

Two Homes for Iowa in FM

Mike Norris, President of Homes for Iowa, stands near the foundation of a home where one of the program's newest projects is being set this week on Green Oak Court. Fort Madison has placed two of the offender-built homes.

Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC



Iowa Prison Industries: Offender-built homes being set in Fort Madison.

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - City residents may have seen a home being trucked in from the west side last week. That home is one of more than 50 that have been built in the past three years under the Homes for Iowa program, an offender-based effort that builds homes from the ground up. Developers can buy the homes and truck them into communities around the state to help fill housing stock shortages. The program gives offenders that qualify for participation skill-based training that allows them to more easily be rein-

troduced into society after serving their sentence. Mike Norris, president of Homes for Iowa, said Southeast Iowa has installed about 20% of the 50 or so homes the program has produced. Lee County has seen five of the homes in Keokuk, West Point, and Fort Madison combined. Homes for Iowa is a 501c3 organization that facilitates the construction and sales of the homes. The homes are built at the Newton Correctional Facility. “We do all the home sales and set the program policies, do the pricing with Iowa Prison Industries,” Norris said. “We

See HOMES, page 8

LEE COUNTY NEWS

Supervisors hire Long to run Lee County EMS ambulance

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY - A MedForce officer and a veteran Lee County EMS paramedic has been named to lead the county's EMS ambulance service. Mark Long will take over the operations of the ambulance service immediately. He follows the 16-month term of Dennis Cosby, who resigned abruptly

on Oct. 24 with no notice. County officials are still in the dark as to why Cosby left the position, going so far as to say they have no information at all. Long comes from a medical background, serving in several paramedic positions after graduating from the University of Iowa Paramedic program. He's also been a public relations officer for MedForce air ambulance service.

Current interim director Jason Dinwiddie will step back into his Director of Operations role. Long will be paid \$92,770 in the position. Dinwiddie also serves as the county's Emergency Management coordinator in a dual role for the county. Supervisor Garry Seyb said it's a good reflection on the county that there were more than 20 applications for the position. Seven interviews were held.

See OFP, page 4

FORT MADISON NEWS

City looking for 2nd Ward candidates

Council to appoint next 2nd Ward Councilperson after Schulz resigns

FORT MADISON - The City of Fort Madison is seeking persons who are interested in serving as the Second Ward Council Member. Second Ward Council Member Tom Schulz has been elected to the Lee County Board of Supervisors and has submitted his resignation as Second Ward Council Member on the Fort Madison City Council effective Dec. 31, 2022.



SCHULZ

The position will be filled by appointment at a meeting on December 20, 2022 at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers of

See COUNCIL, page 3

OLD FORT PLAYERS

Miracle on 34th hits OFP stage December 2

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Old Fort Players is thrilled to announce the Christmas production for their 2022/2023 Season “Miracle on 34th Street, the Play,” adapted by Mountain Community Theater from the novel by Valentine Davies. It is based upon the Twentieth Century Fox motion picture Miracle on 34th Street. Produced by Special Arrangement with Dramatic Publishing, Woodstock IL. The show performs December 2-4 & 9-11,

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WEATHER

WED 23 Nov.....	Mostly sunny and cool, 56° F/ 39° F	
THU 24 Nov.....	Mostly cloudy and cool, 52° F/ 32° F	
FRI 25 Nov.....	Mostly cloudy and cold, 47° F/ 30° F	

IOWA LOTTERY

LOTTO AMERICA 11/21	3 12 14 29 32, Star Ball: 4 All Star Bonus: 5
LUCKY FOR LIFE 11/21	1 2 5 33 38, Lucky Ball: 12
PICK 3 11/21 MIDDAY	7 1 9
PICK 3 11/21 EVENING.....	3 4 4
PICK 4 11/21 MIDDAY	0 9 0 4
PICK 4 11/21 EVENING.....	4 5 7 1
POWERBALL 11/21.....	1 6 40 51 67, Powerball: 2 Power Play: 2

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

DR. SATYANARAYANA KANTAMNENI

Dr. Satyanarayana Kantamneni, 81, of Keokuk, IA died Sunday, November 20, 2022 at his home.

He was born on December 20, 1940 in Tenali, Andhra Pradesh, India, the son of Balakrishna and Kamalamba Katragadda Kantamneni.



KANTAMNENI

He was united in marriage to Dr. Jagadamba Jasti on May 15, 1989 in Keokuk, IA. She survives.

He is also survived by three daughters, Prasanti Kantamneni Khurana and her husband Kav Khurana of Charlotte, NC, Neeta Kantamneni and her husband Patrick Neugent of Lincoln, NE, and Lakshmi Kamala Kantamneni of Charlotte, NC, three grandchildren, Satya Kaur Khurana, Jeeti Singh Khurana and Samyra Kantamneni Neugent. He is also survived by four sisters, Sakuntala Devi Kantamneni, Syamala Devi Kantamneni, Vijayalakshmi Kantamneni and Lakshmi Bhavani Kilaru, and one brother, Chandra Sekhar Kantamneni.

He was preceded in death by his parents, one sister, Vasundhara Devi Kantamneni and two brothers, Venkata Rama Krishna Kantamneni and Nanda Kumar Kantamneni.

Dr. Kantamneni graduated from Guntur Medical College in Guntur, India. He came to the United States in 1970 and moved to Keokuk in 1980. He practiced Psychiatry in southeast Iowa for over forty years. He was the Chief of Medical Staff at Keokuk Area Hospital several times.

He was a member of the American Psychiatry Association, the American Medical Association, the Iowa Medical Society and Lee County Medical Society.

Dr. Kantamneni enjoyed gardening, collecting cars, visiting casinos and playing rummy. He had his pilot's license and enjoyed flying his airplane. Most of all, he enjoyed spending time with his family.

A memorial service will be held from 5 pm -7 pm Wednesday, November 23, 2022 at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk.

Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

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OBITUARIES

JERALD W. GRABER

Jerald W. "Jerry" Graber, 77, of Donnellson, Iowa, passed away at 4:00 a.m. Sunday, November 20, 2022, at his home.



GRABER

Born on August 8, 1945, in rural Donnellson, the son of Jacob and Juanita (Jump) Graber. On March 23, 1968, he married Janet Kramer in West Point, Iowa.

He is survived by his wife; five children: Julie Graber of San Diego, California, Jason (Stacy) Graber of Donnellson, Iowa, Janelle Graber of Galveston, Texas, Jessica (Shane Massey) Graber of Galveston, Texas, Jacob (Dena Martin) Graber of Iowa City, Iowa; five grandchildren: Nicholas Warren, Madison, Lauren and Sydney Graber, Jeriana "Jeri" Graber; seven siblings: Janet (Gary) Haefner, Alan Graber, Barbara Graber, Martin (Coni) Graber, Pat Dodson, Howard Graber and Jeffrey (Gayle) Graber. Also surviving are several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and brother Frank.

Jerry was a 1964 graduate from Central Lee High School and a lifelong farmer and entrepreneur in the Donnellson, Iowa area.

Visitation will begin at 12:00 noon, Tuesday, November 22, 2022, where the family will meet with friends from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Schmitz Funeral Home in Donnellson.

A private graveside service will be held Wednesday, November 23, 2022 in Donnell Cemetery in Donnellson.

A memorial has been established in his memory. Schmitz Funeral Home of Donnellson is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com.

Pen City Current obituary policy

Pen City Current runs obituaries one time at no charge to funeral homes and they run the day they are submitted in most cases. They are also run as submitted by the funeral homes. Reposting of obituaries due to changes can only be requested by the submitting funeral home and will be assessed a \$15 reposting fee.

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Obituaries/From the Front

OBITUARIES

MINNIE E. CURTIS

Minnie Ethel “Mrs. C” Curtis, 96, of Montrose, IA, died Saturday, November 19, 2022 at the Montrose Health Center.

She was born on March 9, 1926, in Fort Madison, IA, the daughter of Ray and L. Eve Johnson Thomas. She graduated from Argyle High School with the Class of 1945.



CURTIS

On June 2, 1945, Minnie Ethel was united in marriage to Glenn W. Curtis at the Presbyterian Church in Montrose, IA. He preceded her in death on October 15, 1983.

Minnie Ethel spent her life making a wonderful home for her family and helping her husband on the farm.

She was a faithful member of the Montrose Presbyterian Church where she sang in the choir, taught Sunday School, was a member of the Crusaders Society and past President and charter member of the Mariner’s Group. She was also a member of the Montrose Historical Society, the Hermanis Women’s Club of Montrose, past chairperson of the Lee County Farm Bureau Women and past chairperson of the American Cross Bloodmobile. Minnie Ethel had served as a 4-H leader and was a volunteer in the Art Hall at the Lee County fair for 19 years.

Minnie Ethel enjoyed sewing, crocheting and tatting. She was wonderful cook and loved to cook for her neighbors and friends. She was quite well-known for her homemade noodles. She had a green thumb and her house was filled with beautiful plants and flowers.

She is survived by two sons, Raymond D. Curtis (Sandy) of Keokuk and Harold Lee “Pee Wee” Curtis of Montrose, four grandchildren, Carrie Appel (Luke), Thesesa Klossing (Dan), Rebecca Cook (Clayton) and Corey Johnson, seven great-grandchildren, nine great great grandchildren and one sister-in-law, Catherine Seyb of Donnellson, several nieces and nephews.

Besides her husband she was also preceded in death by her parents, five brothers, Fay, Jim, Lewis, Kenneth and Leo Thomas, four sisters, Gladys Krogmeier, Marie Dauma, Neoma Fowler and Mary Christie.

Graveside services will be held noon on Wednesday at the Montrose Cemetery with Pastor Mike McHugh officiating. Visitation will be 10 a.m. until Wednesday until time of service with family meeting with friends at that time at the Vigen Memorial Home in Montrose, IA.

Memorials may be made to the Montrose Riverfront, Inc. Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

Nominations sought for 2nd Ward City Council seat

COUNCIL - Continued from Page 1

City Hall, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, Iowa.

The candidate appointed would serve until the results of the November 7, 2023 Election were certified, unless an intervening special election were to be held before that date.

Interested parties should prepare a letter of interest and brief bio and submit to the City Clerk at 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, Iowa, or mblind@fortmadison-ia.com. The deadline for submittal is no later than 4:30 P.M. on December 14, 2022, in order to be considered for the vacancy.

Please contact City Clerk Melinda L. Blind at (319) 372-7700, ext. 206, with any questions.

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HAPPY

THANKSGIVING

In observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, we will not publish an e-Edition Thursday, November 24 through Sunday, November 27. We'll resume publication on Monday, November 28. Breaking news will continue to be published on our website 24/7.

We wish you a very warm & wonderful Thanksgiving.

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From the Front

Large cast to put on OFP’s Christmas production

OFP - Continued from Page 1

2022. This production is sponsored by Montrose Health Center and directed by Richar Abel. “This is a tale that we want to believe in, that creates a world we seem to desperately desire, free of the blatant commercialism that surrounds us, where love and decency and generosity of spirit are their own rewards. What we want Christmas to be all about, really.” So writes the Santa Cruz Sentinel of this most heartwarming holiday story. By chance, Kris Kringle (John Todd Gorham), an old man in a retirement home, is hired by Doris Walker, (Amanda Greenhalge) to play Santa for Macy’s. Kris unleashes waves of good will with Macy’s customers and the commercial

world of New York City by referring parents to other stores to find exactly the toy their child has asked for. Seen as deluded and dangerous by Macy’s vocational counselor, (Jesse Weaver) who plots to have Kris shanghaied to Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital, Kris ends up in Judge Harper’s (Sterling Barnes) court competency hearing. Kris is represented by his lawyer, Fred Gayley (Chris Greenhalge). Especially at stake in the dramatic courtroom scene is Susan Walker’s (Elise Greenhalge) belief in Santa. The rest of the very large cast goes something like this: Dr Pierce -Ty Clute, Bag lady & Elf - Caris Greenhalge, Drunken Santa - Robbie Phillips, Macy - Sophia Gilbert, Sawyer & Halloran - Jesse Weaver, Bloomingdale - Veronica Pranger, Fin-

ley & Shellhammer - Jadi Zioui, Mara & Sharon’s parent -Taegan Hamilton, Duncan, Rich person, Foster parent & Newscaster - Juniper Strickland, James & Johnny - Cooper Barnes, Al - Codee James, Lou - Kim Albers, Child 1- Neva Steele, Pedestrian & Extra Elf - Pieper Terrell, Elf Z - Macy Anderson, Elf J & Dutch girl - Sunshine Zioui, Elf R - Burkley Carter, Elf W - Bella Miller, Sharon - Lila Schleidt, Meagan - Aubrey Davis, Pedestrian 1 - Pieper Terrell, and Pedestrian 2 - Jenna Christensen, Pedestrian 3 - Ripley Mena. Extra kids & singers - Norah Lumsden, William Martin, and Sue Abel. The show performs December 2-4 & 9-11, 2022. Friday and Saturday shows begin at 7:30 and the Sunday matinee begins at 2:00 pm. Adult tickets are \$15, Senior, Vet & Military are \$12, and Students are \$10. You can reserve a seat by phone or Facebook Messenger. Purchase online at www.purplepass.com/ofpdec2022. The theater is located in downtown Fort Madison at 725 Avenue G. Send a Facebook message, send an email to oldfortplayersfm@gmail.com or call 319-372-9559 for more information. Like them on Facebook (Fb@oldfortplayers) or visit www.oldfortplayers.com to keep up with everything that’s going on at the theater.



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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

CURTIS BECKER

Curtis “Curt” Becker, 72, of Warsaw, passed away on Monday, November 21, 2022, at Blessing Hospital in Quincy, Illinois.

Curt was born on June 6, 1950, in Macomb, Illinois, the son of Bernard and Ruth (Wood) Becker. He graduated from Warsaw High School in 1968, and on March 11, 1972, he was united in marriage to Deborah Rohrbough in Warsaw, Illinois. They later divorced.



BECKER

Curt was employed at Roquette (Formerly Hubingers) for thirty-eight years. He was an active member of his community and was a member of the Warsaw Fire Department for almost 30 years, Lions Club, Spunky Point Senior Center, American Legion Ralph Parker Post #682, VFW Post #9802, and the Hancock County Veterans Affairs Committee. In his free time, Curt could be found racing RC cars or working in his yard and around the house. Curt proudly served his country in the United States Army in the 101st Airborne, Company F, 41st Infantry, during the Vietnam War, receiving his honorable discharge. During his service, he received the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Air Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Army Commendation Medal, Sharpshooter and the Bronze Star.

Curt is survived by his ex-wife Deb Becker of Warsaw; two sons: Chris (Michele) Becker and Andy Becker, both of Warsaw; two granddaughters: Chloe and Caleigh Becker, both of Warsaw; his brother C. Craig (Denyse) Becker of Ozark, Missouri; two nephews: Corey (Sarah) Becker of Ozark, Missouri, and Collin (Dana) Becker of Osage Beach, Missouri; two great-nephews: Dawson and Noah; and a great-niece Addie.

Curt is preceded in death by his parents. A memorial service with military honors will be held at 4 pm on Saturday, November 26, 2022, at Printy Funeral Home in Warsaw. Visitation will be held at the funeral home on Saturday from noon to 4 pm directly before the service.

Memorials may be directed to the Warsaw Fire Department, Spunky Point Senior Center or St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

Tributes and condolences may be left at www.printyfuneral-home.com.

Printy Funeral Home of Warsaw is in charge of arrangements.

OBITUARIES

STEVEN A. GILMAN

Steven “Steve” Anthony Gilman, 68, of Keokuk, Iowa, passed away on Monday, November 21, 2022, at his home in Keokuk.

Steve was born on August 12, 1954, in Fort Madison, Iowa, the son of Tom and Jo (Kulp) Gilman. He was employed at area factories throughout his working career. Steve was a man of many talents, and enjoyed fixing up old cars and motorcycles. He loved his dogs and animals in general, and you could catch him spending his free time fishing. Above all, Steve loved his family, and was a wonderful father and grandfather.



GILMAN

Steve is survived by six children: Tara Gilman of Fort Madison, Anthony Gilman of Montrose, Aaron Gilman of Montrose, Amy (Haris) Smajlovic of Keokuk, Troy Gilman of Montrose, and Alisa (Jason) Hirschler of Donnellson, Iowa; two brothers: Keith (Barb) Gilman of Fort Madison and Dan (Cindy) Gilman of St Louis, Missouri; twelve grandchildren with one on the way; four great-grandchildren; and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Steve is preceded in death by his parents, his brother Tom “Butch” Gilman and his sister Pat Poggemiller. A celebration of Steve’s life will be held at 1 pm on Sunday, December 4, 2022, at the Ivor Fowler Community Center in Montrose.

Tributes and condolences may be left at www.dejongsfuneralhome.com.

DeJong-Greaves-Printy Funeral Home of Keokuk is in charge of arrangements.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE MEETING MINUTES Regular Meeting Monday, October 10th, 2022 7:30PM, City Hall

The regular meeting of the Donnellson City Council was called to order by Mayor Dave Ellingboe, with Council Members Moeller, Weber, Newton & Estrada present. Marshall was absent. Motion by Weber, second by Moeller to approve the agenda: all ayes. Citizen comments – None. Motion by Estrada, second by Weber to approve the minutes of the September '22 meetings: all ayes. Motion by Newton, second by Estrada to approve the September '22 financial reports: all ayes. Motion by Estrada, second by Moeller to approve the September '22 disbursements and October '22 bills to be allowed: all ayes. Motion by Estrada, second by Newton to approve building permit for utility shed at 413 University: all ayes. Motion by Weber, second by Estrada to approve the Annual Financial Report FY2022: all ayes.

Review of Accountants Report of Annual Exam FY22. Detail of findings can be found on the cities website donnellsoniowa.org. Trick or Treat in Donnellson will be October 31st 2022 from 5-7pm Lee County Crimestoppers Halloween Event will be held at the Lee County Fairgrounds October 22nd from 4-7pm. There will be a Toys for Tots drop box in the city office building, they are accepting new & unwrapped toys this holiday season. Police Report – There were 34 calls for service, 4 traffic stops & 1 citation. 27 building checks were done during the day & night time hours. Water/Sewer Superintendent Report – Iowa DNR conducted the sanitary survey of the public water supply 9/23/2022, no deficiencies were found. Water mains will be flushed October 17th & 18th weather permitting. Clerk Report – Oktoberfest had a good turn out with several compliments. Discussion was held on a few properties that were being followed up with regarding nuisance issues. There being no other business to come before the Council, motion

by Newton, second by Moeller, Mayor Ellingboe declared the meeting adjourned: all ayes. Dave Ellingboe, Mayor Attest: Rebecca Schau, City Clerk Summary of All Receipts: General \$22,391.55 Capital Equipment Reserve \$0 Road Use Tax \$13,879.28 Employee Benefit \$1,259.85 Local Option Sales Tax \$7,824.88 Debit Service \$0 Rathbun \$0 ARPA \$0 Water \$22,693.44 Water Sinking USDA \$1,816.00 Sewer \$28,912.24 Sewer Sinking \$0. Summary of All Disbursements: General \$27,045.63 Capital Equipment Reserve \$0 Road Use Tax \$74,241.45 Employee Benefit \$2,104.72 Local Option Sales Tax \$0 Debit Service \$0 Capital Project Fund \$0 Rathbun \$0 ARPA \$0 Water \$17,284.37 Water Sinking \$1,816.00 Sewer \$12,324.25 Sewer Sinking \$0. MASTERCARD, Misc supplies 693.46 WINDSTREAM, Internet 274.55 ALLIANT ENERGY, Electric..... 5,079.48 GRRWA, landfill.... 953.00 MCFARLAND SUPPLY, office supplies..... 49.99

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From the Front



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Workers prepare the foundation on ground at 236 Avenue E where a second Homes for Iowa home will be placed later this year.

Mohrfeld moving IPI homes onto Fort Madison lots

HOMES - Continued from Page 1

basically order the houses from IPI, they train the men, build the house, and move the house.”

Fort Madison’s Michael Mohrfeld has purchased three of those homes and is currently placing two of them in Fort Madison. The third one was placed in West Point several years ago.

Mohrfeld said he’s enjoying the relationship with Homes for Iowa because of the value of the program. He said not only does it provide affordable housing replacement, but it also fills skills gaps by training offenders to fill jobs when they re-enter society.

“What’s neat about this is they are truly teaching them conventional construction. If you go to the site in Newton, they are outside framing houses just like you would on a foundation of a home,” Mohrfeld said.

“It’s not to be confused with modular. That’s kind of a dirty word in the industry. These are fully stick-built and come in as one full unit. There’s not any quality corners cut. This is strictly a training exercise for the offenders.”

Mohrfeld is currently having one of the homes placed on Green Oak Court and concurrently prepping the ground for another home at 236 Avenue E.

The homes have two bedrooms on the main floor and a third in the basement with a second bathroom in the basement. The amenities are on the main floor so Mohrfeld said that could work for seniors or be a great starter home for a young family.

“It’s just another offering,” he said.

“If you’ve followed what we’re trying to do is just create an offering at all price points. Condos, entry level, good quality. These are great homes and I like the initiative behind this. Getting offenders back in the workforce is a huge challenge.”

Mohrfeld said the market is strange right now after exploding after COVID.

“We’re seeing things get caught up and come back to normal. We’re trying to figure out in the last three, six months what the new needle is,” he said.

“Costs are coming back in line but interest rates are going up.”

Mohrfeld is also in the process of putting a four-unit apartment complex at Victory Field.

Both that property and the one on Avenue E are properties acquired off a city plan to get dilapidated property in the hands of developers.

The Fort Madison City Council announced the plan earlier this year and advertised the properties to the public.

Mohrfeld said two of the properties caught his eye right away because they stood out as bad spaces in otherwise good neighborhoods.

“I set my eyes on those because those are great neighborhoods and an example of one bad property in the mix. My initiative was to make those go away.”

Mohrfeld said he wants to get those two projects complete and then will be turning his attention to the former Jefferson School property and development there.

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