, and hoodies pulled up over their heads.

The Fort Madison Police Department is vigorously investigating this case and if anyone has any knowledge of this incident to contact the Fort Madison Police Department at (319)372.2525.



Surveillance photos from Fort Madison Police Department Facebook page

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## From the Front/For the Record

# Kearns: Democrat party in perilous position this year

**SPEECH** - Continued from Page 1

tions off the bargaining table is bad for Iowans.

“That would be a statewide plan that everyone would subscribe to. He would take that off the bargaining table and it would not be subject to bargaining which I would certainly oppose,” Kearns said.

“My party’s in a perilous place this year. We don’t have a majority in either house. Some of the things that have been passed in the House previously they’ve been able to stop in the Senate, but that’s probably not going to happen this time.”

But Kearns did say there were some things that he was happy to hear about in the speech, such as efforts to keep renewable energy tax credits in the picture and a focus on reducing accidents due to texting and driving.

“In his proposed budget for the coming fiscal year I was pleased to hear comments on alternative energy production. We’re a leader there - particularly wind energy and that impacts our area,” Kearns said.” And his comments on

distracted driving are reasonable. He’s looking for stricter measures on that because increased traffic deaths can be attributed to texting and driving.”

Taylor said the governor is proposing an additional \$140M in education spending, taking the state’s contribution to Iowa schools to \$3.2 billion annually.

“That amounts to about a 2% allowable growth,” Taylor said. Taylor is on record as saying he would introduce or support a 6% allowable growth bill.

“I hope schools don’t get their hopes up and plan their budget on 2% for the next two years because I don’t think they’re getting it. I think the governor’s purposefully misstating that.”

Taylor also questioned how the governor can offer just 2% growth, which Taylor said is break even at best, and then look at a mandate for all schools to provide a computer science class as part of the curriculum.

“I’m sure that will all come out as we go through this process,” Taylor said.

## For the Record

### Fort Madison Police Report

01/09/2017 - 1:07 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 900 block of Riverview Drive.  
 01/09/2017 - 1:28 p.m. - Fort Madison police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 1900 block of Avenue D.  
 01/09/2017 - 2:19 p.m. - Fort Madison police responded to a property damage accident at the intersection of 31st St. and Avenue O.  
 01/10/2017 - 9:15 a.m. - Fort Madison police responded to a report of a stolen vehicle in the 700 block of 34th Place.  
 01/10/2017 - 10:00 a.m. - Fort Madison police arrested Jennifer Elizabeth Hershberger, 30, Fort Madison at the Lee County

Probation office on warrant for probation violation. She was taken to the Lee County Correctional Center and held.  
 01/10/2017 - 11:56 a.m. - Fort Madison police responded to a report of a burglary in the 2800 block of Avenue P.  
 01/10/2017 - 6:06 p.m. - Fort Madison police responded to a report of a burglary in the 700 block of Avenue E.  
 1/10/2017 - 8:18 p.m. - Fort Madison police arrested Danny David Black, 50, of Fort Madison on warrants for failure to appear on driving while barred, failure to appear on 4th-degree theft, a warrant for 2nd-degree theft, and warrants for burglary x6, theft x5, and possession of burglar tools. He was taken to the Lee County Correctional Center and held.

### Lee County Sheriff's Report

01/06/2017 - 7:03 a.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a two-vehicle accident on Hwy 61 northbound. A vehicle driven by Toby Allen Gale, 19, of Keokuk collided with the rear end of a vehicle driven by Bob J. Hofstede, 57, of Phoenix, Ariz. Gale's vehicle was traveling behind Hofstede and collided with the rear of his trailer. No injuries were reported and no citations were issued at the scene. Gale's vehicle was towed from the scene.  
 01/06/2017 - 4:04 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to one-vehicle rollover accident on Peach Orchard Rd. Desiray May Hunkepillar, 16, of Montrose swerved to avoid an animal in the road and lost control on an icy shoulder and ran into the ditch where the vehicle rolled and knocked over a utility phone box. She was transported to Fort Madison Community Hospital. The vehicle was towed from the scene. It should be noted that a criminal charge is merely an accusation and those listed above are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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