



Pen City Current

Wednesday, July 31, 2019 | 8 pages | Volume 3 • Issue 168

City finalizing plans for inaugural cruises

Volunteer sign-up set for Thursday at Partners office

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – With the inaugural docking of American Cruise Lines in Fort Madison one week away, city and business officials are busy getting things buttoned up.

Things have changed a little since the city and cruise

line inked a 20-year lease agreement for the cruise line to dock on Fort Madison's river front.

City Tourism Director Jean Peiton said now passengers on the shorter 6-hour port-of-call will have two land excursion options to choose from and the longer 8.5 hour port-of-call will have four options. The first arrival will be Tuesday, Aug. 6 at 8 a.m.

The cruise line will bring three different boats into Fort Madison 14 times this year with five in August, five in September, and four in October with the final boat docking on Oct. 16. There are back-to-back stops on Sept. 18 and 19th. Beginning next year, 30 cruise

docks are planned during the cruising season

The six hour layovers arrive at 8 a.m. at the end of the pier and depart at 2 p.m., while the 8.5 hour stays arrive at 9 a.m. and depart again at 5:30 p.m.

The cruise line will charter Trailways buses to move the passengers on the excursions, but Peiton said they are also negotiating with the schools to possibly use a school bus to shuttle people around the city for drops and pickups.

"When they're coming in on the 8-2 two excursions

See **CRUISES**, page 8



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

RiverFest 2019 worker Brodi Grens works on lighting under the east side beer tent with the Morhfeld Electric Main Stage in the background Tuesday night on the Fort Madison river front. The annual music festival and carnival starts Thursday night. See Wednesday's pencitycurrent.com for a feature on this year's newest family attraction, Kachunga & the Alligator.

Trade issues prompt USDA payment program

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Signup opened Monday for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP), a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program to assist farmers who continue to suffer from damages because of unjustified trade retaliation from foreign nations. Through MFP, USDA will provide up to \$14.5 billion in direct payments to impacted producers, part of a broader trade relief package announced in late July. The sign-up period runs through Dec. 6.

"Our team at USDA reflected on what worked well

and gathered feedback on last year's program to make this one even stronger and more effective for farmers. Our farmers work hard, are the most productive in the world, and we aim to match their enthusiasm and patriotism as we support them," said Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue.

MFP payments will be made to producers of certain non-specialty and specialty crops as well as dairy and

See **TRADE**, page 4

Driver shortage causes school busing changes

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Fort Madison school officials are revamping busing plans for the upcoming school year due to a shortage of bus drivers.

A letter was published on the district's Facebook page on Monday indicating the district will fall back on Iowa Code that stipulates transportation be offered for elementary or middle school students living two or more miles from their respective schools and high school students living more than three miles from the high school.

The restrictions also apply to day care centers. According to the letter, "A family must first qualify for district transportation before qualifying for transportation to a daycare facility."

A state licensed daycare facility must be 2.0 miles away from an elementary or middle school and 3.0 miles away from a high school in order for district transportation to be provided to qualified families.

"We understand and are sensitive to the recent transportation challenges," Dr. Erin Slater wrote in an email this Tuesday morning.

"Prior staffing levels have allowed the district to drop below state code transportation guidelines and use 1.8 miles instead of 2.0 miles for K-8 and drop below 3.0 for high school for past years. Current staffing levels no longer allow the district to drop below state code guidelines."

Repeated attempts to reach district Transportation Director Richard Hand were unsuccessful Tuesday morning.

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Obituaries/For the Record

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

07/29/19 – 1:42 p.m.
 – Fort Madison Police arrested David Robert Clark Sparrow, 40, of Keokuk, in the 900 block of Avenue H, on a charge of public intoxication and disorderly conduct. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
 07/29/19 – 7:21 a.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1300 block of 20th Street.
 07/29/19 – 9:20 a.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 2600 block of Avenue L.
 07/29/19 – 5:55 p.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 1200

block 33rd Street.
 07/29/19 – 9:07 p.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 2800 block of Avenue K.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

07/29/19 – 9:52 a.m.
 – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Randall Dean Sommerfield, 56, of Fort Madison, at the sheriff's office, on a judgment hold. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

07/29/19 – Fort Madison Firefighters responded to two medical calls and one false alarm.

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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OBITUARIES

MARGARET JEAN STRODER SWARTZBAUGH

Margaret "Peggy" Jean Stroder Swartzbaugh, 76, of Hamilton, IL passed away Tuesday, July 30, 2019 at her sister's home in Keokuk.



SWARTZBAUGH

She was born on August 24, 1943 in St. Louis, MO. She was united in marriage to Duane Swartzbaugh on August 25, 1977 in Colchester, IL. He preceded her in death on June 7, 2013.

Peggy worked as a private investigator in St. Louis, MO. She also worked as a day care provider and was an instructor at the Red Cross. She belonged to the Order of Eastern Star. Peggy volunteered for the Shriners, special needs prom and the special needs rodeo.

She enjoyed cake decorating, painting, doing puzzles and crocheting. She loved flowers and lighthouses. Peggy also like to cause mischief in hopes to make people smile.

She is survived by one daughter, Vicki Fountain (Pat) of Hamilton, IL, her kidlens, Parker and Faith, two sisters, Vickie Abston of Keokuk and Debbie Quinn of Montrose, and several special friends, Shawn, Wanda, Gretchen, and Catrina.

She was preceded in death by her husband and her in-laws, Mildred and Max Swartzbaugh.

Visitation will be held Thursday from 5 – 7 p.m. at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk, IA with the family meeting with friends at that time. In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to Vickie Fountain.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com. The Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk is in charge of arrangements.

OBITUARIES

RICHARD ALLEN WHALEY

Richard Allen Whaley, 82, of Keokuk, IA passed away Monday, July 29, 2019 at 7:10 p.m., at Mississippi Valley Healthcare in Keokuk.



WHALEY

Born May 18, 1937 in Mt. Pleasant, IA, Richard was the son of Herman and Lucille Parker Whaley. On July 3, 1960 he was united in marriage to Nora MarScine Holland at St. Paul United Church of Christ in Keokuk.

Richard proudly served with pride in the Iowa National Guard from 1954-1964.

Richard was a gifted and professional ceramic tile setter and was a member of the National Tile Contractors Association. He also enjoyed being employed by his brother-in-law, Don Holland at Holland Trucking. He was a faithful member of the New Testament Christian Church who was an extended loving family to him.

He is survived by one son, Mark of Keokuk, two daughters, Melissa Neff Murfreesboro, TN and Melody Koontz (David) of Knoxville, TX, four grandchildren, Jared and Alexa of Murfreesboro, TN, and Trevor and Courtney of Knoxville, TN. Also surviving are his former wife, MarScine, special friend, Todd Marshall and his special "buddy", Mike Kline, two sisters, Janice Sinclair of New London, IA and Joyce Stevens of Burlington, IA and several nieces and nephews.

Preceding Richard in death was his son-in-law, Alan of Murfreesboro, TN, were his parents and a sister, Pat Richenberger and a brother, Gary Whaley, known affectionately as his "Little Brother".

Graveside services with military rites will be held at 10 a.m., Thursday at the Oakland Cemetery in Keokuk with Ray Miller and Todd Marshall officiating. A procession line will form at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk and leave for the cemetery at 9:45 a.m.

There will be no visitation. In lieu of flowers, memorials have been established at New Testament Christian Church or Friends of the Keokuk Animal Shelter (FO-KAS).

Online condolences may be left for the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.



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Pen City Current

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Obituaries/Lee County News

OBITUARIES

LYNLEY EUGENE DUKE

Lynley Eugene "Earl" Duke, 61 of Keokuk, IA died Friday, July 26, 2019 at his home.

He was born January 12, 1958 in Orlando, FL the son of Lewis Duke Sr., and Dorothy (Branson) Garner. On November 10, 2011 he was united in marriage to Peggy Shinn on the Island of St. Lucia, West Indies. She survives.

Other survivors include one step-daughter, Brittne Jenkins (Rigo) of Waverly, IA, one step-son, Charles "C.J." Jenkins III (Andrea) of Williamsburg, VA, one grandson, Rodrigo Xavier Gasnarez IV of Waverly, IA, one granddaughter, Olivia Jenkins of Williamsburg, VA, two brothers, Larry Duke (Clarice) of Apopka, FL and Layne Duke of Old Town, FL, one sister, Tawny Lamb of Steinhatchee, FL, four sisters-in-law, Connie Davis (Moe), Barb Kutzner, and Debbie Pezley (John) all of Keokuk and Tammy Wilson (Steve) of Fort Wayne, IN, two brothers-in-law, Paul Shinn (Alice) and Monk Shinn both of Keokuk, and friends, Craig and Cindy Blamire of Titusville, FL.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother, Lewis (Ty) Duke, Jr., brothers-in-law, P.W. Lamb, Timothy Shinn, Don Shinn, Tony Schmitt, Ron Kutzner, sisters-in-law, Judy Schmitt and Marjorie Duke and mother and father-in-law, Lloyd and Lois Shinn.

Earl was a veteran of the United States Army and proudly served his country from 1975-1978.

He had been employed by the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union No. 803 as a welder for twenty-three years.

Earl enjoyed buying old trucks and restoring them. He was a jack of all trades and would tinker on all types things around the house. He loved to snorkel and scuba dive. Earl never knew a stranger and was always willing to help others.

A memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m., Friday at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk, IA with Pastor Mike Shea officiating.

Visitation will be held after 1 p.m., Thursday at the funeral home with family meeting with friends from 6-8 p.m.

Memorials may be made to Keokuk Humane Society or to Keokuk Animal Services.

Online condolences may be left for the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

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Reynolds announces fall Future Ready Iowa summits

DES MOINES – Today, Gov. Reynolds announced 27 collaborative, public-private partnership events will be taking place to help Iowa build a skilled workforce for the future. From Sept. 4 to Nov. 1, 2019, Future Ready Iowa Employer Summits will be taking place across the state. A full schedule can be found here.

“My top priority is ensuring Iowans have the skills they need to succeed in a global economy driven by disruptive technology. Future Ready Iowa is vital for accomplishing that goal as well as meeting our job creators’ needs,” said Gov. Reynolds. “That’s why we’re hosting statewide Employer Summits for top business, community, and education leaders to collaborate, innovate, and ultimately, help Iowans thrive in cutting-edge careers.”

Each event will feature presentations about hiring and retraining practices, collaborating with community partners, and upskilling current employees. Employers, local business members, and educators are encouraged to attend. Iowa Workforce Development is partnering with the Iowa Association of Business and Industry and the Iowa Business Council to host the events across the state.

“Employer support and participation is absolutely essential to the success of Future Ready Iowa and ensuring we meet our goal of 70 percent of Iowans with postsecondary training or education by 2025,” said Director Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development. “The focus of

the summits is on employers and how they can leverage Future Ready Iowa to create and sustain its talent pipeline as well as educating them about all the different options they have to grow their skilled workforce, both internally and externally.”

“Iowa Association of Business and Industry members look forward to co-hosting these summits and learning about workforce solutions with local employers,” said President Michael Ralston, Iowa Association of Business and Industry. “We hope they will gain a new perspective about state resources that can help their business succeed.”

“Iowa Business Council members understand the critical nature of Future Ready Iowa’s success throughout the state,” said Executive Director Georgia Van Gundy, Iowa Business Council. “The Employer Summits will be a way for local businesses to learn about Future Ready Iowa programs and the best practices to address workforce challenges in the region.”

The events are of no cost to the attendees. Registration for upcoming events is now available at www.Future-ReadyIowa.gov.

If you are an employer interested in hosting a Future Ready Iowa Employer Summit this fall, please contact Shelly Evans, Iowa Workforce Development Executive Assistant, at shelly.evans@iwd.iowa.gov

RSVP looking for Bridges program volunteers

BY PCC STAFF

LEE COUNTY – RSVP/United Way of the Great River Region is seeking volunteers to fill several volunteer positions at Southeast Iowa Bridges out of Poverty Initiative Lee County

The open position requires; setting up of tables for the buffet evening meal, keeping it stocked, clearing off tables, and tear down at the end of the evening. This volunteer opportunity will run 12-18 weeks on Monday’s from 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.

If you are interested in learning more about this volunteer position, please call 319-372-8043 and ask for Tammy..

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Letter to the Editor/From the Front

Trade retaliation payments offered to offset losses

TRADE - Continued from Page 1

hog producers.

MFP payments will be made to producers of alfalfa hay, barley, canola, corn, crambe, dried beans, dry peas, extra-long staple cotton, flaxseed, lentils, long grain and medium grain rice, millet, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, rapeseed, rye, safflower, sesame seed, small and large chickpeas, sorghum, soybeans, sunflower seed, temperate japonica rice, triticale, upland cotton, and wheat.

MFP assistance for 2019 crops is based on a single county payment rate multiplied by a farm's total plantings to the MFP-eligible crops in aggregate in 2019. Those per acre payments are not dependent on which of those crops are planted in 2019. A producer's total payment-eligible plantings cannot exceed total 2018 plantings. View payment rates by county.

Dairy producers who were in business as of June 1, 2019, will receive a per hundredweight payment on production history, and hog producers will receive a payment based on the number of live hogs owned on a day selected by the producer between April 1 and May 15, 2019.

MFP payments will also be made to producers of almonds, cranberries, cultivated ginseng, fresh grapes, fresh sweet cherries, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts. Each specialty crop will receive a payment based on 2019 acres of fruit or nut bearing plants, or in the case of ginseng, based on harvested acres in 2019.

Payments will be made in up to three tranches, with the second and third tranches evaluated as market conditions and trade opportunities dictate. If conditions warrant, the second and third tranches will be made in

November and early January.

MFP payments are limited to a combined \$250,000 for non-specialty crops per person or legal entity. MFP payments are also limited to a combined \$250,000 for dairy and hog producers and a combined \$250,000 for specialty crop producers. However, no applicant can receive more than \$500,000. Eligible applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income (AGI) for tax years 2015, 2016, and 2017 of less than \$900,000, or 75 percent of the person's or legal entity's average AGI for those tax years must have been derived from farming and ranching. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

More information can be found on farmers.gov/mfp, including payment information and a program application.



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Chamber looking for help sprucing up riverfront

Good Afternoon!

The Fort Madison Chamber is coordinating a volunteer Community Beautification Day in an effort to spruce up visible areas prior to the first American Cruise Line ship docking on August 6. The target areas will be Riverview Park, Avenue H along Riverview, and Avenue G and will consist of picking up trash, planting flowers and removing weeds, sweeping sidewalks, removing debris from sidewalks and roads, as well as touching up some paint, to name a few.

The Beautification Day will be held on Monday, August 5th at 9:00 am with a meeting location of the Fort Madison Partners Office located at 614 9th Street. Duties will be assigned as people arrive. Gloves, trash bags, safety vests will be provided.

We are in need of flat shovels, weed eaters, step ladders, pruning sheers/clippers, brooms, rakes, leaf blowers or anything else you think we could use.

Please let us know if you're able to attend so that we can plan accordingly.

We are looking forward to the opportunity that American Cruise Lines has provided to us and we would like to show them that they made the right choice in Fort Madison!

Thank you,

Savanna Collier

5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

WED 31 Jul	Partly Cloudy High – 74.8° F Low – 60.4° F
THU 01 Aug	Overcast High– 74.6° F Low – 61.7° F
FRI 02 Aug	Overcast High– 77.1° F Low – 64.9° F
SAT 03 Aug	Clear Skies High – 78.3° F Low – 65.6° F
SUN 04 Aug	Light Rain High– 80.2° F Low – 67.8° F

[OpenWeatherMap](#)

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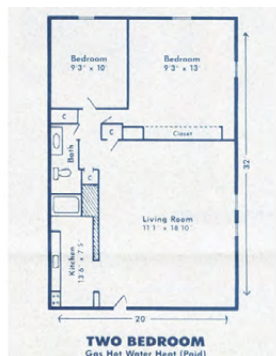
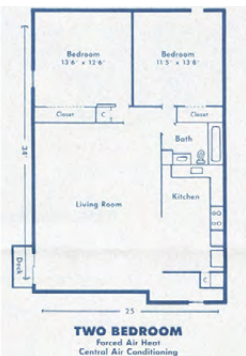
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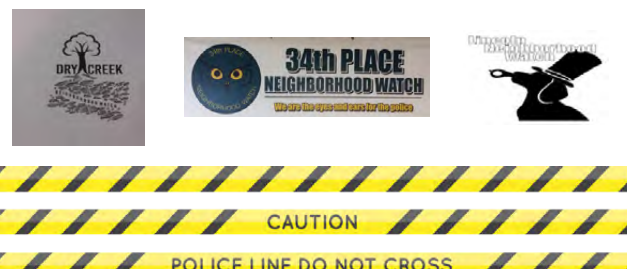
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Volunteers need to help with arrivals

CRUISES - Continued from Page 1

they can pick to go on two, and then they can also do their own thing. One of those we're working on is not concrete yet, but looks like it will be finalized, is going to the prison. The Old Fort is the one they will have given to them, but don't need the bus because that's right there," she said.

"When they're here for the longer 9 to 5:30 p.m stays they'll be offered four different excursions, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. They could typically pick any of the four."

Peiton said some of the options would be historic tours that would include the depot, a park-to-park excursion in the historical district, and getting a concept visit of the prison, but not the full tour as those four would be shorter excursions.

"We're still trying to square away of some of those and trying to get access to the jailhouse and the Lutheran Church where the Betsy Ross flag hangs. Places they can get off and stretch their legs, but not stay too long."

The city, along with other entities like the Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce, is working up a grand welcome for the first docking which could include dignitaries, a band, a cannon shot and welcoming groups.

Peiton said the city's trying to build things to keep the passengers local.

"They told us on conference call they were looking at disembarking and then going to Burlington and we certainly don't want that," she said. "And we don't see that happening. That's why we're so heavy into planning."

Peiton said Fort Madison Chamber coordinator Savanna Collier is working on an agri-tour that would take passengers west of town to places like Harvestville Farms and Appleberry Orchards.

"I told the boats that would be a nice one with October because now you're out on the scenic drive with the trees turning colors," Peiton said.

"A lot of things are getting accomplished in a short amount of time. If this was Hannibal they'd be ready because they're doing it now, but here in Fort Madison we weren't quite there when they said they were coming, but we're getting there."

Peiton is holding a volunteer sign up session on Thursday starting at 10 a.m. at the Fort Madison Partners office at 614 9th Street.

Volunteers will be recruited for Community Beautification, Meet & Greets, preparation of greeting packets, passenger assistance and help with non-profits.

Volunteers would also be needed as step-on guides for some of the tours, but the cruise line would pay for those services. Peiton said she's already paid by the city for that service, so she would donate any money she makes to non-profits in town, but others could be compensated.

"We want to control the product. I don't want to offer one thing and then have someone else come in and not give the same product. We can adjust it through the season but we have to be on message with all the tours," she said.

The plan is to end the first tours on Main Street where passengers can get off and hit the shops and tour the buildings, but they need to have access to the stores.



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