



Pen City Current

Tuesday, February 19, 2019 | 6 pages | Volume 3 • Issue 51

City to reassess Ave. G sidewalk plans

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A public hearing on a \$1.55 million project to redo the sidewalks and curbing has been pulled from the city's Tuesday City Council meeting agenda.

According to Mayor Brad Randolph, bids for the project have come in close to double the available funding.

HR Green, Inc. out of Cedar Rapids has been handling the project for the city, and Randolph said the



RANDOLPH

project is being "reassessed".

"It's very frustrating," he said.

The project included putting in new sidewalks, curbing, permeable pavers, and storm water enhancements along the north and south sides of Avenue G. The pavers would go back about six feet, with the rest of the sidewalks to the buildings being new concrete.

The funding source comes from the interest that would have been paid to the state on loans taken out to rehab the city's waste water treatment plant. So instead

of paying interest on those loans, the city can use what amounts to a refund of the interest on those waste water treatment loans, up to \$1.55 million, to fund the project.

The work was originally suggested to cover from 6th Street to 10th Street along the downtown portion of Avenue G. However, estimates on the work required several scale backs, including lighting and other amenities along the tract of work.

Officials have come to the council several times indicating the project was over budget for the available funds. Bids for the work went out in January.

County swans learning new song

DNR gives county two female swans for marsh

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

MONTROSE – The population of Lee County's trumpeter swan is low compared to other areas of the state such as Fort Dodge, Des Moines, and Atlantic, but the dedicated marsh just west of Heron Bend grew by two on Wednesday.

Lee County Conservation Wildlife Manager Rick Tebbs released two flightless swans to the aerated marsh on Wednesday afternoon. The swans were given to Lee County by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The females were injured and flightless, but they can now nest with males and hatch cygnets. The cygnets in turn become wild swans and are free to migrate and nest in the wild.



The move is part of an ongoing reintroduction of swans to the area. The birds are no longer on a watch list, but about 30 years ago, the population of trumpeters was down to 60 in the Yellowstone area, Tebbs said.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources had

been keeping an eye out for injured swans after Tebbs told them one of the females in the Lee County Marsh had died due to injury from a predator.

"Something had gotten ahold of her and damaged her leg and we lost her. I called and told them about it and they said they would

keep an eye out for any birds," Tebbs said.

He got a call from Dave Hoffman, the DNR biologist who oversees the trumpeter program for Iowa, a couple of weeks ago. Hoffman had received a report of two female birds that were spotted injured.

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Lee County Conservation District Naturalist Rick Tebbs releases a flightless trumpeter swan to the Lee County Marsh just off Hwy. 61 across from the Lee County Conservation Center on Wednesday. Tebbs released two swans that were given to Lee County by the Iowa DNR

Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Agreements ready as city shakes out depot funding

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – As city officials scour state and federal funding options to keep the Amtrak depot relocation efforts active, lease agreements

for the platform at the new depot appear to be ready for approval.

At the Feb. 19 regular council meeting, the city will not only be possibly approving the 2019-20 fiscal year budget, but will also hear from Mayor Brad Randolph about some new possible funding options that could reduce, or possibly completely offset any hit to the budget under consideration.

Varley put out three memos to the city council on Friday outlining three different agreements that need council approval. Varley also used the memos to

outline exactly what the city's responsibilities are under each agreement.

The city has to approve three separate agreements with Amtrak; an agreement to sublease the platform, an Old Station Revitalization agreement, and a lease agreement.

Under the lease agreement, the city would lease 813 square feet of space to Amtrak, along with a common area for passengers. The term of the lease is 20 years with two 10-year extensions available. In exchange, the city would get currently, a \$400 monthly rent payment from Amtrak.

The city would be responsible for all maintenance, upkeep, and repair on the platform, restrooms, and common area including 20 parking spaces reserved for Amtrak passengers. The city would also be responsible for having someone identified as the building

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VARLEY

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Obituaries/Celebrations

OBITUARIES

DONALD "DONNIE" EUGENE WADE

Donald "Donnie" Eugene Wade, 65, of Keokuk, IA, entered into Heaven's Gates on Friday, February 15, 2019 at 12:33 a.m. at Fort Madison Community Hospital following a sudden heart attack.



WADE

He was born on January 3, 1954 in Keokuk, IA, the son of Irwin R. Sr. and Gwendolyn M. Phillips Wade.

On February 6, 1972, Donnie was united in marriage to Joyce Ann Protsman. They had just celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary.

Donnie was active in his Pentecostal faith and attended several local churches along with many Bible studies.

Donnie held a variety of jobs, his last being at Manchester Tank in Quincy, IL where he retired in 2009.

He had a passion for Jesus, his family and food. He enjoyed singing the gospel and recorded two CDs, woodworking and listening to a variety of music. He will be most remembered by the love he showed to everyone and his sense of humor. Donnie gave in death as he gave in life by being an organ and tissue donor.

He is survived by his wife Joyce of Keokuk, his children, Deni McClinton of Keokuk, Meranda Wade of Burnsville, MN, Tiffani Wade (Mike Namias) of Yukon, OK and Dustin (Ashley) Wade of Keokuk, grandchildren, Raven McClinton (Cole Tripp), Chardea'e McClinton (Kyle Ray), Keaton Robinson, Drayton Robinson (Deztany Overton), Weston Robinson

(Aiyana Pearson), Koulton Robinson, Kordell Carter, KeTrell Carter, Phorest Shoup, Stone Shoup, Lyric (Aaron) Hoenike, Bryher Wade, Jade Namias, Brooke Wade, Blake Wade, Holdyn Wade, Logan Bode and Jayme Bode, great-grandchildren, Oakleigh Brown, Daxton Tripp, Taniya Smith, Kamdyn Ray, Kreeyd Ray, Jayden Robinson, Zephaniah Allsup-Robinson, Kaydon Sammon, Ariaya Robinson, Elaina Sammon, Aleksa Sammon, Za`Veyah Robinson, Baby Robinson due in March, Jace Robinson, Garrett Hoenike, Gunner Hoenike, Laylah Bennett, Lyam Bennett, Ashtyn Bode and Adryan Bode, his brothers and sisters, Irvin "Sonny" (Linda) Wade, Jr., Ron (Diane) Wade, Kathy Radar, Debbie Wade and Melinda "Till" (Jeff) Plowman, and many, many, many other family members.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a brother, Richard Wade-Rickerts, a great grandson, his in-laws, Billie & Charlotte Dobbins and Joseph & Joyce Protsman, his brother and sister-in-law, Joe & Diana Protsman, sister-in-law, Laurie Protsman and a great niece, Carrissa Horton.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m., Saturday at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk with Pastors Harry and Marvin Miller officiating. Visitation will be held Saturday from Noon - 2 pm at the funeral home with the family meeting with friends at that time. Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

Birth Announcements

TORRANCE

FORT MADISON - Mr. and Mrs. Nathan and Sierra Torrance of Media, Ill., are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Emersyn Irene Torrance on Feb. 9, at Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Emersyn is joined at home by Blake, Gage and Drake.

Grandparents are Bill and Iva Carlson of Biggsville, Ill.; Randy and Kayla Schleidt Hamilton of Fort Madison; Nick and Patty Schleidt of Reno, Nev.; and Jay and Dina Torrance of Story City.

Great-grandparents are Don and Kae Glasgow of Fort Madison; Ralph and Marilyn Torrance of Terre Haute, Ill.; and Ivan Lant of Media, Ill.

Pen City Current congratulates the family on this wonderful news.

DRESDEN

KEOKUK - Lacey Dresden is proud to announce the birth of her daughter Londyn Rose Dresden on Feb. 5, 2019 at Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Grandparents are Alicia and Doug Dresden of Keokuk.

Pen City Current congratulates the family on this wonderful news.

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.



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5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

TUE 19 Feb	Snow High- 25.3° F Low - 20.8° F
WED 20 Feb	Snow High- 35.0° F Low - 22.6° F
THU 21 Feb	Light Snow High- 27.4° F Low - 10.4° F
FRI 22 Feb	Light Snow High- 30.7° F Low - 26.3° F
SAT 23 Feb	Snow High- 37.1° F Low - 28.5° F

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Guest Column/Lottery Numbers

Mayor counting on Amtrak to come through

LEASE - Continued from Page 1

manager, installing panic buttons under the ticket counter, and providing regular security.

However, according to Randolph, Amtrak officials are meeting Tuesday to discuss possibly increasing their contributions to the project, in light of the city's struggling financial picture.

He said if Amtrak does come through with additional funding, that lease agreement may have to be pulled from the agenda to be rewritten.

"We are counting on Amtrak to come through," Randolph said Saturday.

The revitalization agreement outlines the city's responsibility in constructing the platform, signage, and wheelchair enclosure. Amtrak agreed originally to contribute a one-time \$150,000 investment toward the cost of the platform construction.

The final agreement is a sublease where once that platform is constructed, the city would give the platform to Burlington Northern Santa Fe. Amtrak would lease the platform from BNSF and lease it back to the city so the city can be responsible for maintenance and upkeep.

In other action, the council will consider

- the reappointment of Joe Thurman to the Old Fort Commission and Marty Dean to the Southeast Iowa Regional Riverboat Association.
- purchase of a \$40,500 tractor/mower from Sinclair Tractor of Houghton, and a \$4,550 pallet fork and 6' rotary mower from Sinclair.
- approve the 2019-2020 budget and set a public hearing on the budget for March 5, at 5:30 p.m.

Deep freeze was hard on the farmer

Tough winter. I've fallen twice now doing chores, the first time breaking the eggs I had just gathered—that upset me more than the fall. I laid there for a couple of seconds on the ice, trying to determine if I'd broken anything, beside the eggs. I was glad I had my cell phone with me in case I had to dial 911. ("Mr. Swarm, I see you're lying on the ice. Are you okay?") "No. Would I be lying on the ice if I were okay?") Fortunately, I was fine. The second time I fell, I was even wearing those ice cleats that strap onto your boots. It was so cold and the ice was so hard and slick, the cleats were ineffective. I stayed down on my hands and knees and crawled back to the house—glad there was no one watching.

That was enough for me. One more fall on this 70-year-old frame might mean a broken hip, femur, noggin, elbow, wrist, you-name-it. Of course, if it was my noggin, it might be a blessing—knock some sense into me. I'm now driving the truck

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm



from the house out to the barn to do chores—hard on vehicles, easier on the bod.

I think Barney-the-Barn-Cat felt sorry for me. He delivered two dead voles to our doorstep and laid them out neatly on the threshold. That was right considerate. When cats do this, I'm told, it's because they think they're bringing you a gift.

Given the choice be-

tween a nice warm farm house and the barn, even in 20-below weather, Barney chooses the barn. He loves it out there and likes doing chores with me. I'll see him charging through snow drifts I can't drive through, in subzero weather to get to the barn when it's chore time. He sure has cleaned out the mice, which can be a problem when you're storing chicken and cattle

feed.

I can always tell when a storm front is approaching. The livestock (in our case, one heifer and a dozen hens) will eat everything in sight to store up. It's a throwback to their ancestor days in the wild when they would have to hunker down to wait out a storm. I find it particularly comforting watching farm animals eat—maybe a throwback to my hunter-gatherer days.

During the real cold weather that followed the freezing rain, I had problems getting into

See **SWARM**, page 5



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For additional information please contact Shelley Sheerin at 319-372-2486 ext. 7



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Classifieds

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Fort Madison City Council will hold a public hearing concerning PIP 2019-01, 14TH STREET BRIDGE DECK OVERLAY PROJECT on Tuesday, March 5, 2019, at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison. The purpose of the hearing will consist of approving plans, specifications, contract documents estimated cost and awarding construction contract for the project.

You may appear at the hearing to express your views concerning the above. Written statements may be submitted to the Fort Madison City Clerk, P.O. Box 240, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, Iowa, 52627 no later than 4:30 PM on March 5, 2019 or delivered before the hearing is closed.

Melinda L. Blind
City Clerk

PUBLIC NOTICE PROCEEDINGS FORT MADISON CITY COUNCIL February 5, 2019

The Fort Madison City Council met in an informal work session on Tuesday, February 5, 2019, at 5:45 P.M. following a scheduled Council Meeting, at City Hall, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison. Mayor Randolph presided with Council Members Greenwald, Morawitz, Rink, Andrews, Mohrfeld, Lair and Cangas present (Cangas left at 8:07 P.M.).

Varley outlined options for the FY 2019/20 budget. Council discussed the options and alternatives.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 P.M.

/s/ Bradley A. Randolph,
Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Melinda L. Blind, City
Clerk

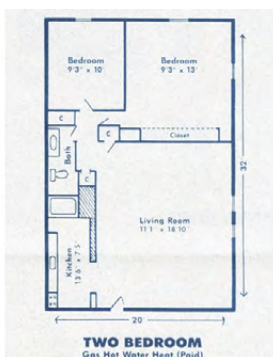
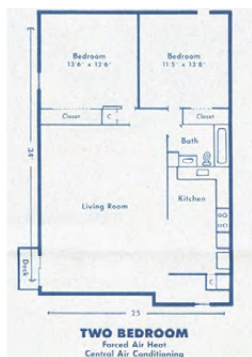
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Sports/Education News



Courtesy photo

FMHS junior Danen Settles, far right, stands with the top eight Class 3A 285 lb. wrestlers Saturday night at Wells-Fargo Arena as part of the 2019 State Wrestling Tournament.

Reynolds' Cyberstart open to high school girls

DES MOINES - Governor Kim Reynolds is pleased to announce that Iowa is partnering with SANS to offer the Girls Go CyberStart competition again this year. Iowa first participated in CyberStart in 2017 and Girls Go CyberStart just one year later. As a result, several Iowa students received scholarships for advanced education in cybersecurity and other prizes.

"Iowa's leadership position in innovation is continually reaffirmed through programs like CyberStart. It's why I'm constantly seeking new ways to support our students' passion for STEM-related disciplines like cybersecurity," stated Gov. Reynolds. "Cybersecurity is vital for protect-

ing our state and nation's most critical assets. It's also a lucrative career for young women and the underrepresented."

In 2018, Iowa had three Girls Go CyberStart teams place in the top 3 percent of 2,600 participating teams in 15 states. This year, at least 10 high school girls in Iowa will receive individual \$500 scholarships for college expenses.

Girls Go CyberStart is a free, forward-thinking cybersecurity skills program designed to educate and inspire high school girls to discover the opportunities and rewards offered by a career in cybersecurity. It is open to all female students in grades 9 through 12, regardless of their prior knowledge or experience with cybersecurity and information technology. Both male and female college students have the opportunity to play CyberStart this year. The college program, called Cyber FastTrack, is an avenue to scholarships for advanced cybersecurity educations as well as internships and jobs in the field.

Iowa's students will be competing against students from 25 other states. Girls Go CyberStart initiative encourages participants to explore their interests in cyber studies, learn core cybersecurity skills, and build confidence in problem-solving.

Interim State CIO Jeff Franklin states, "I am very proud of the participation and success that Iowa has shown in this program in the last two years. This competition is yet another great opportunity to provide our students with education and experiences that will help prepare them for the jobs of the future in information technology and cybersecurity."

Girls Go CyberStart registration opened Feb. 18, 2019. First day of play is March 20, 2019. Cyber FastTrack registration also opens today, February 18, 2019. First day of play is April 5, 2019.

For more information, visit girlsgocyberstart.org and cyber-fasttrack.org. To see the types of challenges the students will face in the games, please visit <https://go.joincyberstart.com/>.

Winter chores bring a freshness to life

SWARM - Continued from Page 1

Blossom's (our Angus heifer's) pen. I've had to keep a bolt-with-a-nut through the chain to keep Blossom from escaping. She's quite the escape artist. When we have freezing rain, the threads on the bolt ice over, and I can't get the nut off. I was about to go to the barn for some wrenches when I thought of something else to try. I had carried water out to her, so I just poured cold water over the bolt. Voila. Off comes the nut—hard on bare hands in freezing weather, yes, but if it works, don't fix it.

I'm actually grateful to have chores to do in the winter. Sure, it's tough getting out there when the wind is howling—pulling on insulated coveralls and boots—but I always enjoy the fresh air and seeing the farm animals once I'm out there. As a remedy for cabin fever, chores are a good way to "get the stink blown off you."

I've found the best shovel to use for shoveling a path through all this snow and ice is still the old-fashioned farmer's aluminum scoop shovel. Although, in reality, an aluminum scoop shovel isn't all that old fashioned. The original scoop shovels were made of iron or steel. They were much heavier, and had a problem with snow sticking to the scoop—which makes shoveling snow twice as hard. Slick and light-weight aluminum has helped the situation considerably. At the hardware store the other day, while I was buying 110 lbs of ice melt, I saw plastic scoop shovels. Hmmm. My father once told me the true test of a man was if he could stand on top of a wagon full of ear corn, and begin scooping from the top. I probably have a ways to go before I can live up to my father's expectations.

Have a good story? Call or text Curt Swarm in Mt. Pleasant at 319-217-0526, email him at curtswarm@yahoo.com or visit his website at www.empty-nest-words-photos-and-frames.com.

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From the Front

Flightless swans will help repopulate area

SWANS - Continued from Page 1

Tebbs was going to a Wildlife Society meeting near Rathbun this week and Hoffman brought the birds to the meeting. Tebbs brought them to Lee County on Wednesday afternoon for release.

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“We’re trying to be a part of bringing back the whole Midwest nesting population. We’ve probably had close to 50 young from those that are put here. These are injured birds and we use them as breeding pairs and then the young become free flyers,” Tebbs said.

He said there are currently anywhere from 10 to 16 swans that are frequently counted in the area. Some migrate and feed outside

the marsh, but use it as central open waters. Some will go out around the river at times, but stay close to the marsh.

The nesting done at the marsh bears the cygnets, or young swans from eggs, and then those will migrate when they become old enough to leave the marsh.

“They won’t breed for three or four years while they’re juveniles, but then they bond when they are four or so and they nest together. If something happens to one they will usually find another mate,” Tebbs said.

There is no tracking of the birds and the flightless ones will stay where they are. He said the motivation is just to get more birds in the wild. Some birds are tagged and Lee County Conservation will



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

The trumpeter on the right was recently released into the county’s trumpeter marsh just off Hwy. 61 across from the Lee County Conservation District’s Heron Bend center.

report when they see birds with collars to let federal naturalists know where the birds are migrating to.

“We’ve found some with collars that are from Wisconsin down here.

We call to let them know so we can keep track of where migration is, but we don’t actively tag and track them,” he said.

The county keeps the marsh open during the

winter with aerators that generate motion in the water to prevent freezing. Only about half of the marsh is kept open for fresh water, the other half is ice covered right now and

has plenty of goose population there.

“We have to keep the water open so they have water to drink. Again, these swans can’t fly south because of their injuries so we keep this wetland habitat for open for them,” he said.

The swans will typically nest on top of muskrat houses and those houses stay at water level in the marsh. If the swans try to nest on the river it becomes challenging because the water levels rise and fall regularly and can wipe out the nests.

Populations dwindled in the 60s because people would hunt the swans for feathers and meat. Tebbs said feathers were used for powder balls that women would use to powder their bodies. The birds also have a lot of meat on them, so they were heavily hunted.

Some of the birds were killed in powerline contact, while natural predators also reduced the number of the birds.

He said the birds were on a targeted list due to the reduced numbers of locations the swans were being reported in, but the reintroduction in Midwestern states has the populations in the thousands now in Iowa alone.

According to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, in 2010 there were 193 swans reported in Iowa. In 2016, that number had increased to more than 1,800.

Trumpeter swans weigh up to 30 lbs and have a wingspan of more than seven feet. They get their name from their call.

“That call is kind of like a call to wetland’s preservation. This is why we do this,” Tebbs said.



New Year. Fresh Start.

Thank you to all our customers who worked to reduce their environmental footprint last year. We’re looking forward to helping you continue your efforts and to educating our communities on more ways to help this year.



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Here are just a few ways you can help:

- Don’t put plastic bags in recycling bins
- Rinse & clean all food jars & cans before recycling
- Flatten empty boxes for better storage & volume reduction
- Place all recyclables loose in bins
- Don’t recycle wrapping paper
- Properly dispose of all electronics and household hazardous waste