



Pen City Current

Wednesday, Oct. 17, 2018 | 17 pages | Volume 2 • Issue 235

City Council foregoes final payment to LCEDG

Councilman pledge to give \$25K annually through 2023 if city budget holds out

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - The Lee County Economic Development Group will be going without a contribution from the City of Fort Madison this year.



CANGAS

At Tuesday's regular city council meeting, the council voted unanimously to not make a contribution to the LCEDG, which would have been the final payment of a five-year pledge to the group. But the vote also included a renewed pledge starting in the next fiscal year at \$25,000 per year if the city budget holds up.

Despite most of the council voicing support for the efforts of the LCEDG and the bang they get for their buck, the council wasn't willing to sacrifice potential cuts to city programs over the contribution. Council-

man Chad Cangas even called the financial support to the group "crumbs" compared to other larger riskier investments like the proposed Amtrak depot.

Councilman Matt Mohrfeld made a motion for the council to make a commitment, based on a yearly review of city finances, of \$25,000 per year through 2023, which is the current five-year campaign underway by LCEDG.

Dennis Fraise, the COO of the economic development group, talked to the council again about the

See CONTRIBUTION, page 2

Kurtz and Reichman vye for 83rd District House seat



KURTZ



Pen City Current Editor Chuck Vandenberg sat down with the candidates for local elections in one-on-one candid conversations about issues of importance to voters in southeast Iowa.



REICHMAN

Kurtz believes Iowa is leaving citizens behind

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - He was just settling into retirement when a political opportunity came knocking on the door.

Literally packing for a trip to the Mexican Riviera, Jeff Kurtz of Fort Madison, was approached by several people asking him to run for the seat being vacated by Jerry Kearns, a Keokuk Democrat who announced in the spring he wouldn't be seeking re-election to the House.

Jeff is opposing Jeff Reichman (R-Keokuk) for the 83rd District seat in the Iowa House of Representatives.

See DEMOCRAT, page 9

Reichman says state is in a good place

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Making his first run for public office, Keokuk's Jeff Reichman said he's a different kind of Republican who can represent the working class.

Reichman was born and raised in Keokuk and graduated from Southeastern Community College, has a business degree from Iowa Wesleyan College, and is a Marine Corp Command staff graduate. He now makes his home in Montrose and works in the shipping department at Roquette, while running his own home inspection business, Tri State Home Inspections for the past two years.

See REPUBLICAN, page 8

Council shows signs of waning on Amtrak depot move

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - If a vote were taken at Tuesday's meeting, the Fort Madison City Council may have wiped their hands clean of moving the Amtrak Depot back to Riverview Park.

Mayor Brad Randolph asked that the issue be put back on the council agenda for Tuesday's regular meeting to take another look at where the city is in regard to relocating the depot.

"I felt it important to kind of take a step back for me, because I've been the one spear-heading this project since 2012, to make sure the council and the community were still on board with continuing the project in light of new budget concerns and some of the issues we have now encountered through circumstances beyond our control with Amtrak," Randolph said.

He said he's been working to procure additional funding through lawmakers who are empathetic to the city's concerns, but are unable to provide any additional funding. He said he's also gone to Burlington Northern to contribute to the project. Randolph said he thought there was value in the fact that the city would be taking over the passenger aspect and they advised him that they were not ready to engage in any further help other than what they have agreed to, which is about \$45,000 in in-kind support.

Randolph said he's also spoken with former Macomb mayor Tom Carper, a member of the national Amtrak board, who said there is a 550-mile stretch

See AMTRAK, page 7

Advertiser Index

Central Lee Dance Team.....	P.9
Classifieds	P.6
Great River Regional Waste Authority	P.7
Griffin Muffler & Brake Center	P.3
Harvestville Farms.....	P.4
Huffman's Farm & Home	Ps.10-17
Lee County Health Department.....	Ps.2,5
Pilot Grove Savings Bank.....	P.4
Professional Services	P.6
RSVP of Lee County	P.8

News Index

Celebrations	P.7
-Elena Marie Rickelman	
-Zayne Donald Lee	
Tapp	
Current-Lee	P.4
For the Record.....	P.3
From the front.....	Ps.2,7-9
Local News.....	Ps.2,7
Lottery Numbers	P.2
Weather.....	P.4

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From the Front/Lottery Numbers

Councilmen tout support for LCEDG but reduce funding

CONTRIBUTION - Continued from Page 1

strides being made and the reputation the LCEDG is garnering around the state and country. However, he stopped short of asking the city to continue the contributions only saying LCEDG appreciates the opportunity to work with the city and will continue to update the city on LCEDG efforts and information.

At a meeting last month, the conversation got a bit heated when LCEDG CEO Joe Steil tried to clear up what he termed some misunderstandings in the commitment the city had made for five years. City officials were unclear as to the number of years in the commitment and didn't budget for a 2018 fiscal year contribution. City Manager David Varley told Steil he was being irresponsible asking the city to not consider its financial condition and turn over the money.

Mayor Brad Randolph said Tuesday not budgeting for the final year was an oversight. The city did give LCEDG \$50,000 per year from 2014-2016 and then pared that back to \$25,000 in 2017 due to tightening budget concerns.

The LCEDG gets its funding from a private/public partnership with funds coming from pri-

vate industry and businesses in the county and also from contributions from Lee County, the City of Fort Madison, and the City of Keokuk.

"When Gov. Reynolds goes out and talks about the state, about workforce development, she mentions Grow Lee by name," Fraise told the council. "We've built a great reputation and that's due to the investors we've had."

He said Fort Madison is a vital partner in the success of the economic development efforts in the county.



RANDOLPH

"We love the idea of collaboration with you guys and one of the things that came up last time was attending your work sessions. We think that's a great idea. Sometimes we get busy and we forget to do this, and show up and tell you what we're doing and we're responsible for that and we will be doing a better job of that in the future."

Fraise said after the meeting that LCEDG has tried hard to work within their means and even though the contributions are an integral part of their funding source, the group will be able to manage the missing contribu-

tion.

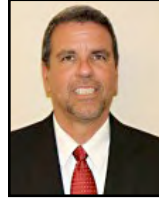
Councilman Matt Mohrfeld said budgeting is about prioritizing.

"When we look at just some real simple return on investment, they're putting 60% of the heads in beds in our hotels. They drive our budget and that's straight return on investment," Mohrfeld said.

"And let me put some things in perspective. We give them \$25,000 to do what they do for Lee County. We spend on the person managing our tourism budget, that's \$45,000. Old Fort we spend \$90,000. The swimming pool, and I love the swimming pool, but we spend \$100,000 on the pool. If we can partner with someone instead of creating the wheel, that is a tremendous return on our investment."

Councilman Chris Greenwald said the contribution to the LCEDG and the new Amtrak depot are both issues of growth and he said the city needed to go back and prioritize.

"I think we have to go back through and prioritize and see where our best investments are. When money gets tight, it doesn't mean you just say no to everything, it means you go back through and find where your priorities lie and you'll get the best return."



GREENWALD

Randolph said, "To be able to spend whatever amount of money we decide, we could not do that on our own. To be able to take a small amount of money and pony with other amounts of money and get the horsepower we get out of Lee County Economic Development becomes critical to the long-term success of the county."

Councilman Kevin Rink said Varley outlined 12 different programs that could be reduced to provide the \$25,000 per year.

"I don't want to sound like I'm negative against it, but I'm reasonably comfortable with the funds that we've all discussed, but where do we find this money. We're sure it's there, we've found money before."

Councilman Bob Morawitz said he wasn't as confident the revenues would be there.

"I'd love to give them the \$50,000 per year or more because it's needed, but you have to take care your own family first. Public safety is our number one issue and I don't want to cut anything out of there," he said.

Mike Mohrfeld, of Mohrfeld Electric and Green Oak Development, sits on the LCEDG board of directors and said Green Oak development was born out of the Iowa Fertilizer Company announcement.

"Working behind the scenes with this group they are on the right track. ROI on a \$25,000 investment, I think it's our job to come back to you in six months, 12 months, and show you what that ROI looks like, but I can assure it's going to be there in a fiscal sense,"

Mohrfeld said. Councilman Chad Canagas said he'd like to see where we get it.

"What I'm hearing right now is every dollar we put somewhere comes from somewhere else because we don't have extra. So I'd like to see hard numbers of where we get it?"

Rusty Andrews said he was happy with the discussion on the issue.

"We're talking about \$25,000

and we've seen a lot bigger issues come across the council that we voted and approved and we didn't know where it was going to come from. This was a great discussion and it needs to happen more often and make sure these things are solved at budget, but I don't know how we solve it."



ANDREWS



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Lotto America™	Wed & Sat	8:59 pm	10:00 pm
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Pick 3 - Evening	Daily	9:40 pm	10:00 pm
Pick 4 - Midday	Daily	Noon	12:20 pm
Pick 4 - Evening	Daily	9:40 pm	10:00 pm



10/15
1 30 39 41 42
Lucky Ball: 12



10/15 MID-DAY
9 5 2
10/15 EVENING
0 8 8



10/15 MID-DAY
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Current-Lee/Weather

CURRENT-LEE

LCHD offering October flu clinics

Lee County Health Department will be holding Flu Clinics throughout the month of October at various locations throughout Lee County. Flu clinics are open to the public, and offered to anyone ages 6 months or older. Medicare Part B, except Humana Gold choice, will be accepted for billing Medicare. Bring your Medicare card to the clinic. Flu vaccines for people without Medicare Part B will be \$25.

Complete Flu Clinic Schedule: Oct. 15, 8:00 am – 11:00 am – Montrose Public Library, 200 Main St., Montrose, IA; Oct. 16, 8:30 am – 10:00 am – Hoerner YMCA, 2126 Plank Rd., Keokuk, IA; Oct. 17, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm – Donnellson Public Library, 411 S. Main St., Donnellson, IA; Oct. 18, 8:30 am – 9:30 am – Hotel Iowa, 401 Main St., Keokuk, IA; Oct. 18, 10:00 am – noon – Heritage Center, 508 Main St., Keokuk, IA; Oct. 18, 9:00 am – 10:00 am – Eagle Bluff Apartments, 2803 Ave. A, Fort Madison, IA; Oct. 23, 8:30 am – 10:00 am – Rose Michael Gardens, 4516 Ave. L, Fort Madison, IA; Oct. 23, 10:30 am – noon – Parkview Apartments, 507 Iowa Joe St, West Point, IA; Oct. 25, noon – 5:30 pm – Lee County Health Department, #3 John Bennett Dr., Fort Madison, IA. Visit Lee County Health Department's website here to learn more: <http://www.leeconomyhd.org/index.php/flu-schedule/>.

CURRENT-LEE

Veteran's Breakfast at Sunnybrook

Each month on the third Tuesday of the month, Sunnybrook Assisted Living hosts a Veteran's Breakfast from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. at 5025 River Valley Road in Fort Madison.

Heels & Wheels Car Care Clinic

Griffin Muffler & Brake Center invites you to their Women – Heels & Wheels free car care clinic, Saturday, October 20, 10am-1pm, 535 Avenue G, Fort Madison. Come learn about many topics including:

What's under the hood -How to check your oil - How your brakes work - Fuel saving tips - Shock absorbers and struts - Check engine lights - What regular maintenance is really necessary for your car

Learn about tires: How to check tire pressure - How to measure tread depth - How to find the tire size for your car.

Boost your car care confidence with this free clinic and enter for door prizes and other gifts! Refreshments will be served. Seating is limited, so call 319.372.2478 to reserve your seat today!

Choczilla & Treasure Sale

First Christian Church is holding a Choczilla (everything chocolate) & Treasure sale, Saturday, October 20, 10am-1pm, 608 10th Street, Fort Madison.

YMCA's Trunk or Treat

This event had more than 600 children through the parking lot of the YMCA in 2017 and it's back for another year on Friday, October 26 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Vehicles can arrive at 5 p.m. for decorating. There is no charge for the event and businesses can decorate their car and handout candy as little goblins walk through the parking lot to receive goodies purchased by the businesses. Registration forms can be picked up at the YMCA and need to be returned by Friday, Oct. 19.

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THU 18 Oct



Clear Skies

High– 51.5° F | Low – 41.1° F

FRI 19 Oct



Moderate Rain

High– 52.4° F | Low – 47.1° F

SAT 20 Oct



Clear Skies

High – 54.7° F | Low – 38.1° F

SUN 21 Oct



Clear Skies

High– 48.8° F | Low – 48.5° F

[OpenWeatherMap](#)

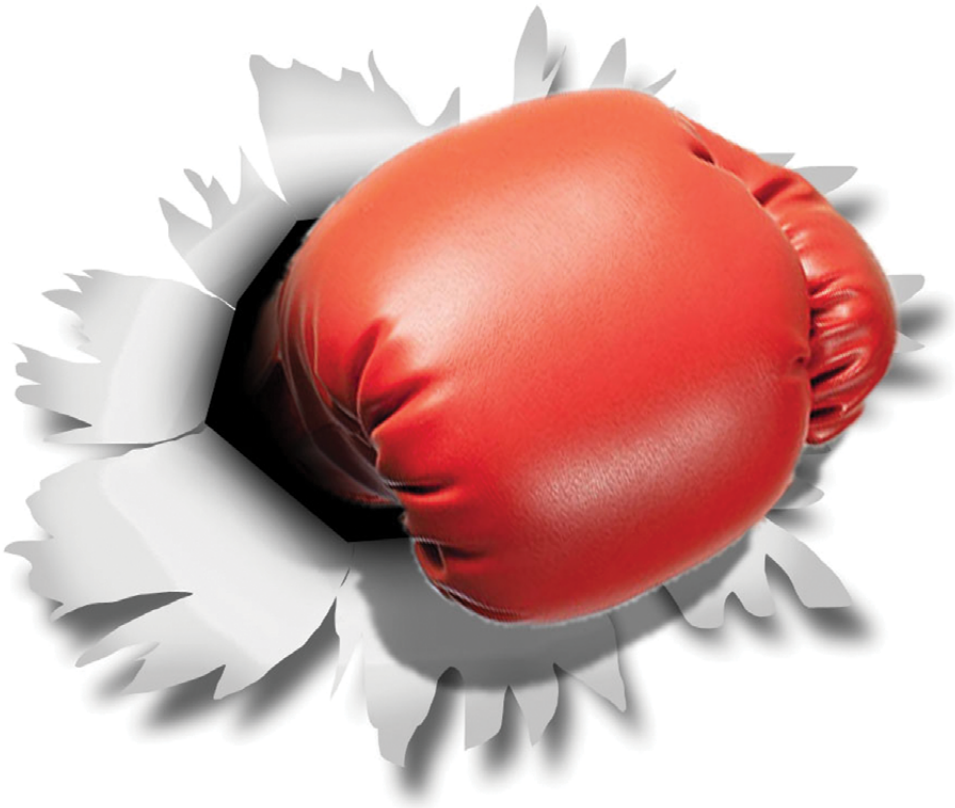
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Lee County Health Department 2018 Flu Clinic Schedule:

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<p>10/18 Hotel Iowa Keokuk 8:30am-9:30am</p>	<p>10/23 Parkview Apts. West Point 10:30am-Noon</p>	
<p>10/18 Heritage Center Keokuk 10:00am-Noon</p>	<p>10/25 LCHD (#3 John Bennett Drive) Ft. Madison Noon-5:30pm</p>	
<p>10/18 Eagle Bluff Apts. Ft. Madison 9:00am-10:00am</p>	<p>11/1 McAleer Hall Fort Madison 10:00am-2:00pm</p>	



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Celebrations/From the Front

Amtrak depot project still on for now

AMTRAK - Continued from Page 1

of track through New Mexico that doesn't have positive track controls. Burlington Northern is no longer using that stretch of track and have received a waiver from the federal government to not have those safety mechanisms on that stretch.

"Amtrak does not want to run their trains on a portion of the track that is not covered by PTCs, so they have talked about options with the Southwest Chief using buses to cover that 550-mile stretch, which they feel would just add to the decrease ridership."

He said Amtrak has received the necessary waivers and have an alternative in place to run on that track next year so he said the Chief is safe for next year. He also said Amtrak is taking a big look at all of their routes and especially the long-haul routes. One option is shortening the Chief run from Kansas City to Chicago. The Chief is the Amtrak train that runs east and west through Fort Madison.

But he said Carper and another Amtrak official have assured him that no conversations have taken place about eliminating a stop in Fort Madison.

Councilmen Bob Morawitz, Matt Mohrfeld, Mark Lair and Chad Cangas all expressed reservations about continuing with the project.

Cangas said he's uncomfortable with Amtrak's lack of a commitment to keep Fort Madison a viable stop. Mohrfeld said it was time the city set a hard deadline on the project to either move forward or get out of it.

"So Amtrak has gotten a one year waiver for a track that doesn't have all the safety regulations it would normally require and then, after that, it's entirely feasible that the government would pull that waiver and they wouldn't be able to run on it anyway," Cangas said.

If the city pulled the plug on the project, Varley said the city would have to pay back about \$63,500 in grant money. The city has about \$370,000 in additional potential costs if the depot project is finally approved. The additional

funds have been budgeted and are being carried year to year so money is there to take care of the city's costs.

The project would move the depot, including ticketing operations and a passenger platform, to the historic depot in River-view Park.

Councilman Chris Greenwald said he was against the project at the beginning, but they are too far in now to stop and turn around. He challenged the councilman who said there are too many uncertainties with Amtrak's future plans by saying if the council shuttered the project they would know that people wouldn't be stopping.

"I believe if we shut this thing down, we've bought the 'Closed' sign and put up the first couple letters.

I don't have a whole lot of good solid guarantees to sell you on this, but I really want to see this through," he said.

Mark Lair said the city shouldn't be in the depot business, and Greenwald said the city shouldn't also be involved in the Old Fort business.

"I agree," Lair said. "But I still don't think we should be in the depot business. Why should we be maintaining their depot, cleaning their depot, manning their depot to an extent at \$40,000 per year?"

After about an hour-long conversation, the council decided to forge ahead because no action was taken. Randolph said he and City Manager David Varley would continue to push Amtrak to get the required infor-

mation back so they can move forward and would update the council at upcoming meetings.

Right now, Amtrak has approved agreements from the Council and those documents need signed and forwarded to Iowa Department of Transportation to get in the bid-letting hopper for the state. The city approved the agreements in December and then had to reapprove them with some language that was changed. That was several months ago and the city hasn't received the signed agreements.

Varley said additional real estate attorneys have gotten involved and are reviewing the documents again. Varley said he's expecting those documents any day.

Birth Announcements

Rickelman

FORT MADISON - Mr. and Mrs. Luke and Ashley Rickelman, of Fort Madison, are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Elena Marie Rickelman, born Oct. 11, 2018 at the Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Elena is welcomed home by Emmett Rickelman.

Grandparents are Marty and Twila Rung of Fort Madison and Warren and Peggy Rickelman of Fort Madison. Great-grandparents are Norbert and Jean Rickelman of Fort Madison and Martha Dohman of West Point.

The Pen City Current congratulates the family on this wonderful news.

Tapp

FORT MADISON - Erica Boudreau and Jacob Tapp, both of Fort Madison, are proud to announce the birth of their son Zayne Donald Lee Tapp on Oct. 10, 2018 at Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Zayne is joined at home by Cescily Lampe and Zeke Tapp.

Grandparents are Jeanine Rosenboom of Fort Madison, Calvin Boudreau of Argyle, and Teresa Tapp of Fort Madison. Great-grandparents are Donald Tapp (deceased) of Fort Madison, and Hazel Andrew (deceased) of Dallas City, Ill.

The Pen City Current congratulates the family on this wonderful news.



GRRWA's 3rd Annual pReserve Day

Recycling Event

Wednesday, October 24, 7am-4pm

Open to all residents of Lee, Van Buren, & rural Henry Counties

Commercial & Business

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Fertilizers, herbicides, household & Auto cleaning products, insecticides, oil based paints, paint thinners & solvents, pesticides, pool chemicals, motor oil, antifreeze. All batteries and lightbulbs; propane tanks & more!

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Appliances & e-Waste (Electronics)

All household appliances will be accepted. Electronics is anything that plugs into a wall or takes batteries. There is a fee for Appliances and any screened electronics (computer monitor, TV, laptop, tablets, etc.) During this event, GRRWA will accept any combination of four (4) appliances/screened electronics, per vehicle, at no cost! There will be a fee for any additional screened electronics/appliances. Vehicles can only come through ONCE with electronics/appliances.

NEW THIS YEAR



Goodwill of the Heartland will be on-site from 7am-2pm to collect gently used clothing.

Great River Regional Waste Authority
2092 303rd Avenue, Fort Madison

One-On-Ones - Jeff Reichman

Reichman says economic development is still top priority

REPUBLICAN - Continued from Page 1

His family moved around a lot within Keokuk before he graduated high school.

"My parents were at the forefront of find-it, fix-it, flip-it, but they didn't do it in 90 days, it was every three to six years while we were living in it. So I lived in about 11 homes in Keokuk while I was child before I ever left for college. I had a lot of experience in real estate and fixing stuff and home improvement."

He is facing off against Jeff Kurtz (D-Fort Madison) for the 83rd District Iowa House seat being vacated with the retirement of Jerry Kearns at the end of this year.

Reichman has put in more than a quarter century with the U.S. Marines, serving two tours in Iraq and is still serving in the reserves.

Currently, his capacity is as an Individual Marine Augment.

"I augment them as a reservist for exercises. I've been to Korea four times and the Philippines the year before that. The last time I went out to Headquarters for Marine Forces Pacific which is in charge of the entire Pacific realm from California to India including all training, multinational training, and briefing reports to the general each morning," Reichman said.

He said politics in the state and country is an emotional topic.

"I think it's each party fighting for its relevance. We saw that in the last few weeks. That was one of the questions we had in our last debate and we all agreed it's terrible. A lot of grandstanding, butting heads, and push and pull," he said. "I think they've lost sight of who they're serving because look at what they've done driving people to the extremes."

Reichman said bringing the country together comes down to leadership and we've lost a lot of that because elected officials are more worried about self-serving than worry-

ing about the people they represent and America as a whole.

"We have a lot of good qualities in our president now," he said. "You can't find a person to please everybody. And I won't say I support everything he does or the way he does everything, but his results speak for themselves and we've had some great results."

He said previous free trade agreements were anything but free, and President Donald Trump has made great strides in rectifying the agreements made under previous administrations.

"Obviously we know now that these other agreements were not 'Free Trade' but we didn't know that as the general public. We said free trade so we figured everything was just flowing back and forth and we now know that wasn't the case at all. An extra \$3 to \$4 a gallon for milk to Canada - obviously not free, or an extra \$2,500 on a car in Japan or China, obviously not free trade. And he fixed that and he's in the process of signing other agreements as well."

Some of the results of the agreements are still to be determined, and Reichman said the real value of the new agreements will take some time to be realized.

"Even with the farmers, you can find one that doesn't like what's going on, but you can also find several that have confidence that trade deals are going to get signed for our food products as well."

BUDGET

With Gov. Reynolds announcing a budget surplus of more than \$120 million last month, Reichman said he thinks the main contributor to that is economic growth.

"I think it's a combination of a few things, but we know, and the governor has said it herself, there needs to be changes to health care, specific to mental health, and they did take some steps to put that back

in the budget. But the economic growth is the largest part of it, which I think is a great thing."

He said his fear is that people are going to find a way to spend the surplus instead of using it bring people's tax burden down.

"My fear is that you put an extra pile of money in front of someone they're going to find a way to spend it. When the gas prices went down five years ago I was interviewed for Channel 10 and they asked what I thought of a gas tax and I said I don't think we should look for ways to tax people. Tax and spend is not the right way and that's my fear is that we have this budget surplus and we'll find a way to spend it."

He said the state is looking at online sales tax as a way to help offset more of the spending cuts absorbed in the past few years.

Reichman said that is part of keeping up with technology, but any increased revenue from online sales needs to be re-allocated from the state, that would probably collect the tax, back to the local economies.

"We've had clothing and other stores close up shop and now you buy those things online now and that's revenue out of our local economy that's going somewhere else. We need to make sure if they are collecting at the state level it doesn't stay there, but filters back down to where the revenue was lost."

HEALTH CARE

Reichman said the privatization is certainly a change for Iowans. He referenced former General Electric CEO Jack Welch who said if you're not No. 1 or 2 in the business get out of the business.

"I don't see a reason why Iowa should be running a health care system, that's not their forte. Run Iowa, create infrastructure and do economic development, but leaving health care to health care professionals is my philosophy," he said.

"Just by being different there's going to be criticism of it. Not all changes have been for the good. I've talked to people in health care, but what you get is the goals you set. We're the customer and the customers are always right and if the people of Iowa are not happy, you inform them that they're providing a

service and we're not happy and this is what we want changed."

Reichman said the government "upset the apple cart" with health care six years ago with the Affordable Care Act.

"I don't remember talking about the rising cost of health care until about six years ago. That has not corrected itself. I still have hopes that it will and we're still battling over it."

EDUCATION

Reichman said Iowa is in a great place regarding education, but that doesn't mean the state should be comfortable with where it is. He said the state is rated as one of the top five states in the country in education.

"You can't stop being great and you have to continue to evolve to stay great. Iowa was rated as the no. 1 place in the nation to live. We have to keep building on that success and not rest."

He said he would like to see Iowa's educational branding change to increase the focus on vocational and hands-on programming rather than forcing the four-year degree on students.

"Our education system is good, but there are some changes I'd like to see. We passed No Child Left Behind in the Bush area and the ones that are being left behind are the ones who are not choosing a four year degree. We're chasing standardized testing and I'd like to bring more industrial arts and technical programs back into the schools. Statistically, just 50% of these kids go on to a four-year college and only 25% of those graduate. We're teaching and training to go to a four-year degree and that chases the standardized tests."

He said there are a lot of kids being left behind by not being introduced to trades and that value and need saying kids are held in higher esteem if they go to college. He referenced efforts currently under way in Lee County that could be used as a model throughout the state.

"The way funds are allocated now, I don't like. We used to spend more and have more emphasis on trades and hands-on opportunities. I saw a thing on Facebook that asked what we learned in high school that we still use. I

still change my oil when I can, work on my own house, change parts on my car, usable skills that I still use today. There's a large value in those and we need to emphasize that."

IPERS

The state's Iowa Public Employees Retirement System has been pushed to the front of discussions in the past year and Reichman said he'd go so far as to say it was election year propaganda.

He said one person in the legislature made a motion to change the structure and it's been scuttlebutt ever since then.

"It's miscommunication. I would go so far in an election year to say it's probably propaganda. I've seen a video out where she's says 'No' not going to change it."

He said there is a funding shortfall and some adjustments were made to allow it to catch up over the next 20 years.

"There's going to be a lot of people retiring in the next 20 years," he said. "That needs to be monitored closely and, if it's corrected, great. If it's not, somebody's going to have make a tough decision... a lot of people are going to have make a tough decision, and make sure that it's corrected properly and continuing to increase its contributions to make sure it's properly funded. As long as it continues to fund itself, it's a good program."

WATER QUALITY

Reichman said Iowa's waterways can never be clean enough. He said water quality has improved from the days when Lake Michigan caught on fire.

"I know we've gone to a lot of drainage tile to get water off farmland quicker and that promoted runoff and that's not good, because there isn't really much of a barrier after that."

He said a two-pronged approach where we look at ways to capture the chemicals and then looking at what farmers can do to reduce the amount of nitrates and phosphates is probably the best formula.

"It would be nice to see catches to monitor the water. That's what we do with industry to monitor that waste. This is Iowa, I don't want to restrict farmers, but I don't want them to hurt us in an effort to help us. I want to make sure

what they are putting on the crops to make sure they grow properly and feed us all aren't ultimately harming us in the long run."

OPEN MIC

"What I've been pushing from the start is economic development. Yes, it's finding more businesses to locate in Iowa and having existing businesses hire more and that's happening and that's great. The other thing is improving the standard of living. If we have a higher demand for jobs, the wages go up. Wages have been stagnant and repressed. Iowa has an extremely low cost of living here."

"We've got to make sure we're covering with education those shortfalls from these jobs that are left open. With recruiting of people, we've lost 10,000 people in Lee County in just over a decade so if you do an average wage in Lee County as \$30,000...\$300 million gone. Gone from the tax base, from people who buy a home, groceries, gas, clothes - all the activity that happens in the local economy."

"We need to rebrand our education goals. Trying to shove everyone into a four-year program isn't the route to go. Again at the state and federal level, we've got a bunch of lawyers and doctors and people with four-year degrees who think that's the way to go. A shift in that process that we raise all our children to have four-year degrees needs to take place."

"As I've said, I am a working guy, doing shift work at Roquette and there's a misconception that if you're a Republican you can't represent the worker. I've punched a clock, I've worked shift work and weekends and holidays. I've been laid off and unemployed. I've been through those things and I understand people in Lee County are going through that. At the same time I've had the background and diversity with my business degree working in retail, manufacturing, military, all at different levels with many different people."

"I enjoy talking with people and I think I can bring that communication and the conversation to get people together. I'm open to everyone and appreciate their input and I'll show value in that input, and get things done."

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One-On-Ones - Jeff Kurtz

Government and free market mix is best for Iowa

DEMOCRAT - Continued from Page 1

Kurtz was taking his wife on a 10-day cruise this past winter and decided to not ask her about the run prior to the vacation so it didn't weigh on them on the trip. But he said on the way back home, he sprung the idea on her.

"We were sitting in an airport in San Francisco and I said, 'Honey, what would you think about me running for Jerry Kearns' seat. I've been asked to do it.' She looked over at me and said, if it doesn't involve too much work for me, I don't care what you do. And I said, well I'll take that as a yes."

Kurtz is a retired engineer and labor union leader with the Santa Fe Railroad and then later the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad.

He started with the Santa Fe railroad in April of 1974 and a year later was promoted as a locomotive engineer in Chicago. He lived there for about five years where he met his wife. The couple married in 1979 and in April of 1980 the couple moved back to Fort Madison.

In 1982 he was elected to an office with the railroad's Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainman Union Local 391 and then stepped aside after his three-year term. He had planned on retiring from the union work then, but took an alternate legislative representative. In the union that is the position that handles political duties and safety.

"I was going to be the alternate, but in January the guy who took the spot died of a heart attack, so I ascended into that position at that point."

Kurtz said it was then that he began to develop relationships with the state union board. He said he became friends with chairman and secretary/treasurer of the state legislative board. In the summer, Kurtz agreed to run for the 1st vice to the chairman and then the chairman stepped down and he quickly took over as chairman of that board, and has served on the board for more than four decades.

"That board oversees four railroads in the state and I got my baptism by fire right away with some of the safety issues we had," Kurtz said.

He then held that position until 2014 when he retired from the board in April, but then stayed on with the railroad and retired officially in October.

Kurtz said he helped with some of the safety issues as a retiree and maintained those Des Moines contacts. He was actually helping with some issues when the possibility of running for the Iowa legislature opened up.

"The people at the railroad really encouraged me to do this along with other union members and other political activists."

Kurtz had three boys graduate locally, one from the public schools and two from the former Fort Madison Aquinas, and said the state is falling behind in educating its citizens.

He said the party line for the Republicans is out of touch with the taxpayers of Iowa.

"In 2008, in the middle of the Culver administration education funding was 45.8% of our state budget I believe," he said. "From there until 2015 as Republicans started gaining control, it's now down to 40.7% so when people say we're not cutting the budget, we are cutting the budget."

The 1% allowable growth public schools received last year doesn't even allow inflation and doesn't compensate for population growth, he said. He agreed that the state is spending more actual dollars on education, but as a percentage of the state's budget and considering inflation and student population, that argument is leaving children behind.

"We have to keep moving forward, we can't move backwards. This is our future. These kids being productive is what's going to take care of me in my old age."

BUDGET

Kurtz said Iowa has to start thinking differently when it comes to tax breaks and credits.

"I'm not against tax cuts and tax credits, but I am when it fosters corporate welfare and giving taxpayer money to people who don't need it," he said. "Like we did with Apple last year. We just handed them \$20 million and then gave them another \$113 million in tax

breaks and credits. When we talk about how were going to fund mental health, education, medicaid, it can't be that way."

Kurtz said the recent announcement of \$127 million budget surplus was a byproduct of dangerous cuts.

"Look what we did with education mid-year, and corrections mid-year, and we still have this Medicaid debacle. And a month ago (Gov. Kim Reynolds) just gave Medicaid insurers \$103 million, so most of that's gone anyway. We also have to look at next year, where there's another \$104 million hole shot in the budget. Last year we had to get into the rainy day fund for \$140 million. We dodged a bullet once and we think we're Superman. We can't keep doing this," he said.

He said long-term planning and consistency is the key to keeping the state financially healthy. But he said using proposed online sales tax for additional state revenue is still something to be investigated.

IPERS

Kurtz said the Iowa Public Employee Retirement System may need to be calibrated to become fully funded, but he said converting those accounts and that program to a 401K is the wrong idea.

"From what I've looked at, things need to be tweaked all the time and if it needs to be tweaked so be it. We did that frequently with the railroad, but to go in a direction of a 401k - no. The people that are going to eligible, and those that are currently on IPERS now, don't want that. There is no reason for that and it works fine the way it is."

He said the Chapter 20 overhaul that took place in 2017 was supposed to just have a been a few tweaks, but didn't end there.

"There are times when we'll need to tweak it, but they said that, too, with Chapter 20 and they completely demolished it," he said. "We have to be careful when they say 'We're going to make a few changes' - let's look at past history when they've said this."

Kurtz said he worries about IPERS because if something drastic were to happen to IPERS it would put the \$21 million annually that the retirement system brings into Lee County and \$1.8 billion in the state in jeopardy.

"If we roll the dice this could have serious, serious financial repercussions especially in a place like this where we're still suffering."

HEALTH CARE

Kurtz said the privatization of public health services in Iowa has done a great disservice to the those in need.

"I hear stuff all the time about people getting jerked around by insurance companies, especially the privatized care, because those companies don't have to be as transparent as the state did," he said.

Kurtz said Iowa's Medicaid Director, Mike Randol, doesn't have the best track record.

"Everything we're hearing is that they're losing money. We're hearing that people aren't getting coverage they should and they're actually dying because of this. That's because there's no consistency in the system and there's not going to be when there's no accountability," he said.

"Those companies' purpose is to make money and they make money by not paying claims," he said.

He also indicated state Medicaid administrative costs under the state-run program was 3 to 4% and now that figure has climbed to 12 to 15%.

"12 to 15 percent is more than 3 to 4% I don't care what kind of math you use," he said. "Capitalism... I get it, but this is more like highway robbery than capitalism."

RURAL IOWA INITIATIVE

Gov. Reynolds has launched an Empower Rural Iowa Initiative with task forces aimed at bring ideas and solutions to the table next year on issues such as connectivity, investment, and growth. Kurtz said the effort could be sincere and not just an election year stunt.

"You can't get inside her head, but from what we've seen from her in the past, I've been skeptical. What I will say is that if this is the case, we need people that will hold her feet to the fire," he said. "A good example is the Iowa Energy Plan. That was a pretty good plan. It was really good and then this year they passed a bill that

would slash what utility companies are able to do with investment in alternative energy. This is what I've been saying about consistency. They come up with something decent and then they undermine themselves."

"I don't want to try and judge her motives, she might be pure on these motives, but past practice tells you they're not consistent and if they see a path for a short-term gain, they'll go after it. The one thing they are consistent with is they'll go after the short-term gain every time."

WATER QUALITY

The state passed a bill in January that earmarks \$282 million for water quality issues including \$156 million for farmers to use cover crops, bioreactors, and buffers to help deal with nitrate and phosphate run-off into Iowa's waterways.

Kurtz said it's a step in the right direction but there was no firm commitment to funding it.

"When we talk about water we also need to talk about the health of the soil. Hopefully we're moving in the right direction and I don't think this bills does a lot, but it does say they recognize there is a problem."

OPEN MIC

"I'm not in this to be the prom king of Lee County.

"I can't think of anything I hate worse than trying to raise money. I don't want to be the guy who says you need to elect me and I'm gonna do this for ya and I'm gonna do that for you...Now give me ten bucks. At my age I'm doing all right. I'm doing this for other reasons and I'm not going to get rich off it. This should be something where you're not running to get rich."

"(Politics) is more polarized that it's been in the past, but if you look back at our founding fathers there's was some really nasty stuff there. People say when I'm knocking on doors, go in there and get something done. Don't just go in and put your fingers in people's chest and tell everybody how tough you are."

"The biggest thing for me is we're dangerously understaffed in corrections. That's an issue of saving lives and that's in the short-term. We have to bring back funding for corrections. You can throw law enforcement in there, too, because that's saving lives. You could throw mental health in there, as well. People I'm talking to are saying this a bigger issue than they thought. We have people handling it that aren't trained to handle it. We're putting the people impaired in danger and the people around them in danger and we're putting the people who have to deal with this like law enforcement, corrections, nurses, hospital staffs. We're putting them in danger, too."

"We should use government where government works and we can make a determination that we use the free market where that works. To be a pound-the-table socialist or a pound-the-table capitalist..I just don't think that's the way to go. It's messy, but that's why you elect people. You elect them for their vision and how they understand the issues."

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HUNTING BUDDY INDOOR SAFE
PROPANE HEATER

6000-12,000 BTU
MRHT132035



NEW

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DEWALT CORDLESS
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6000/12000 BTU
20 VOLT
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PLASTIC SHEETING

10% OFF
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TOWER
OSC CERAMIC
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1500W
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HEATER
15,000 BTU
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BLUE BUFFALO
ADULT

Chicken and Brown Rice
 6 LB
 BB000074
 15 LB **\$27.99**
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ORIGINAL
 50 LB
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PURINA TIDY CATS
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Attacks and Neutralizes
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All the Strength, Half
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ELECTROLYTE
 5 LB
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SCENT KILLER**

12 oz. spray
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CLOTHING WASH**

48 oz. liquid
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After \$5 Mail-in
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VALUE PACK**
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Pack
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\$5 MAIL IN REBATE!



\$5 MAIL IN REBATE!

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VALUE PACK**
Odorless Formula
1 gallon plus
24 oz. spray bottle
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Be Ready for **DEER SEASON**



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**BUCK LICKERS
FLAVORED SALT BLOCKS**
4 LB
Wild Persimmon - 5099627
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Sweet Corn and
Molasses - 0409649



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OIL WIPES**
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BIGR018411



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HEAT A SEAT
CUSHION**
FEEL THE HEAT
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CO-CAIN
MIX**
6.5 lb.
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READY TO USE**
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RATES TO 600 LBS



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SNOW THROWER**
21" 123CC



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SELECT MODELS
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Battery Powered AK series chainsaw kit. Kit includes: Chainsaw, Battery, and Charger

AK

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CHAINSAWS