



Pen City Current

Sunday, March 19, 2017 | 10 pages | Volume 1 • Issue 76

Legislators talk worker issues at forum

Workers' comp. and minimum wage take center stage

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Legislative Forum

State Rep. Jerry Kearns addresses about 20 people at The Palms in Fort Madison Friday afternoon. At left, State Sen. Rich Taylor and at right, State Rep. Dave Heaton listen to the dialogue on worker's compensation.

worker's compensation and minimum wage issues currently being hotly debated in Des Moines.

A change to worker's compensation laws is currently in front of the

House targets shoulder injuries and looks to move them into a scheduled injury classification, which would put it on par with a loss of a body part such as a finger or

an eye. Currently the law compensates workers who have injuries to backs or shoulders as an injury to the body as a whole and figures benefits on a weekly basis at a percent-

"It's a bad bill as far as I'm concerned. It's bad for workers and I don't think it's that great for employers, either"

-Jerry Kearns, State Representative

age of loss to the body as a whole. The new law would cap that amount at 5 to 10% of the body as a whole, but includes a retraining benefit of \$15,000 for a two-year junior college program.

However, Kearns said if you didn't take advantage of that retraining benefit you lose it. He also did

credit the Republican party for pulling certain qualifications out of the bill for example once you hit age 67 benefits stop.

"We did have it in the house yesterday and debated it for a few hours," he said. "It's a bad bill as far as I'm concerned. It's bad for workers and I don't think it's that great for employers either. It adds cost to the state because it provides for junior college education if you can't go back to work. And if you don't take advantage of that, you lose the benefit."

Kearns said it was the meatpackers in Iowa that are behind the change to the law.

"Tyson Foods and other meatpackers have an extreme amount of shoulder injuries because those jobs require buck-

See **WORKERS**, page 3



Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Trivia and fun

At left, FMHS Activities Director Andrew Mitchell gives a trivia question to about 120 people in attendance at the annual Taco Supper/Trivia Night that helps fund the FMHS music department. Above Mitchell calls the last heads or tails for half the pot. Brian Pauly, left, won the game as heads was called.

Advertiser Index

Boulders Inn & Suites Fort Madison.....	P.3	Hope Associates Real Estate	Ps.7-9
Classifieds	P.6	KLM Realty	P.6
Dave's Old Fashion Meats	P.5	River City Motors Plus	P.6
Farm Bureau Financial Services	P.3	StopTextsStopWrecks.org	P.6
Griffin Muffler & Brake Center	P.10	Under the Sun / The Avenue	P.3
GRRWA.....	P.2		

News Index

Business	P.4
From the front.....	P.3
For the Record.....	P.3
Sports	P.2

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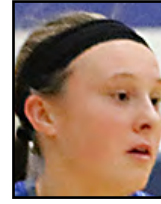
Schneider's first-place paces FM track girls

Harris sets personal best in shot; 4x800 takes 2nd

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
 PCC EDITOR

MONMOUTH - Holy Trinity Catholic junior Brett Schneider set the pace for the Fort Madison girls track team with a first-place finish in the 800-meter run at the Galesburg Silver Streak Indoor Invitational on Saturday on the 200-meter oval at Monmouth College.

Schneider's time of 2:25.52 was a full 2.8 seconds ahead of Dunlap's Jena Brooks to win the event, while the Bloodhound's Sierra Howardson finished in fourth-place



SCHNEIDER

in the same event with a time of 2:31.09.

Fort Madison got a 2nd place finish

when they added three more girls and a baton to make a 4x800 relay team consisting of Schneider, Howardson, Kamryn Bailey and Claire Mendez to finish with a time of 10:27.67, 21 seconds off the pace set by Dunlap.

Head Coach Brian Mendez said senior Britiney Harris hit a personal best 33"0" in the shot put which was good enough for a fourth-place finish at the meet.

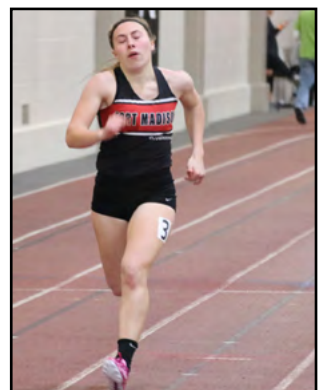
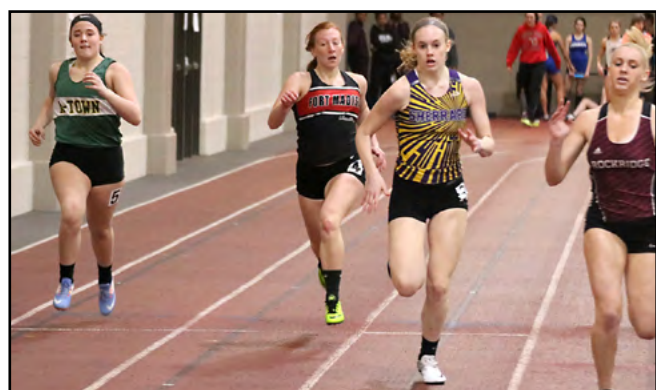
The other top 10 finish at the meet was Cayleigh Smith with a 9th place finish in the 3200 at 14:09.

Other finishers for the Hounds included Claire Hellman in the 3200 at

15.05. Melody McVey finished the 60-meter dash at 9.11, while Harris finished just behind at 9.35. In the 400-meter dash, Mendez took 16th with a time of 1:12.30 and Aliana Gilpin took 26th with a time of 1:18.88. The 4x200 relay team of Brynn Schroeder, McVey, Bailey and Gilpin took 16th place with 2:04.28. In the 60-meter hurdles, Elizabeth Miller took 25th with a time of 13.42.

In the 200-meter dash Bailey took 16th with a time of 30.70 and Schroeder finished in 24th place with a time of 31.50 and in the 1600-meter run Miller took 16th with a time of 6:32.46 and Anna Kester took 19th with a mark of 6:41.51.

The girls are off now until March 30 when they travel with the boys varsity team to the Panther Relays in Mount Pleasant.



Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

'Hounds on the run

At top, the Bloodhounds' Elizabeth Miller, second from right, and Anna Kester, 5th from right, compete in the 1600-meter run Saturday at the Galesburg Indoor Invitational. See story for results. The Bloodhounds' Kamryn Bailey, above right, pulls out third-place in her heat of the 200-meter dash. Bailey placed 16th overall in the event with a time of 30.7. Brynn Schroeder digs deep in the 200-meter dash, above left, on Saturday. Schroeder finished 24th in the event with a time of 31.50.

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From the Front/For the Record

Dems say it's hypocritical to preempt local governments

WORKERS - Continued from Page 1

ing carcasses, and hands and arms are up all the time. They are the movers behind this because it will save them tons of money," Kearns said. "It should continue as an injury to the body as a whole. You might be able to go an office job or type or something, but that's the type of injury that is. Other things in the bill consider weight, age... and those things that say, 'well you're fat and your 60 years old,' and that's part of this bill and it keeps an employee from getting proper benefits."

Taylor said when the bill comes over from the House he wants to work across lines to improve the bill rather than outright opposing it, but said he would oppose it in it's current form.



KEARNS

"When it comes over from the house and we start discussing it, I'm going to be working to fix it. I'm sure the Republican party is going to be passing it as is, but as with any other bill, I would prefer to work with them rather than just say I oppose it. I'm sure I will oppose it however, as it is written."

Heaton said when he saw the bill initially he questioned the need.

"My question when I saw the bill was 'Why are we doing this. What's wrong,'" Heaton said. "There's a strong feeling in industry that worker's comp is not based on written law. It is and it isn't. It's case law that's deciding and setting the ground floor on the benefits that are going to be rewarded. That case

"It drives me crazy when I think individual communities and counties can take it upon themselves to have a minimum wage..."

-Dave Heaton, State Representative

law continued to grow and they felt it was time to come forward and have a written law addressed and set a new floor.

"I was concerned whether or not there was balance between the worker and the employer. That's important and it has to be fair. The original proposal was rather draconian and one of those parts, along with no benefits after 67, was the clause about the preponderance of the injury determining the size of the award. The current code is "substantial" and what they wanted to do was change that to "predominantly" to mean that over 51% of the current job had to contribute to the injury."

He said he wasn't sure of the fairness of that and used the example of a truck driver who works for years for several different companies and incurs carpal tunnel syndrome.

"I always like to use the example of driving a truck. When your a truck driver you might drive for Schneider and then maybe CSRT. Anyway your going to change who you drive a truck for. But the whole time your driv-



HEATON

ing, your hand is on the wheel under constant pressure and at some point you're

probably going to encounter carpal tunnel. Under the law they want to say the current company had to contribute to more than 51% of the injury. To me that didn't seem quite right. A lot of people with serious confirmed injuries were going to get screwed over."

Heaton spoke along party lines with regard to House Bill 295 that would remove local government's abilities to set minimum wage above the state level.

"I really strongly believe the state needs to have a minimum wage. It drives me crazy when I think individual communities and counties can take it upon themselves to have a minimum wage here and another county has a minimum wage there, and two border counties having two different wages, and cities within counties... I'm hoping this year before we go home we'll have a statewide minimum wage. We have to clear the deck for a statewide minimum wage."

Kearns said it seemed a bit hypocritical for the majority party, who has always in the past sounded the horn for local government rights, to now take some of those rights from them. He also indicated that if the state sets a wage different the federal wage, why would they then keep that right from local governments.

"The state does have a minimum wage, it's the federal minimum wage."

The federal wage is set but each state has an opportunity to increase that. I think most states agree with that - to compete for jobs, but minimum wage is hardly a living wage so we need to increase it. I don't have a problem with localities increasing if they think it's the right thing to do for their people. I commend Lee County for starting the process although it may be short-lived if we preempt that," Kearns said.

"How serious are we about letting these localities have control? Generally the majority has been vocal about giving local control and this year we've certainly seen an infringement upon that route. If that's the way we go, Dave, I hope your party puts a decent increase on it."

Taylor too said it didn't seem to fall in line with past Republican stances on local control.

"I don't think anyone would be happy if the federal government told the state of Iowa we couldn't have a wage higher than their rate. So I don't think the state should come in and tell counties what



TAYLOR

they can set for a minimum wage. I don't think it's right to do it, but it's really not right if we don't have a higher rate," Taylor said.

"For four years when I was in the majority every bill we had I had to decide if this was a local control issue or if we were telling people to do what we say. I fought hard to make sure we didn't put our hand down on them and I will continue fight for that."

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Department Report

03/15/17 - 11:29 p.m. - Fort Madison Police arrested John Lee Lightfoot, 47, of Fort Madison, in the 2000 block of 303rd Avenue, on a charge of OWI-1st offense. He was taken to the Lee County Correctional Center and jailed.
03/16/17 - 3:44 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a property damage accident at the intersection of Hwy. 61 and 61 Business south.
03/16/17 - 4:38 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a stolen vehicle in the 400 block of Avenue D.
03/16/17 - 6:45 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 3900 block of Bluff Road.
03/16/17 - 10:09 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit & run in the 1800 block of Avenue L.

Lee County Sheriff's Department Report

03/15/17 - 6:23 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to one vehicle accident on Hwy 27. A vehicle

driven by Jessica L. Betts of Chattanooga, Tenn. lost control and entered the right ditch, overcorrected and entered the left ditch and struck a metal culvert. Betts vehicle was totaled. Betts declined treatment at the scene and no citations were issued at the scene.

03/16/17 - 1:43 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Romi Mokihana Jensen, 46, of Mt.Pleasant at the Lee County Sheriff's office on a warrant for probation/pre-trial violation. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

03/16/17 - 2:43 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Dawn Marie Mackey, 48, of Burlington at the Lee County Sheriff's office on a temporary hold. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held. *All persons in these listings are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.*

Fort Madison Fire Department Report

03/16/17 -Fort Madison firefighters responded to one lift assist and one medical call.
03/17/17- Fort Madison firefighters responded to one medical call and one burn complaint.

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Business

St. Patrick's party at Griffin's



St. Patty's fun

A blowout Business After Hours was held on Thursday at Griffin Muffler and Brake Center with a St. Patrick's Day theme with more than 16 door prizes given away including a weekend Newton, Iowa Speedway race package to Rob Poetting, pictured above with Nannette and Clark Griffin. The other photos are of door prize and Best and Worst Irish costume winners.

Photos courtesy of Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce



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1/2 of 1/2 Beef
100 lbs. - Cut Wrapped & Frozen - \$447
 All Cuts Boneless Except T-Bones
 Chuck Roast, Arm Roast, Ribeye Steak, Brisket, Round Steak, Swiss Steak, Sirloin Tip Roast & Steak, Rump Roast, Sirloin Steak, T-Bone & Ground Beef

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100 lbs. - Cut Wrapped & Frozen - \$439
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The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, the world's largest marketer of branded consumer lawn and garden products, is seeking a **Maintenance Electrician** for the Fort Madison, Iowa location.

The Maintenance Electrician will perform detailed mechanical, instrumentation, and electrical troubleshooting, repair, and preventative maintenance on plant process, utility, and packaging equipment. This position will perform multi-discipline maintenance and electrical work and maintain appropriate documentation.

This position requires a High School Diploma/GED, PLC Technician and Electrical Educational Courses. Candidates should be able to demonstrate the technical skills required to install/service a variety of systems in addition to program, repair, and maintain programmable logic controller systems (PLC) used in a high speed industrial packaging facility. Individual must be committed to maintaining a safe and clean work environment and complying with regulations and policies. This position must be available to work any shift and overtime as needed.

Minimum five years' experience in an electrical maintenance field in a manufacturing environment. For expanded job details and to apply visit <http://www.scottsmiraclegro.com/careers> and search for Req 2221.

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HELP WANTED

The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, the world's largest marketer of branded consumer lawn and garden products, is seeking an **Inventory Coordinator** for the Fort Madison, Iowa location.

The Inventory Coordinator (Warehouse Stager) is responsible for the inventory management of multiple production components. This includes physical counts and inventory reconciliation before, after and during production campaigns.

This position requires a High School Diploma/GED, strong math skills, and the ability to follow directions provided in verbal or non-verbal format. Candidates should be able to demonstrate a willingness to learn multiple job assignments, able to utilize Microsoft Office and Google Chrome, safely operate a fork truck in a manufacturing environment, excellent prioritization skills and the ability to perform multiple simultaneous tasks, with interruptions. This position must be available to work any shift and overtime as needed.

Minimum one year experience in a manufacturing or warehouse environment and past SAP experience. For expanded job details and to apply visit <http://www.scottsmiraclegro.com/careers> and search for Req 2124.

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**3 BR • 2 BA • 2 car garage
1,168 sq. ft. • 0.54 acres**
Lovely family home comfortably situated at the end of a cul de sac, where you can enjoy the woods and the privacy! There is an inviting deck off the back of the home overlooking the woods and beautiful vinyl fencing. There are newer mechanicals and a newer roof, 2 fireplaces and lots of storage!! Don't miss out on this beauty.
Listing #20163951 • \$129,000



**5BR • 2.50BA • 2 car garage
2,834 sq. ft.
14,868 sq. ft. lot**
Amazing family home on a large corner lot in Farmington, IA. 2 fireplaces, beautiful woodwork, a beautiful open front porch, a large yard and an oversized garage!!
Listing #20164117 • \$127,500



**2BR • 1BA • 1 car garage
1,224 sq. ft.
7,250 sq. ft. lot**
A house with character! Wrap-around porch, original hardwood in formal dining room/living room combo, main floor laundry, nice size eat-in kitchen including appliances, dining room has original fireplace, basement and 1 car garage.
Listing #20162543 • \$53,000



**5BR • 1.75BA • 1 car garage
1,904 sq. ft. • 1,903 sq. ft. lot**
Great family home on large corner lot in the middle of Ft. Madison. Large living / dining area with original craftsman woodwork and built-ins, 14 x 22 garage on the alley with 2 additional storage sheds. Nice front porch, rear deck, and a great sunroom on the East.
**Listing #20162346
\$86,950**



**2BR • 1BA • 2 car garage
930 sq. ft. • 7,280 sq. ft. lot**
This 2 bedroom home in Montrose has been a rental property and sells as is. Priced way below assessed value to sell quickly!
Listing #20164279 • \$38,500



**4BR • 3BA • 2 car garage
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From the inviting entrance to the serene back yard, you will enjoy it ALL and everything in between!!!! This very well maintained 4 bedroom, 3 bath home has everything your family will need to call this Home. There is a beautiful screened porch and a deck off the back of the house, all overlooking a meticulously landscaped large yard. Call today on this amazing home situated on a quiet, safe cul de sac!!!
Listing #20163339 • \$164,900



**3 BR • 2 BA • 1 car garage
2,260 sq. ft.
6,784 sq. ft. lot**
Lots of new! Semi open floor plan, new flooring, great open basement family space, and many updates including heat/air units, kitchen back splash, counters and more! Fenced in back yard with stamped concrete patio and awning. Call today to see this great home in a quiet neighborhood.
Listing #20164544 • \$139,900



**2BR • 1.25BA
1,119 sq. ft. • 0.17 acres**
Brick rancher on Ave E close to Old Settlers Park, has full basement mostly finished, picket fence, newer windows, roof, etc.
Listing #20162502 • \$88,900



**3 BR • 2 BA • 2 car garage
1,168 sq. ft. • 0.54 acres**
Quality and beauty! Many updates and upgrades including a new concrete patio/carport with surround sound and mood lighting, new kitchen, bath and lighting throughout. This is an AMAZING house that you MUST see to appreciate!!!
Listing #20164622 • \$92,500



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**5BR • 3BA
3,119 sq. ft.
14,500 sq. ft. lot**

From the period wrought iron fencing to the amazing stained oak staircase...from the impressive arches to the large wrap porch, this beautiful turn of the century (20th) home offers all the beauty and elegance of that era. This is a beautifully appointed home with all the modern conveniences. There is an extra large lot for your family to enjoy!!
Listing #20162159 • \$164,000



SOLD

**2BR • 1.50BA • 2 car garage
1,366 sq. ft. • 3,300 sq. ft. lot**
Immaculate, well-kept ranch has family room with fireplace on the main floor, finished Rec Room, 2nd laundry room, 1/2 bath, and storage room with shelving all in the basement. All windows are vinyl replacement.
Listing #20162507 • \$109,900



PENDING

**2BR • 1BA • 2 car garage
868 sq. ft. • 7,000 sq. ft. lot**
PRICE REDUCED! Rare opportunity to own a renovated home at a great price!! Large, shaded yard and a 2 car garage. Located in a nice neighborhood on a corner lot. Seller is motivated and offering a 1 year AHS Home Warranty!
Listing #20163035 • \$52,000



**3BR • 1BA • 1 car garage
928 sq. ft. • 1,087 sq. ft. lot**
Very nice maintenancefree home by Lincoln School with a 75 X 145 fenced yard, nice patio, fire pit and child's play set! Some very nice built-ins, some original hardwood flooring, full basement including laundry area. Also find extra parking, garage and carport area on the paved alley.
Listing #20164148 • \$72,500



SOLD

**2BR • 1BA • 2 car garage
1,330 sq. ft.
7,250 sq. ft. lot**

REDUCED BY \$13,100! Affordable with lots of potential!!! Nice size kitchen with breakfast bar plus dining area, spacious living room w/fireplace. Sits on a corner lot.
Listing #20160368 • \$59,900



REDUCED

**2BR • 1BA
1,144 sq. ft.
3,625 sq. ft. lot**

Move-in ready with many updates including kitchen WITH appliances, fresh paint, newer electrical (100 AMP breaker), new water lines at street and more! The home is clean as a whistle and ready to move in!
Listing #20161431 • \$42,500



REDUCED

**3BR • 3BA
2,754 sq. ft.
3,550 sq. ft. lot**

Gorgeous, turn-key home with large patio minimum maintenance. UPDATES GALORE!!! Practically perfect in every way, this 1841 home includes the latest improvements while keeping its Victorian charm.
Listing #23006122 • \$99,999



**3BR • 3.50BA • 3 car garage
3,723 sq. ft.**

Splendor in the woods...with privacy...AND a view...AND an AMAZING home. Call today on this brick beauty perched atop a hill overlooking Ft. Madison with a view of the Mississippi River and almost 6 acres of ground. Offered are 3 bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, a formal living & dining room, a large great room/kitchen/breakfast room combo and a study/den with beautiful cherry cabinetry & bookshelves lining the walls. All of this with STUNNING hardwood floors. This beautiful home offering top-of-the-line features throughout.
Listing #20160805 • \$460,000



**2BR • 1.75BA • 2 car garage
679 sq. ft. • 6,500 sq. ft. lot**
Nice, small home. Seller has purchased and remodeled. Excellent condition.
Listing #20164161 • \$62,500



NEW

**3 BR • 2.50 BA
2 car garage • 1,194 sq. ft. 10,400 sq. ft. lot**
Great family home is move-in ready. Nice-sized kitchen with all appliances, dining area, and nice living room all on the upper level. Completely re-modeled family room with a wood burning fireplace on lower level. Many updates include newer flooring, roof and HVAC system.
Listing #20164531 \$114,900



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Your Irish eyes will be twinkling with joy once you're in your new home.



PENDING

**3BR • 3BA • 3 car garage
1,635 sq. ft. • 4.3 acres**

Amazing cedar log sided home in a quiet and private setting, a well-appointed guest house, and 26x32 metal building. The main home offers beautiful hardwood flooring with a awesome open floor plan. Enjoy summer evenings on the nice walk-out patio area. This is a dream home!!!

Listing #20161863 • \$299,000



REDUCED

**4 BR • 1.75 BA
3 car garage • 2,052 sq. ft.
8,700 sq. ft. lot**

Beautiful 4 bedroom home with large rooms, recently redecorated and ready to move into. This home features stainless steel appliances, main floor laundry, eat in kitchen and formal dining room, main floor office or bedroom, open staircase, large living room and big bedrooms. Newer roof, siding and gutters on house. 24' X 36' insulated garage and workshop, plus carport. Large wrap porch great location near Old Settlers Park.

Listing #20163776 • \$129,500



**3 BR • 1 BA • 1 car garage
1,248 sq. ft. • 0.37 acres**

Well-kept ranch on a beautiful, large corner lot in West Point, IA. New wooden privacy fence surrounding the entire back yard. There is also an attached garage and storage shed. A large wooden deck leads to the front door where you can sit and enjoy those beautiful Iowa summer sunsets! PLUS a covered deck in the back for those rainy days. This house is a rare find.

Listing #20164234 • \$119,900



PENDING

**4BR • 2.50BA • 1 car garage
2,056 sq. ft.
39,640 sq. ft. lot**

Beautiful 2 story home located just off Highway 61 north of Fort Madison. Formal living and dining room, nice kitchen with breakfast room all open to a main floor family room, relaxing, private screened porch that opens onto the large deck that spans the back of the home. Basement boasts recently finished family room and tons of storage.

Listing #20164530 • \$175,000



SOLD

**3BR • 2.50 BA
2 car garage • 2,400 sq. ft.
10,150 sq. ft. lot**

Lovely tri-level home on a quiet cul de sac offering numerous upgrades. There are 3 bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths, a large living room, dining room and open kitchen with newer stainless steel appliances and a breakfast bar. Newer windows, HVAC, new floor coverings on main and lower level and freshly painted throughout. The large backyard is completely fenced and has a 24 x 16 patterned concrete patio. Don't miss out on this wonderful family home.

Listing #20163404 • \$167,500



SOLD

**Multi-family Duplex
2,672 sq. ft.
7,250 sq. ft. lot**

Income property. Potential for \$875/month income or more. Side-by-side duplex with 2 - 2 bedroom, 1 bath apartments. West side has a long term renter and east side is vacant.

Listing #20162154 • \$49,500



2 car garage • 2,527 sq. ft.
UNIQUELY beautiful 9.38 river bluff acreage. This home boasts many updates including complete master suite, heat and A/C, Septic system, deck, roof & gutters, flooring, and the list goes on. This private property includes fenced in barn area for animal lovers, mature fruit trees plus trees have been dropped for a beautiful panoramic river view that will last for years! Owner also plans to leave a John Deer mower and new snow blower!!

Listing #20162733 • \$269,000



**Land
50.82 acres**

2,213,719 sq. ft.

Ideal 50 acre m/l parcel to develop. Close to new 4-8 Middle School and Baxter Rec Plex. TREMENDOUS DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY.

Listing #20162779 • \$559,020



**3BR • 1.75BA • 1 car garage
888 sq. ft. • 9,450 sq. ft. lot**
RARE RANCH with large fenced back yard and attached garage! Updated windows and kitchen, newer HVAC and water heater. Family Room in the basement. Just waiting for your own personal touch!

Listing #20163423 • \$74,900



NEW

**2 BR • 1 BA • 1 car garage
528 sq. ft. • 5,600 sq. ft. lot**
Super deal on this cream puff home, offering 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, new roof, newer windows, siding and REALLY nice garage!

Listing #20164597 • \$29,900



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www.hopeassociatesre.com

www.seia.rapmls.com



Land

14.65 acres • 638,514 sq. ft.
Just outside city limits, perfect for housing development or small farm for horses or small livestock, over half tillable. City water is available. 30' X 60' building is totally insulated, heated and air conditioned with 200 amp service.

Listing #20162574 • \$249,000

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- ✓ Suspension Check
- ✓ All Fluids Level Check
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- ✓ Tire Check
- ✓ Lights Check
- ✓ PLUS Road Test

*For faster service, please call ahead for an appointment. Cannot combine with any other offers. Valid for a limited time only!

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