



Pen City Current

Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2018 | 8 pages | Volume 2 • Issue 218

Reynolds cheerleads Future Ready Iowa

Lee County contingent talks about the need for public/private partnerships

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

BURLINGTON - A vast group of players trying to tackle the troublesome state of Iowa's skilled workforce gathered Tuesday for one of the state's first summits to address the issue.

At the Comfort Inn in Burlington, officials from Iowa Works hosted a group of about 200 people from the arenas of economic development, industry, education, and politics to hear and share best practices in trying to address the 400 lb. gorilla in the room. - how to fill immediate skilled workforce shortfalls in southeast Iowa.

Gov. Kim Reynolds made a stop at the summit to give a pep talk to the crowd and said it was time to go to work.

Reynolds' initiative Future Ready Iowa is a program aimed at getting 130,000 additional Iowa residents either to a college degree or post-secondary certificate by the year 2025. The program sets a goal of 70% of Iowa adults meeting the criteria.

"This is a perfect place to hold one of 18 summits across the state. We were gonna start with six, but the fact that we had community after community call and want to be a part of this, it speaks to, first of all, the



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Gov. Kim Reynolds speaks to those in attendance at one of the first Future Ready Iowa summits at the Comfort Inn in Burlington.

need, the momentum, people are aware of it, and they want to figure out what they can do to make their communities vibrant as well."

She said she was most proud of the fact that the entire legislation signed off on the Future Ready Iowa initiative during the last legislative session.

"This also relies on strong regional private/public

relationships building on the legislation so we can meet the local challenges, but northwest Iowa might be different than what you need here in southeast Iowa."

"The need has never been greater. We've often talked about workforce, but everything is starting to

See **SUMMIT**, page 4

Holtkamps roll up 30 years in furnishings

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Dave and Sandy Holtkamp on some days think their 30 years in business has been a long journey. But in the next sentence looking at their son Bobby and his wife Jessica, they think, "Where has the time gone?"

Either way, it's been 30 years... already.

On October 4, the family will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of Floors, Decor and More, now doing business under the leadership of Bobby and Jessica as Holtkamp's Floors Decor & Furniture. The original company name was held for 28 years, until Bobby and Jessica brought furniture in the fold for three years and

See **FAMILY**, page 2



Reynolds says state's fiscal 2018 will end with surplus

DES MOINES - Gov. Kim Reynolds announced Tuesday the State of Iowa will end Fiscal Year 2018 with an estimated balance of \$127.3 million in its general fund. That's \$95.6 million more than what the Revenue Estimating Conference predicted in March.

"We are striving to be fiscally responsible with your tax dollars, and I am proud to announce Iowa will end the fiscal year with a \$127 million surplus," Gov. Reynolds said. "Our economy is growing, incomes are rising and our state's budget is a reflection of that. But I'm never satisfied. I'm going to continue to push for policies that grow our economy, invest in education and affordable health care and maintain Iowa's status as the #1 state in the country."

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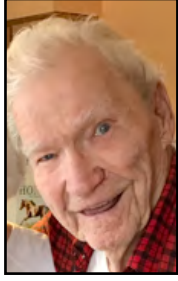
Obituaries/From the Front

OBITUARIES

ARTHUR JOHN MUERHOFF

Arthur John Muerhoff, 86, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away peacefully in his sleep at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, September 24, 2018 at his home. He was born on January 16, 1932 in Keokuk, IA to Frederich & Anna Menke Muerhoff.

He married Arletta Ruth Knipe on December 30, 1954 at St. Mary's Church in Fort Madison, IA. He retired from the Sheaffer Pen Company and Brockman Ready Mix. He was a member of Ss. Mary & Joseph Church and enjoyed fishing, visiting with his buddies at his morning coffee club, his uncle's horses when he was younger and watching sports, especially the Chicago Bulls, Chicago White Sox, Chicago Cubs and the Green Bay Packers. He and Ruth watched Michael Jordan play twice, once at The Mark in the Quad Cities and once at the United Center in Chicago. He was always the first one there to help his friends and family.



MUERHOFF

Art is survived by: his wife: Ruth Muerhoff of Fort Madison, IA; 1-daughter: Deb (Dave) Worden; 1-son: John (Tammy) Muerhoff; 2-grandchildren: Amanda Worden & John Muerhoff; 2-brothers: Lester (Ann) Muerhoff & Clarence (Norma) Muerhoff and 1-sister in law: Betty Muerhoff. He was preceded in death by: his parents & 1-brother: Vincent Muerhoff.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A celebration of life will be held from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 13, 2018 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory in Fort Madison. A memorial has been established for the Wounded Warrior Project. Online condolences to Art's family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: 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.

Celebration kicks off with reception on Oct. 4

FAMILY - Continued from Page 1

then they changed the name to market the new structure better.

Sandy brought the retail from her Kempker's up-bringing around hardware and Dave brought his career of installing flooring to a marriage that one day, morphed into a business partnership. Fast-forward 30 years and now it's their son's family's business and the four of them keep customers in the tri-state area floored, furnished and more.

Dave said they bought the building from George Lyle after it had sat vacant for more than two years after a struggling restaurant owner bolted town overnight leaving everything as it was.

The building was originally a car dealership before it was the restaurant. Sandy said when they bought the business, Bobby would come in at 4



“

We pretty much went to every bank before we got one to go with us, and once they got behind us, it was 'whatever you need' because they didn't want us to fail."

-Dave Holtkamp, co-founder

years old and help scrape the gunk off the floors. Dave said they brought a dumpster to the property and literally pitched everything in the building. The couple bought the place in August and opened October 11, 1988 "It was an interesting first few years I'll tell you. We really didn't have much, but it's all turned out good."

He said for the first three to five years things were very touch and go and some months they didn't know if the bills would get paid. "When we opened we had three boys, Wes was 11 months old, Bobby was four, and Scott was 8. We looked at each other at times and said, "What were we thinking?" Sandy said.

Dave said the most difficult part of getting open was finding inventory. "The hardest part was figuring out how I was going to get people to supply us. If there was another store in town, it was difficult for them to say, 'We're going to go against the guy that's buying from us already and sell to you. We actually started with just one carpet company, Mohawk, and then Armstrong vinyl and that was all we had."

He said they looked at

going into a bigger market, but they didn't have the money for it.

"And I'm a momma's girl," Sandy said, and the two decided to settle in Fort Madison.

The two made appointments with just about every bank in town and most weren't interested.

"We pretty much went to every bank before we finally got one to go with us, and once they got behind us it was, 'whatever you need' because they didn't want us to fail."

When Bobby came back eight years ago from Ohio and wanted to work in the family business, Dave told his son he wouldn't be allowed to come back at the top of the company.

"You're not going to come back as the boss, you're going to go out and install. I think that was very good for Bobby because the installers now respect him because he knows what that work is."

Sandy said the business took off and has survived because people knew the Holtkamps and the Kempkers to have strong business acumen and stood behind their work.

"I think a lot of it was that people came to us because we were doing the work ourselves, we were well-known in town,

See **HOLTKAMP**, page 8



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FRI 28 Sep



Clear Skies
High— 72.4° F | Low — 63.1° F

SAT 29 Sep



Light Rain
High— 74.9° F | Low — 60.6° F

SUN 30 Sep



Moderate Rain
High— 59.9° F | Low — 56.3° F

[OpenWeatherMap](#)

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Founded in 2016



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For the Record/Scene Around Town



Olive Branch Jiu Jitsu has moved downtown to 802 Avenue G. At right, founder Joe Lestina works with a couple of boys in the youth class on Friday evening. Below, the Fort Madison Chamber Ambassador Club paid a visit to the new studio that opened several weeks ago after several years at the Fort Madison YMCA.

Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC



For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

09/24/18 - 1:37 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of personal injury accident in the Fort Madison area.
 09/24/18 - 5:48 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1700 block of Avenue H.
 09/24/18 - 9:01 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a shoplifter in the 2600 block of Avenue L.
 09/24/18 - 8:37 p.m. - Fort Madison Police cited Shatara Danielle Brewster, 39, of Fort Madison in the 4500 block of Avenue O, on a charge of driving under suspension. She was released upon citation.
 09/25/18 - 1:24 a.m. - Fort Madison Police cited Brett Allen Michael Montgomery, 25, of Fort

Madison in the 1100 block of Avenue G, on a warrant for contempt of court.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

09/24/18 - 4:00 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Michael Adam Farnett, 59, of St. Paul., in the 2500 block of Hwy. 61 in Fort Madison, on charges of operation a vehicle while intoxicated, failure to maintain control and violating a one-way traffic design. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
 09/24/18 - 4:11 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Leann Rosalyn Briscoe, 38, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on a warrant for violation of probation.
 09/24/18 - 8:22 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident on 150th Avenue south of Hwy.

16. A vehicle driven by Kim Than Duh, 38, of Des Moines lost control headed southbound and entered the west bound ditch and rolled. No injuries or citations were reported the scene. *Those listed above are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.*

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

09/21/18 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to one burn complaint and one false alarm
 09/22/18 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to one medical call, and one unauthorized burn.
 09/23/18 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to one burn complaint.
 09/24/18 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to burn complaint, gas leak and medical call.

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From the Front/Lottery Numbers

Industry officials say "factory" jobs have changed

SUMMIT - Continued from Page 1

come together and align," Reynolds said after her presentation. Future Idea really addresses all that with additional money to help people get two-year degrees tied to high demand jobs.

"We're at 58.4% right now and when I talked to other governors across the nation, they are not anywhere close to that," she said. "We're starting at a pretty good point, but I think it's about getting in front of them and that's what the summits are about so that they're aware of the opportunities that exist and what that pathway is like and that there's funding there to help them with that."

Iowa Works officials have said the apprenticeship program that the state is offering businesses with tax incentives and

schools with funding assistance to set up apprenticeships, is struggling in the early going.

Bruce Hardy, plant manager at Silgan Containers, said the apprenticeship program requires a lot of paperwork and the incentive is capped at \$1,300 per person per year. He said he believes in apprenticeships, but set up collaboration with the schools in Lee County that provides a career specific maintenance tech track that will result in those completing the program being offered jobs with the container manufacturer.

Brian Langerud, plant manager at Pinnacle Foods, and Jason Huffman, of Huffman Welding & Manufacturing, both spoke during the session where county business

and industry leaders shared thoughts and ideas.

"In our minds as plant managers the perception for us was when career counselors sat with students the conversations usually went something like, 'Well if nothing else works you can always get a job at the local factory.' I think that was a lot of people's perceptions 5 to 10 years ago. Industry is trying to do things to combat that mentality," Langerud said.

He said manufacturing isn't just a muscle job anymore. He said he has lines that do 1,400 cans per minute. He said industry is a lot more mental now.

"You need skills... you need welding skills, people to put the machines together and skills to keep the lines filled and

“

You set an ambitious goal. You shoot high and you work your tail off to get it done. They thought we should get to 68, and we said 70.”

Kim Reynolds,
Iowa Governor

running. We've got great people in Lee County who get it and know the number of people that aren't going to four year schools. So we got involved in the schools and helped develop curricula and those are the things we've been involved in."

Huffman said the ex-

perience at Huffman has been a long, drawn out process, but he said when you get a leader involved in the right program, turn around can be quick.

"What we do is all custom. Our jobs are highly skilled, we don't hire a lot of basic welders, but one of our biggest boundaries to growth is finding those additional people. We put on an addition last year, but we're still in the process of finding that specialized skilled employee."

Huffman said he sees it on a personal level where people with the four-year degrees are struggling to find a supervisory position and bringing two-year certificate programs with specialized skills is important to helping provide other career tracks for Iowans.

Reynolds said there needs to be more aware-

ness of the programs being put together locally, regionally, and statewide.

We just need to make people aware of it and talk about it more. That's part of what Future Ready Iowa summits are about. Bringing awareness to these types of jobs and getting into high schools and we're seeing some tremendous momentum there."

She said there is a lot of momentum with welding, but there is also nursing, accounting, and other opportunities that she said were limitless in today's economy.

She said she believes the goal of 2025 is attainable, if not maybe a little ambitious.

"You set an ambitious goal. You shoot high and work your tail off to get it done. They thought we should get to 68 and we said 70."

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9/24 EVENING
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9/24 EVENING
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From the Front/Classifieds

Community has always been part of family businesses

HOLTKAMP - Continued from Page 2

and we stood behind our products," Sandy said.

Dave said customer service has always been their top priority and that's helped build the business, as well.

He said they never could have done it alone. They had to have each other to vent to and then solid family in the area to help with the kids and to keep them motivated.

Dave said Sandy's dad, Bob Kempker, used to offer encouragement and motivation.

"We would be over at

the house and we'd be talking about things being rough and he would just snap up and say 'C'mon. You can do this. You can make this work.' They never gave us money, but their encouragement and wisdom can't be measured," Dave said.

The first expansion came when the Holtkamps added a warehouse. There were two homes to the east of the retail front and Dave secured the use of their garages for padding and carpet. In 2003, they added the warehouse on

the back of the property.

From the original days with Dave and Sandy and one salesperson, the company has grown to four full-time installers and three paid sales staff in addition to Dave and Sandy who still work at the business, and Bobby and Jessica running the show.

The Holtkamps will be holding a Business After Hours from 4:30 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 4 with hot dogs and hamburgers and beverages. There will be some specials to kick

off the 30th anniversary that will run from Oct. 4-Oct. 20.

Jessica said there will be some flooring specials up to 30% off and customers will be able to take advantage of a Buy-One, Get-One of equal or lesser value 50% off of furniture.

Bobby said a lot of the credit for the business goes to the sales and installation staff that have kept the company name solid.

"We owe a lot of credit to the staff," Bobby said. "We've been very fortunate with employees from installers to sales staff."

Community is still a big part of the Holtkamp business model.

"When we first started out, we had to pick and choose what we gave to. But we made it a point to be at all the events so people could see our face," Sandy said.

Bobby said his grandparents would always give to community events and groups.

"That's been instilled in me forever - to give back to the community," he said. "My grandparents, it may have been a \$5 gift certificate or \$100 certificate, but they tried to give

whenever they could. I try to carry that with me," he said.

Sandy said she and Dave were excited when Bobby and Jessica wanted to buy the business two years ago.

"We were very excited when the two of them came to us and asked to buy us out. They are doing a great job and we couldn't be more proud of what's going on."

Bobby said he still relies on his parents for guidance.

"I still ask questions. I think I might know the answer, but I still ask the question."

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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Sealed bids clearly marked "TWO 3/4 -TON TRUCKS" will be received in the office of the City Clerk, City Hall, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, Iowa, until 1:00 P.M. on October 16th, 2018, for the sale to the City of Fort Madison, Iowa, the following:

TWO (2) NEW 3/4-TON 4X4 TRUCKS WITH TOW PACKAGE

Any bids received after this time will be returned unopened.

All bids properly received will be opened and publicly read aloud in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The bids will be evaluated and presented to the City Council.

Specifications and instructions to Bidders are on File at City Hall, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, Iowa.

The City of Fort Madison reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive

minor technicalities, and to accept that proposal which the City Council deems to be in the best interest of the City.

Melinda L. Blind
City Clerk
City of Fort Madison

PUBLIC NOTICE FORT MADISON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS WORK SESSION October 1, 2018 6:00 P.M. AGENDA

- I. Call meeting to order and determination of a quorum
- II. Recognition of guests
- III. Approve the agenda
- IV. Monthly communications
 - A. Curriculum Corner - Introduction to K-8 Math Materials
 - V. Update from Bond Subcommittee
 - VI. Adjourn

Got a news tip?
Call Chuck (319)371.1670

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JULIE GERDES

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