



Pen City Current

Wed., March 29, 2017 | 6 pages | Volume 1 • Issue 85

County OKs wage bump; state may strip it

House bill looms large over county's decision to set minimum wage at \$8.20

**BY CHUCK
VANDENBERG**
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON/KEOKUK - Lee County would potentially move their minimum wage to \$8.20 on May 1, but a bill awaits Gov. Terry Branstad's signature that could wipe the measure out.

At a split meeting of the Lee County Board of Supervisors Tuesday, a morning session in Fort Madison and an afternoon session in Keokuk, two separate discussions were held before a final vote to move the wage from the current rate of \$7.25. The vote passed, 4-1, to a smattering of applause from about 20 people in attendance,

most of whom were appointees to the Raise the Wage committee. Supervisor Ron Fedler cast the dissenting vote.

Fedler has stood his ground throughout the vote saying the wage should be set by the federal or state governments, while the other



LARKIN

board members took a position that the state had ample time to do so but hadn't moved on the wage.

House File 295, the bill preempting the counties' rights to set their own minimum wage, was approved by the Iowa Senate

“
I presume that when it passed the Senate in the same version as it did the House, it goes directly to the governor and he's gonna sign it.”

-Rick Larkin
Supervisor chairman

on Monday night and will now go before the governor. If it's signed, all counties will be required to go back to the \$7.25 minimum. Employers would be free to pay as they see fit as long as they pay the state minimum.

The Raise the Wage



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

More wage talk

The Lee County Board of Supervisors from left Gary Folluo, Matt Pflug, Chairman Rick Larkin, Ron Fedler and Don Hunold meet with residents at the Newberry Senior Center in Fort Madison to renew the center's permit and talk minimum wage.

committee was made up of appointees by supervisors. Kathy Gabel, a member of the wage committee appointed by Supervisor Gary Folluo said she was thrilled with the vote despite the looming legislation.

“I'm thrilled. I think it really reflects our coun-

ty as being progressive,” Gabel said. “I know there are some obstacles at the state level but I really think these guys listened to the commission they put together and respected that information and said, ‘Yeah.’”

Chairman Rick Larkin said it's his belief that Gov.

Branstad will sign the bill and possibly something could come from the Ways and Means committee to bump the wage this session, but he didn't think that was probable.

“I presume that when it passed the Senate in the

See **WAGE**, page 6

Habitat board looking for growth

**BY CHUCK
VANDENBERG**
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - A local charitable group charged with providing better housing for families is looking to extend their presence in the community by adding members to the local board.

Habitat For Humanity, which has tentative plans to start another project in Fort Madison later this year, is looking for members of the community to contribute their efforts to

build Habitat Homes in the city.

“Having community members be involved in the process and serve on the board helps extend the program's abilities and projects while, at the same time, preserving the tradition of service the group has built in Fort Madison,” said Tony Wolfe, the local chapter board director.

Those interested can call 319-470-8720 or email the group at hab@lee.org

See **HOMES**, page 6



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

No injuries

This two-vehicle accident happened at about 3:30 p.m. Monday near the intersection of U.S. Hwy 61 and Hwy 16. No injuries were reported at the scene.

Advertiser Index

Boulders Inn & Suites Fort Madison.....	P.3	Lee County Bank.....	P.6
Classifieds.....	P.5	Pen City Current.....	Ps.3,5
Dave's Old Fashion Meats.....	P.2	Elect Ross Braden.....	P.6
Farm Bureau Financial Services.....	P.3	Steffensmeier Welding & Mfg, Inc.....	P.3
GRRWA.....	P.4	The Kensington.....	P.6
Kempker's True Value Rental.....	P.5	Your Heat & Air guy.....	P.5

News Index

From the front.....	P.6
Business News.....	P.3
Obituaries.....	P.3
Arlene Hile - 81, Fort Madison	
Sports.....	P.4

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Business News/Obituaries

OBITUARIES

ARLENE M. HILE

Arlene M. Hile, 81, of Ft. Madison passed away at 7:20 PM at Ft. Madison Community Hospital on Tuesday, March 27, 2017.

She was born on August 22, 1935 in Milwaukee, WI to Selby C. and Josephine E. Mika Hile. Arlene was a pediatric nurse in Chicago and retired after 30 years of service. She enjoyed playing bingo, cards, dominos and the piano. She was loved by all her friends at The Madison and enjoyed visiting with them.



HILE

She was preceded in death by her parents and a sister, Dolores Brannen.

A memorial service will be held on Thursday, March 30, 2017 at 1 PM at The Madison with Rev. Bill Willis officiating. Per her wishes, cremation has been entrusted to King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory and there will be a private graveside service in Oakland Cemetery.

Online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.



Photo courtesy of Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce

Visiting the new warden

The Fort Madison Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Club made a trip out the Iowa State Penitentiary on Friday to welcome new warden Patti Wachtendorf. Wachtendorf officially took the position last month after Nick Ludwick resigned due to a prolonged battle with cancer.

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Hounds take third at Falcon Relays

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
 PCC EDITOR

WEST BURLINGTON - The Fort Madison Bloodhound team took third in the Class A portion of the Falcon Relays Monday.

According to head coach Erin Benner almost the entire squad improved on previous times this year and set season best times.

"I was pleased with the boys at tonight's meet," Benner said.

The Hounds were paced in scoring by Caleb Gehle's first in wheelchair shot and the wheelchair 100 and 200-meter events.

The 4x800 meter team of Jared Kester, Joseph Grabowski, Dayne Cordray and Matthew Meierotto took second place with a time of 9:54.03.

"All members of the team ran their fastest this season in this race tonight," Benner said. "We are hoping to continue to cut time all season."

She also said Gehle threw well but had a bit of trouble with the racing chair.

"We are still continuing to learn the ins and outs of the racing chair, but each race is a good learn-

ing experience for him."

Elijah Barnes took another third-place in the shot put, while Alex Gully captured 3rd in the 100-meter dash with an 11.88 time. State Champion Isaiah Trousil took the title in that event at 10.76 secs. for West Burlington-Notre Dame.

Aaron Steffensmeier and Matt Hellige both had third-place finishes in the long-distance running. Steffensmeier in the 1600-meter run with Hellige right behind in 4th-place and Hellige took third in the 3200-meter run with Steffensmeier in fourth place in that event.

"Aaron felt good after running this tonight. He knows he has some time to cut, but was happy with tonight's run," Benner said. "Matt ran well tonight, too. He is trying new strategies, seeing what works for him and continuing to have success."

Quentin Schneider took two third-place finishes in the 400-meter run and 400-meter hurdles.

"What an athlete," Benner said. "We are going to see Quentin grow as the season continues and he'll be exciting to watch."

Complete FMHS results are below.

100 meter dash	Alex Gully	3rd	11.88
	Caleb Gehle		(wheelchair)
200 meter dash	Alex Gully	24.69	7th
	Logan Rashid		27.53
	Caleb Gehle	1:27.06	(wheelchair)
400 meter dash	Quentin Schneider	56.46	3rd place;
	Dayne Cordray		1:0427 10th
Boys 800-meter run	Joseph Grabowski	2:34.88	6th place
1600-meter run	Aaron Steffensmeier	5:02.51	3rd place;
	Matthew Hellige	5:07.76	4th place
3200-meter run	Matthew Hellige	10:48.18;	Aaron Steffensmeier 10:58.83
400-meter hurdles	Quentin Schneider	1:02.69	3rd place
4x100-meter relay	Heath Heonig, Donald Bell, Kyle Young and Matthew Meierotto	- 56.42	6th place
4x200 meter relay	Gully, Bell, Young and Meierotto	- 1:50.57	- 4th place
4x400 meter relay	Jared Kester, Grabowski, Cordray and Meierotto	- 4:06.87	- 5th place
4x800 meter relay	Kester, Cordray, Grabowski and Meierotto	9:54.03	2nd place
800-sprint medley	Gully, Jared Kester, Rashid and Schneider	1:44.17	5th place
Distance medley	Kester, Rashid, Hellige and Steffensmeier	4:09.38	- 5th place
Boys Long jump	Redd-Donald	- 18-00.5	7th place
	Rashid	16-07.25	12th place
Boys Shot put	Elijah Barnes	- 32-08	(chair)
	3rd; Dylan Eid	- 16-08	
	13th; Gehle		
Boys Discus	Hoening	- 95-00	14th place



On the chase

Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Fort Madison's Jared Kester takes the handoff from Logan Rashid in the 800-sprint medley on Monday at Bill Nelson Field in West Burlington. The Hounds finished fifth in the relay and took third in Class A at the meet.

Classifieds

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From the Front

State legislators likely to look at bump in election cycle

WAGE - Continued from Page 1

same version as it did the House, it goes directly to the governor and he's gonna sign it," Larkin said after the meeting. "Now they may want a wage attached to it and it's a revenue issue it may be able to go through Ways and Means."

Larkin said he would venture a guess that during next year's election cycle a minimum wage bill will be presented.

Tracy Leone of the Iowa Labor Federation, a proponent of increasing minimum wages across the state, agreed with Larkin's assessment.

"My bet is the governor will sign it. If I look into the crystal ball I would say they would introduce a bill next year. There is no live bill to do it right now."

She, too, said since the

wage is a revenue issue something could come from the Ways and Means committee in the form of a bump, but she wouldn't bet on that. Leone also pointed to some confusion between Branstad and the Iowa Speaker of the House Linda Upmeyer.

"I heard the Governor said on public radio yesterday that he had said all along he would like to see the wage raised modestly. \$8.20 is modest, but Speaker Linda Upmeyer said that conversation never happened. So there's some confusion out there already."

Folluo said he didn't understand why anyone would be against a minimum wage boost.

From a personal standpoint, I don't understand anyone feeling threatened

by raising the minimum wage," Folluo said. "I was a small business owner myself and I started people at minimum wage, but whatever wage that is just part of doing business," he said.

Gabel said if the governor does sign the law and the minimum wage isn't increased, that another effort would have to be underway.

"We start all over again, maybe at the state level, I don't know," she said. "that's frustrating. I think that Gov. Branstad is in favor of raising the wage, so I was really hopeful hearing that. In the meantime a lot of people go without, it may not seem like a lot of money to some people, but to the people that are living within that income, it is a step."

Making his case

Raise the Wage committee member Mike Bennett discusses his position on the minimum wage and why it's important to move now to help the population still living in poverty in Lee County.

Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

On the scene

Emergency crews work on trying to separate a black pickup truck from a semi trailer on U.S. Hwy 61 just east of the Hwy 16 intersection.

Group has solid history of FM homes

HOMES - Continued from Page 1



Habitat for Humanity[®]

itatftmadison@hotmail.com or mail the group at P.O. Box 291, Fort Madison, Iowa 52627.

The group was founded more than 40 years ago as an ecumenical organization committed to eliminating substandard housing.

Volunteers work side by side with recipient families who contribute sweat

equity in their new home learning construction and maintenance skills.

The homes are sold to families at no profit and are financed with affordable loans. The repaid funds are combined with donations from the community to build more Habitat homes.

"Locally, we have had grants and donations

from organizations, businesses, churches and individuals. Without their support our projects would not be possible," Wolfe said. "We think that adding people to the board and steering committee at this time helps energize and enhance our programming going forward."



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