



Pen City Current

Wednesday, July 26, 2017 | 6 pages | Volume 1 • Issue 179

Officials looking into park statue thefts

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

DONNELLSON - The Donnellson police are looking for information regarding a stolen statue from Railroad Park on Mill Street.

According to city clerk Jane Krebill, the bronze statue depicting three children on a log was uprooted from the park sometime late Friday night and early Saturday morning.

Kreibill said officials believe someone backed a vehicle up and wrapped a chain around the statue and pulled it from an anchoring in the park.

"It was bolted down to concrete. They just yanked it out and dragged it across the street and then down the street," she said Tuesday afternoon.

She said she had seen on social media where another bronze statue had been swiped from Lacy Park in Keosauqua

"It was bolted down to concrete. They just yanked it out and dragged it down the street and then down other streets."

-Jane Krebill,
Donnellson City Clerk

and notified police.

"I saw that someone had taken the statue from Lacy Park on Facebook and I immediately contacted our police and told them what had happened and said we should keep an eye on ours. I got a call back in like 15 minutes and said we

See **STATUES**, page 6



Photo courtesy of City of Donnellson

This is a photograph of the statue that was stolen from the Railroad Park in Donnellson sometime late Friday night or early Saturday morning. The statue was valued at \$4,250. Photo courtesy of City of Donnellson.

Lee County resident hits board on mowing

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

FORT MADISON - A Lee County woman who's been pushing the county to stop mowing so deeply into rural ditches asked again Tuesday for a stop to the process.

Margot Sprenger, who has been pushing the county to let more of Iowa's native plants grow along county roadsides, came to the regular meeting of the Lee County Board of Supervisors with another reason to stop the deep mowing.

Sprenger had several two foot sections of dead wild parsnip in tow and offered a branch to each supervisor.

"Are you all familiar with the wild parsnip?," she said walking among the supervisors with the

Lee County resident Margot Sprenger offered to give each Lee County Supervisor a piece of the poisonous Wild Parsnip behind her as she asked for the county to stop mowing so deep in the ditches. Sprenger has been an advocate for allowing more plants native to Iowa to be allowed to grow in the ditches.

dead plants.

"I know you want to stay away from it," said supervisor Gary Folluo as she brought it around.

"Well, I'd cut you all a

piece but I guess you don't want it," she said.

Sprenger said she was coming to the board as a landowner with a concern that the deeper mow-

ing that the county has started doing is lending to facilitating the growth of the poisonous plant on her land that is part of the

See **MOWING**, page 6

Group puts together FM school assistance program

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON - A group of volunteers, in conjunction with the Lee County Health Department will be holding a Back to School Health Fair in Fort Madison.

The event will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, August 12 at the Fort Madison High School. Registration for the event closed July 10, but there will still other services offered for those that didn't get registered

Many area organizations, churches and local businesses have agreed to participate. Services being offered include immunizations, vision screenings, hair cuts and backpacks with most school supplies. There will be many informational booths set up so families can learn about things around our community that may benefit them.

Parents are also required to attend with their children.

Financial donations are still being accepted for the event and can be made by contacting Kevin Adams at Lee County Bank or checks can be sent c/o Adams and made out to Fort Madison Kiwanis. If anyone has not been contacted, but would like to offer assistance with supplies or costs, they can do so by contacting Dawn Johnson at 660-341-6427.

Johnson said the group is still in need of financial assistance as they need \$3,000 to help cover the cost

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

STEVEN G. WILMESMEIER

Steven G. Wilmesmeier, 58, of Farmington, IA passed away on Saturday, July 22, 2017 at 4:10 PM at his home.



WILMESMEIER

He was born on March 19, 1959 in Ft. Madison to Paul and Mary Ann Kensett Wilmesmeier, Jr. Steve had worked at DuPont since 1979. He enjoyed going to car races and hunting. He also loved being outdoors and working on his land.

Survivors include two daughters, Casey (Dave Long) Wilmesmeier of Iowa City and Hilary Wilmesmeier of Bonaparte; one son, Brad Heidbreder of Ft. Madison; six grandchildren, Mya, Alivia and Shae Batten, Cecilia Long, Kelsey Heston and Austin Heidbreder; his father, Paul Wilmesmeier Jr. of Burlington; a sister, Carol (John) Michaels of Fenton, MO and his companion, Debra Williams of Bonaparte, IA. He was preceded in death by his Mother and a brother, Michael.

Per his wishes, cremation has been entrusted to King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A Celebration of Life and private family burial will take place at a later date. Online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

AUBREY W. DAVES

Aubrey W. Daves, 78, of Ft. Madison, passed away on Sunday, July 23, 2017 at 5:14 PM at the Ft. Madison Community Hospital surrounded by his family.



DAVES

He was born on July 23, 1939 in Oklahoma to Benjamin and Margaret Wilbur Daves. Aubrey married Carla Bell on February 18, 1967 in Greene County, IA and she passed away on March 13, 1979.

Aubrey had worked as a dynamite packer for several years at River Products in Iowa City. He also worked as a hired farm hand until his health declined and he was forced into retirement. Aubrey was a huge supporter of Fort Madison Special Olympics and proudly cheered his grandson Jacob on to many state events. Aubrey loved spending time with his family, especially his grandsons. He also enjoyed watching wildlife from his front porch, watching western movies and listening to classic country music.

Survivors include a daughter, Margaret "Peggie" (Bret) Gipple of Ft. Madison; two sons, Cody (Dayna) Daves of Danville and Dallas (Cyndie) Balzer of Wever; five grandchildren, Thomas "Jeffrey" Cofield, Joseph "Joey" Cofield, Shasta Joy; Jacob (Stephanie Dawson) Balzer, Alex (fiance' Amanda Rainville) Balzer, two great grandchildren, Jacob and Nevaeh Joy; several "adopted" children and grandchildren; one sister, Gracie Channel; one brother, Ben of Oklahoma. He was preceded in death by his parents; his loving wife, Carla; a daughter, DeShawn and a brother, Howard.

Per his wishes, cremation has been entrusted to King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. A memorial has been established in Aubrey's name for the Fort Madison Special Olympics. Online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

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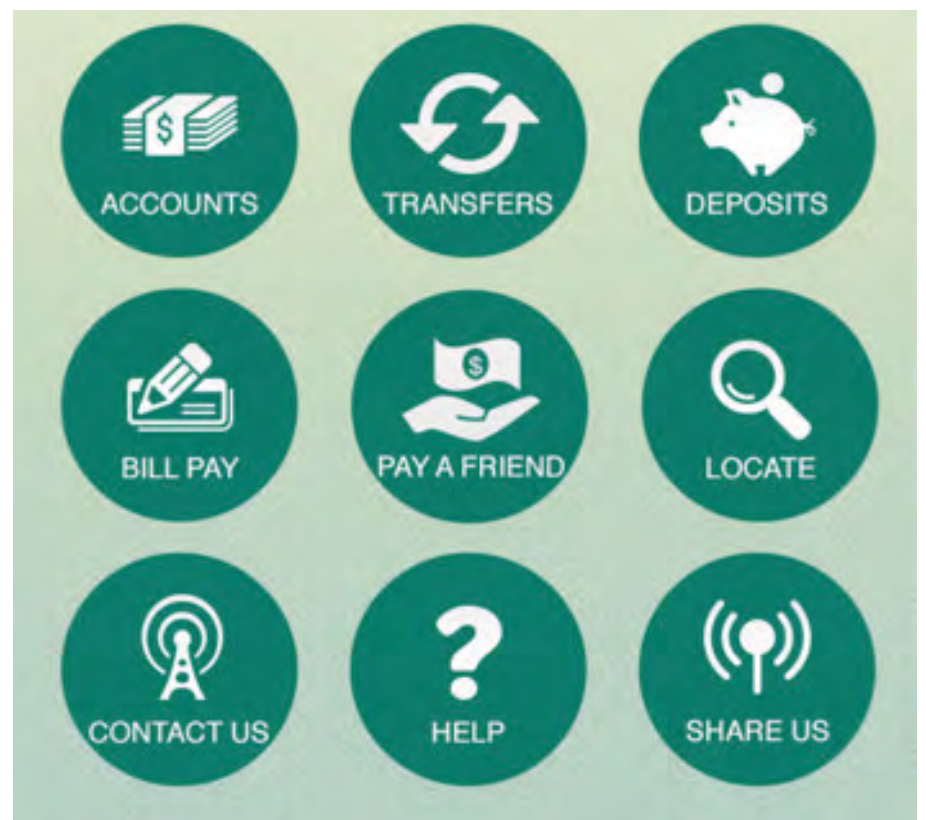


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Local News/For the Record

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

07/24/17 - 3:51 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a property damage accident in the 900 block of Avenue G.
 07/24/17 - 3:54 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft at the 800 block of Avenue E.
 07/24/17 - 4:50 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 2600 block of Avenue I.
 07/24/17 - 6:18 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a

report of a larceny/theft in the 1300 block of Lee Henry Street.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

07/25/17 - 1:33 a.m. - Lee County deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident on 320th Street near 250th Avenue. A vehicle driven by Brendan Wade Esquivel Plate, 18, of Keokuk swerved to miss a dog and rolled into the south ditch coming to rest on the wheels. No injuries were reported and no citations

were issued at the scene. *All persons in these listings are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.*

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

07/22/17 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to three medical calls
 07/23/17 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to two medical calls
 07/24/17 - Fort Madison firefighters responded to three medical calls.

Group looking for contributions for Back-to-School fair

FAIR - Continued from Page 1

of shoes. Lee County Bank is currently accepting donations for the "Banking on Shoes" program which will assist in providing shoes to the 120 students who have already registered. She said the goal for this year was to provide 100 backpacks for students and they passed that goal by 20 and are now looking at addi-

tional funding to build on that.

Area churches that have or will be donating include Denmark United Church of Christ, Madison Baptist Union Presbyterian, First Christian Church, St. Paul Lutheran Church, and Harmony Bible Church. Iowa Fertilizer Company purchased the backpacks.



Volunteers are shown with backpacks purchased by the Iowa Fertilizer Company with an assist from Hy-Vee. The backpacks are part of the Back-to-School Health Fair being held Aug. 12 from 10 a.m. to noon at FMHS.

Courtesy photo



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Pick 3 - Midday	Daily	Noon	12:20 pm
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



7/26
 2 5 26 58 60
 Lucky Ball: 6
 Megaplier: 3



7/26 MID-DAY
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7/266 EVENING
 1 9 2



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7/26 EVENING
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From the Front

Resident says mowing spurs growth of noxious weed

MOWING - Continued from Page 1

conservation reserve program or CRP land. She said the mowing, which on her land had approached three times per year, was causing the seed from the noxious weed to be spread into her land.

Parsnip is a wild growing poisonous weed that, according to the Iowa State University Extension office, causes skin irritation due to sunlight activating the toxins causing a breakdown of tissues and cells in the skin.

"Two years ago, I didn't have hardly any of this plant and now I've got these plants 30 and 45 feet into the field and I bet I show you this next year and you'll see 100s," Sprenger said.

She said the county started mowing 15-feet into county ditches instead of the five or six foot several

years back.

"What started this was I only had one simple question. I wanted to see only five or six foot mowing along county roads. What we have now is 15 feet. You're getting a lot more damage done. I don't understand the reason for it."

Supervisor Matt Pflug moved the question to Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber and Lee County Engineer Ernie Steffensmeier, whose department also oversees secondary roads.

Weber said it's a safety issue as far as he's concerned.

"I've listened to a lot of this and have respect for what you're doing, but have you hit a deer lately and had the airbag blow up in your face?" Weber asked Sprenger. "Because that's a pretty dangerous thing. Fifteen to twenty feet gives you time to see eye-shine and gives you more time to react, time to slow down."

Sprenger said mowing actually creates a more lush area for deer to eat and cited instances where landowners in Des Moines County stopped mowing and the incidents of deer/car collisions went down.

Weber said he's testified in a case where Iowa was being sued for not mowing far enough back which was alleged to have caused an accident.

Pflug said he agreed with the sheriff that increased visibility helps motorists avoid collisions with deer.

"If you're going down the road and you have that cleared back you have a better chance of seeing animals and deer there," he said.

But Sprenger said, in most cases, driving puts you

above the native plants.

"When you're in a car or pickup you're way on top of many of these natives. So it's not an issue of you not seeing a deer poking out of there."

Steffensmeier said the mowing can't take place until July 15 and even with a five or six foot mow they would have to go back to 15 to 20 feet in the fall.

"Eventually we're going to have to mow that all the way back to keep the brush under control, but we're starting earlier just because of the volume of land we have to mow."

Steffensmeier said the county has 740 miles of roadway in the county that are graveled.

The county is looking at creating a roadside management program in the next budget to help address Sprenger's issues and help maintain healthy and safe roadsides that also benefit the environment.

Sprenger asked the board to leave the meeting with adjusting the policy to just mow deeper at intersections, but leave the five foot mow in the other areas.

The board took no action on the matter other than agreeing to continue to look at the roadside management program as part of next year's budget.

In other action, the board:

- approved three tax abatement resolutions, 5-0.
- approved a transfer of personnel from the Records to the Community Service program, 5-0.
- approved an annual courthouse security report, 5-0.
- heard from a Lee County resident who requested the county post reduced speed limit signs on county roads near 253rd Street south of Hwy 2 due to high speeds and accidents in the area.

5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

WED 26 Jul



Moderate Rain
Low - 71.3° F | High - 88.4° F

THU 27 Jul



Heavy Intensity Rain
Low - 69.2° F | High - 76.9° F

FRI 28 Jul



Clear Skies
Low - 60.3° F | High - 72.7° F

SAT 29 Jul



Clear Skies
Low - 58.2° F | High - 75.0° F

SAT 30 Jul



Clear Skies
Low - 59.0° F | High - 76.6° F

[OpenWeatherMap](#)

Thefts may be related to highway debris

STATUES - Continued from Page 1

were too late, someone had already stolen one."

Monday night, the Donnellson fire department and other volunteers went to the other parks and pulled up some of the other statues in the parks and have them in safe keeping.

She said the statue

weighs about 300 pounds and because they are just dragging it off, they are probably going to sell it or melt it down.

"They don't care what shape they're in obviously, so they must going to sell them for the metal."

The statue cost the city of Donnellson \$4,250

not including the cost of installation.

Krebill said information has also been gathered regarding chunks of concrete on roadways north of town.

The Lee County Sheriff's office reported two incidents of vehicles hitting large chunks of concrete early Saturday morning, one along Hwy 2 at about 12:30 a.m. and the other on Hwy 61 just off Hwy 2 on the bypass,

which was reported being struck at about 3:30 a.m. Saturday morning.

Sheriff Stacy Weber said a deputy also hit a chunk of concrete but wasn't ready to say all the incidents were related.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact the Donnellson Police Department at 835-5714 or Lee County Crime Stoppers at 800-382-8900 or online at www.tipsubmit.com.



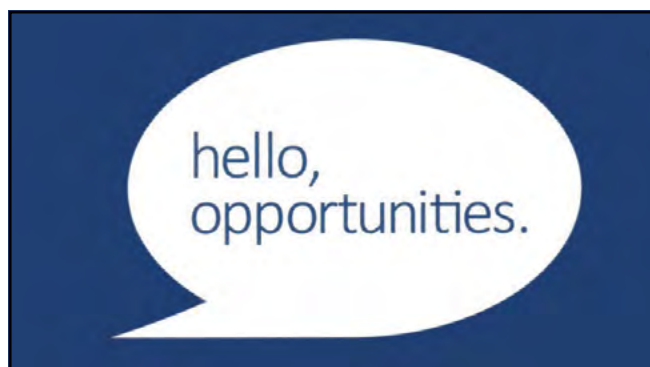
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