



# Pen City Current

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## Hull named next county engineer

*Danville grad will look to replenish staff out of the gate*

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

MONTROSE - It was an expected transition as current Assistant Lee County Engineer Ben Hull was tapped to take over the county engineer's position starting Dec. 29. At Tuesday's regular meeting of the Lee County Board of Supervisors, Hull was approved to replace Ernie Steffensmeier, a 42-year veteran of the county engineering department.

The Danville High School graduate came back to the



HULL

southeast corner of Iowa in 2009 when he was hired on with the Lee County Engineer's office

Hull graduated from the University of Iowa in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, but has been involved in county road work since his high school days.

"I graduated from Danville in 1998 and went to work with Des Moines County that summer and during college breaks on road crews. Then they moved onto their survey crew while I was still in college," Hull said.

After a couple of years, Hull took a job in Iowa City while he was finishing his degree work and did construction and surveying work. After graduation, he took a job in Cedar Rapids designing residential and commercial

developments and then served for four years as the Cedar County Asst. County Engineer. He also did a one-year stint with Polk County as its construction manager.

In 2009 he saw an opening for a position with the Lee County Engineers office and applied for that in hopes that he would be able to move closer to where he grew up.

Hull has served as Steffensmeier's assistant since he arrived in 2009. Steffensmeier had been appointed County Engineer after Dennis Osipowicz stepped away from the position.

He said he doesn't foresee any big changes coming in the department as things are going pretty well compared to other counties state wide.

See **ENGINEER**, page 7

## Pooches hear stories from kids

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - It was a bit 'ruff' at the start, but a new project from Richardson Elementary students is helping dogs become more social, while helping younger students become better readers.

A group of second grade students from Kim Fullenkamp's class at the Fort Madison west side elementary are using a research-based initiative to help improve their reading skills, while helping dogs at the PAW animal shelter adapt to human interaction...and giving back to their community.

For the second month in a row, Fullenkamp's students brought black milk crates and story books out the animal shelter about a mile



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Students from Kim Fullenkamp's 2nd grade class at Richardson have taken to reading to the PAW animal shelter dogs. Fullenkamp said research shows reading to the dogs is good for the students and the animals.

south of the Hwy. 61 and 48th Street intersection. The students, this being the month of December, brought their favorite Christmas books and plopped down on the cement and dirt runs in front of kennels contain-

ing the dogs.

"I saw a post on Facebook that a group in Missouri was reading to dogs as part of a research project and I thought it would be a great community project for the kids," Fullenkamp said

Wednesday as her class spread out among the kennels.

"Our goal now is to come out every month and have the students sit and read to the dogs."

See **DOGS**, page 3

## FMHS salutes area veterans on Friday

PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON - All active and veteran military personnel are invited to the annual Veterans' Assembly being held this Friday beginning at 2 p.m. in the Fort Madison High School gym at 2001 Avenue B in Fort Madison.

The event called "A Salute to Those Who Sacrificed" is being sponsored by the Fort Madison High School Student Government and will feature local speakers, color guard and music from the FMHS music department.

The student government is encouraging any and all local military veterans and active personnel and their families to attend this event in their honor.

For more information, contact the school at 319-372-1862.

In another salute to area veterans, New Dimensions salon at 1736 Avenue G in Fort Madison will be offering free haircuts on Saturday to all area veterans. For more information on that program, contact the salon at 372-6291



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# Obituaries/Current-Lee

## OBITUARIES

### MARDIE L. SMITH

Mardie L. Smith, 71, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 11:46 a.m. on Wednesday, December 19, 2018 at Fort Madison Community Hospital. She was born on August 12, 1947 in Peoria, IL to Jack & Ramona Kane Campbell. She was in media sales and was the Fort Madison Convention & Tourism Director. She served on the Fort Madison Tourism Commission and the board of directors of the Emma Cornelis Hospitality House. She was responsible for bringing the idea of doing a lighted parade back to Fort Madison from seeing one in East Peoria, IL.



SMITH

Mardie is survived by: 1-son: Scott (April) Warnhoff of Fort Madison, IA; 1-granddaughter: Darian (Franz) Hoenig of Fort Madison, IA & 1-brother: Craig Campbell of Canton, IL. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. No services are planned. Online condolences to Mardie's family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory: [www.kinglynk.com](http://www.kinglynk.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

### Salute to Veterans

Fort Madison High School will be hosting a veterans assembly at 2 p.m. on Friday Dec. 21 in the high school gym. The event will include speakers and music from the FMHS music department. All area active and veteran military personnel are invited to attend this annual celebration.

### Downtown Enchanted Forest

The Fort Madison downtown Enchanted Forest will be open from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Lee County Bank Building at 803 Avenue G on Dec. 22 with visits with Santa from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

### Free Veteran Haircuts

New Dimensions Salon at 1736 Avenue G will be offering free haircuts on Saturday to all area active and veterans of the any military branch. The 3rd annual Christmas for Veterans will be held from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the salon. Call 372-6291 for additional information.

### Caregivers Connection at The Kensington

The Kensington hosts this monthly gathering to help educate attendees about all dementia types. Held at noon the 4th Tuesday of every month in The Kensington's private dining room, 2210 Avenue H in Fort Madison. Call 319-372-4233 to RSVP or for more information. The December luncheon will not be held due to the Christmas holiday. The next luncheon will be held January 22, 2019.

### Fort Madison Day at Carver-Hawkeye Arena

Tickets are now on sale for the Iowa vs. Bryant University on Dec. 29, 2018 at 7 p.m. Tickets are available at the Fort Madison Partners office at 614 9th Street through Dec. 13. Prices are \$15 for adults, \$10 for youth and \$5 if you want to ride a Trailways Bus to the game.

### Senior Community BINGO at The Kensington

Each month on the second Wednesday of the month, The Kensington hosts Senior Community BINGO at 2 p.m. in their dining room at 2210 Avenue H in Fort Madison. All seniors are welcome and cash prizes are awarded. December's BINGO games will be held Wednesday, January 9.

Pen City Current will list your event in this highly visible CURRENT-LEE section in increments of 25 words for \$15. Add a photo for \$5. Non-profit organizations are eligible for the reduced rate of \$10 per 25 words and \$3 per photo. To place your listing, click here or call Lee at (319)371.4125.

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## From the Front/Lottery Numbers

# Project helps shelter dogs re-engage

**DOGS** - Continued from Page 1

Fullenkamp said she researched the impact of reading to dogs and realized that at shelters in particular, the dogs get more socialization and the children's voices can be calming to them. It also has the added benefit of helping the students with reading skills.

She said the students have planned the program from the ground up and enjoy coming out to the shelter for part of the day.

Since it was December and a month of giving, the students also took the opportunity to collect supplies for the shelter and presented those to PAW Director Sandy Brown.

Brown said the dogs, who were a bit rambunctious for the first part of the readings with all the extra added attention from media and kids, have reacted very well to the reading and seem to enjoy the interaction.

"They seem a bit more agitated today, last time they settled in pretty quick and then it was really cool to listed to the kids read and see the dogs sitting there," Brown said.

"It's good socialization for the animals and helps them become more adoptable, and it's good because it helps the kids with reading."

Fullenkamp said there is a cost associated with the program because they have to pay for the school bus to transport them to the shelter. She said Connection Bank gave them \$100 donation for the project. To have the students come out once a month during the school year will cost about \$140 more and she said she's looking for donations to help offset that cost.

"It surprised me a little that some people said "No", but I think that's because they really didn't understand what was happening. This is the first time something like this has taken place around here" Fullenkamp said.

According to the program, the students have to practice reading the books they will take to the shelter with their parents at home and the parents have to sign off that the student is reading the book well enough to be able to read on their own to the animals.

Fullenkamp that helps make the student more comfortable with the book and leads to better experience for the student...and the dog.

"Dogs aren't judgmental when you're reading to them in a kennel. They sit and actually listen and that makes the stress on the students less because there is no feedback. Just listening. Reading in front of peers can be very stressful on students. We just think this is a win for the students and the animals."

Those interested in helping fund the class's efforts can reach Fullenkamp by email at [Kimberly.Fullenkamp@fmcscd.org](mailto:Kimberly.Fullenkamp@fmcscd.org) or by calling the school at 319-372-2765. More information about the PAW no-kill animal shelter can be found on-line at <http://pawfortmadison.com/> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/PAW-Fort-Madison-Animal-Shelter-179648212052707/>.

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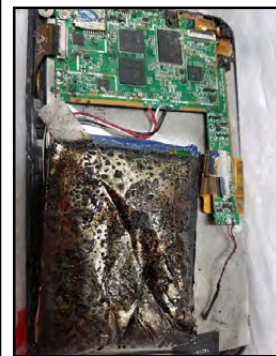


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 Megaplier: 3



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**Sports**

# HTC girls falter in OT to Falcons

*Loss is third straight to WB after Crusaders led in 4th quarter*

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

HTC senior Mya Lawlor races ahead of the West Burlington defense in Tuesday night's 57-54 overtime loss at home.

FORT MADISON - The West Burlington Lady Falcons have a curse on the Holy Trinity girls basketball team.

In the past two years, the Crusaders have held leads in the fourth quarter in each game the two teams have faced each other and somehow, the Falcons find a way to get a win. Tuesday night was no different as HTC held a 49-47 lead with :35 left on the clock in regulation.

A Holy Trinity turnover with :23 seconds left in regulation set the Falcons up with the ball and Head Coach John Vandenberg called a time out to set up a final play where they worked the ball into Alexis Davis, who got a step on the HTC defense outside the lane and slid in for short jumper to tie it at 49 and force overtime.

After each team committed a turnover in the opening seconds of the four-minute extra session, Eryn Anderson was fouled by sophomore Leah Collier. Anderson made the front end but missed the bonus to give HTC a one-point lead.

In the next possession for the Falcons after West Burlington set up in the half-court, the ball rotated over to sophomore Natalie Vandenberg, who laced a 3-ball from the left wing as HTC's Ashlynn Haas flew over to try and get hand in her face. The bucket would give the Falcons a lead they wouldn't give up.

After Vandenberg's score, HTC would commit three turnovers in a row trying to get the ball past the West Burlington trapping press, but the Falcons couldn't get a bucket in transition off the turnovers or in the set offense. With 1:15 left after

“*You can't commit 40-45 turnovers in a game and expect to win. But we've got another game on Friday and then we get a couple weeks to clean some of this stuff up.*”

-Tony Johnson, HTC head coach

a tie-up that gave the ball back to West Burlington, Mya Lawlor fouled West Burlington's Ilyah Moore. Moore, and the Falcons, struggled at the free throw line in Friday's home loss to Danville, shooting just 11 of 24. Moore was just 2 of 7 Friday, but would connect on 3-of-4 on back-to-back possessions to give West Burlington a 55-50 lead.

Vandenberg would then commit a foul on Haas as she was bringing the ball through the press and Haas sank both with :31 second remaining. Senior Lexy Davis would score from the left side when she leaked behind Holy Trinity's 1/2 court press and took a long inbounds pass in for a bucket to put the lead back at five. HTC senior Emily Box, who finished with a game high 22 points,

scored underneath on the next trip down for the Crusaders to cut the lead back to three 54-57.

HTC's Haas would foul Moore again to stop the clock with about six second remaining. Moore missed the first off the right side and the second off the left. The Falcons picked up the rebound off the second free throw, but Haas came up with a timely steal and raced down the floor kicking the ball off to Taylor Boeding who threw up a shot from about 21 feet that missed off the right side of the glass as time expired.

Head Coach Tony Johnson said turnovers were the key to the game.

“You can't commit 40-45 turnovers in a game and expect to win,” he said afterwards. “But we've got

another game on Friday and then we get a couple weeks to get in and clean some of this stuff up.”

Box was able to score almost at will in the first half converting six from inside the paint as she pretty much always had a step on the West Burlington's defense for inside points. Vandenberg made some adjustments and held Box to just three in the third quarter as the two teams stayed within three points of each other the whole second half, with the exception of the overtime period.

“When you run that 1-3-1, in theory you should always be able to get the ball inside. That was working early on, but then it seemed like nothing we were doing worked. We've got a lot of work to do.”

Box led all scorers with 22 points followed by Haas with 11, Boeding had 10 and Anderson had nine. Lawlor had two points to round out the scoring for the Crusaders.

The 5-4 Crusaders travel to Cardinal of Eldon in a Friday night boys/girls double header to wrap up the first half of the season heading into the holiday break.

# Bloodhound boys can't catch Demons

PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON - Washington got 16 points from Trashaun Willis in the second half and pulled away from Fort Madison 73-60 Tuesday night at the Hound-Dome.

Fort Madison had staked itself to a 12-6 lead with two minutes left in the first quarter but the Demons came firing back to close out the period ahead 13-12 after a 7-0 run.

The second period was evenly matched as well with Washington outscoring Fort Madison 25-24. Senior Brandon Keester had eight points in the period for the Hound while Jayden Fedler put in seven with the Hounds trailing 28-26 at the half.

Wilson would dominate the inside game in the third period with 10 points as the Demons again just outpaced the Hounds by one point as they did in all of the first three quarter.

Fort Madison would run out of steam in the last period as Washington would outscore the Hounds 23-13. Four Demons would put up five or more points in the final period to help Washington to the win.

Fort Madison was led by Fedler with 18 points on the night. Brandon Keester finished with 11, while Logan Rashid and Dayton Davis each put in nine for the Hounds.

Fort Madison will take it's 3-5 record on the road Friday to Mt. Pleasant before breaking for the holidays.

# Lady Hounds still searching for first win

PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON - Fort Madison didn't get a single player in double figure scoring on Tuesday as they dropped their ninth straight this time a 46-23 loss to Washington at home.

With the Lady Hounds battling two injuries in the rotation, including the absence of freshman Anna Lynk, and several players battling a flu virus, scoring was a premium on the night.

The Hounds trailed just 4-9 after the first quarter, but only put up three points in the second quarter, while the Lady Demons scored 19 in the period to take a commanding 28-7 lead into the lockerroom.

Senior Eleesha Estrada scored four in the first half and four in the second to lead FMHS with eight points in the game. Sophomore Nadia Boeding had six on the night.

See **GIRLS**, page 7

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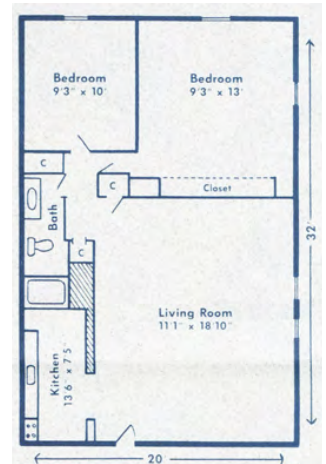
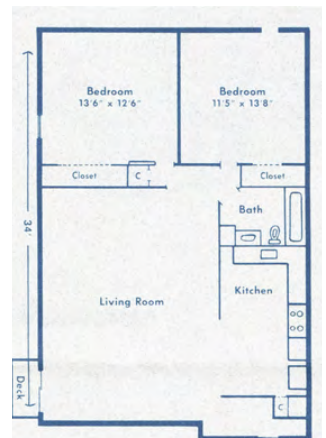
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## Area News/Weather

# Gov. Reynolds gets Rural Iowa task force initiatives

(DES MOINES) – Gov. Kim Reynolds this month received initial recommendations from three task forces charged with identifying needed legislative, regulatory and policy changes as part of the Governor’s Empower Rural Iowa Initiative. The governor established the initiative by executive order in July. It is co-chaired by Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg and Iowa Rural Development Council (IRDC) Chair Sandy Ehrig.

“I’d like to thank our dedicated task force members for bringing forth excellent recommendations to meet the needs of rural Iowa - access to quality housing, leadership in our small communities and sustainable broadband connectivity,” Gov. Reynolds said. “For Iowa to truly be successful, we have to see growth in every corner of our state. We’ve seen positive things happening in our rural communities, but there’s still a lot to do.

These recommendations are just the beginning, and I can’t wait to see how we will continue to empower rural Iowa in the future.”

The Investing in Rural Iowa Task Force, the Growing Rural Iowa Task Force and the Connecting Rural Iowa Task Force held Ideas Summits in six rural locations around Iowa – Earlham, Holstein, Maquoketa, Mount Pleasant, Pella and Stanton. They considered ideas submitted by task force members and the public.

Several common themes were identified in the initial recommendations. One was to create an Office of Rural Affairs to assist with rural policy development and provide a permanent rural perspective. Another was to create a database for rural communities to share available programs, best practices and development strategies.

Specific task force recommendations include:

- Investing in Rural Iowa Task Force
  - Assist rural Iowa communities in obtaining housing needs assessments
  - Reform the workforce housing tax credit to make it more competitive and dedicate additional resources to the rural set-aside
- Growing Rural Iowa Task Force
  - Create an Empowered Rural Communities recognition program
  - Create leadership pathways for recognized empowered rural communities
- Connecting Rural Iowa Task Force
  - Optimize the existing broadband grant program to ensure state funding stretches as far as possible
  - Identify a consistent source of funding for the broadband grant program

## Illness, injury hamper Hounds chances

### GIRLS - Continued from Page 5

Washington’s Kinsey Duwa and Isabel Bailey each had 10 points for Washington.

The Lady Hounds couldn’t cut into the lead in third period as Washington put even more distance between them and the hosts scoring 16, including six from Addison Six.

Fort Madison would get a nice defensive stand in the fourth quarter holding Washington scoreless for about seven minutes, but they couldn’t get into a scoring run and only put up nine points to see the final score at 46-23.

Fort Madison (0-9) plays at Mt. Pleasant Friday night in a boys/girls doubleheader before the holiday break. They will resume action on Jan. 4 at home against Fairfield.

Fort Madison also lost the junior varsity contest 40-28. Josie Pumphrey scored seven to lead Fort Madison.

## Hull says project funding ebbs and flows

### ENGINEER - Continued from Page 1

“I don’t see this as a departure from what we’ve been doing,” Hull said. “Tech is always evolving, with things like robotic total stations and GPS that now runs off our cellphones. We can now literally just jump out of a truck and start working. From a management level these tech improvements allow us to have a better big picture of the county. But they also help us keep records and have our fingers on the pulse of everything a bit better than in the past.”

He said funding is moving target from the state and federal government and things in that area are constantly changing.

“There’s an ebb and flow to funding and where it comes from. I’ve always

heard from the older guys that if you stick around long enough things will go one way and then cycle back and I think that’s kind of what’s going on now.”

Federal money is now, what Hull called “swappable” for state dollars to allow closer control and development of county projects.

“Right now were swapping federal money and that’s basically us trading federal dollars for state dollars. This allows us to develop our projects much more quickly. Right now on federal projects you best case scenario is usually a year to develop. But with these swap funds, I think we can cut some of these project timelines in half,” Hull said.

Steffensmeier and Hull

both have indicated the county is in pretty good shape when it comes to its roads and bridges.

“While we do have more needs than we have funds, I think we should consider ourselves fortunate compared to other counties because our bridges and roads are in pretty good shape in the system as a whole. We’re positioned pretty well compared to others.”

Communication with the public, and funding, are two of the constant hurdles in the office.

“The hurdles are the same as always. Open discussions with the public and try to be responsive to them and to look ahead. It’s hard because you can’t predict how a road will perform over 10 years. You

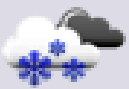
won’t know where funding will be and you don’t always know where to apply your limited funding,” he said.

One of his first tasks will be to replace himself. Asst. County Engineers require licensing, which can come after four years working full time in the field. He will also have another staff position to fill, with the department dropping to three full-time employees on the 29th when Steffensmeier retires officially. A reception for Steffensmeier is set for Dec. 28th from 2 to 4:30 p.m. at the North Lee County Office building.

“When Ernie retires we will be down one and we are already currently down one tech. We are looking to fill both those spots,” he said.

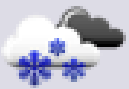
## 5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

THU 20 Dec



Light Snow  
High– 39.2° F | Low – 33.4° F

FRI 21 Dec



Light Snow  
High– 30.9° F | Low – 18.8° F

SAT 22 Dec



Light Rain  
High– 38.0° F | Low – 28.2° F

SUN 23 Dec



Clear Skies  
High– 36.1° F | Low – 24.9° F

MON 24 Dec



Clear Skies  
High– 33.6° F | Low – 14.3° F

[OpenWeatherMap](#)

*There’s  
Snow Place  
Like Home  
for the  
Holidays.*



Pen City Current will not publish an e-Edition Sunday, December 23 through Tuesday, January 1. Our special 2018 Recap editions will publish Wednesday, January 2 through Tuesday, January 8. Breaking news will continue to be published on our website 24/7.

*As we enjoy the holidays with family and friends,  
we thank you for your support and patronage and  
wish you all a very Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!*

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