

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Thursday, December 15, 2022 | 8 pages | Volume 7 • Issue 4



www.pencitycurrent.com

Natural gas report close

UPDATE: LCEDG staff updates investors on progress on different fronts

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

MONTROSE - Area business leaders and elected officials got an update on economic conditions of Lee County over some bacon and eggs Thursday morning.

Lee County Economic Development Group hosted a stakeholder breakfast at the group's offices in Montrose.

LCEDG President Dennis Fraise outlined the group's plans for the next capital campaign and talked about the importance of natural gas to the area.

Danville Mutual Telephone CEO Tim Fencil also pro-



FRAISE

vided an update on the company's ongoing fiber optics project in the county.

Fraise said LCEDG's public/private partnership has been successful. The group is funding with 50% private investments from county businesses and 40% from Lee County Supervisors, 5% from the City of Keokuk, and 5% from the City of Fort Madison.

LCEDG had planned to conduct another 5-year campaign in 2023 with their last being in 2018, but Fraise said

See **UPDATE**, page 8



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

LCEDG President Dennis Fraise updates stakeholders at breakfast hosted by the group Thursday morning.

CITY NEWS

Former 3rd Ward councilman Travis Seidel dead at 47

FORT MADISON - Former Fort Madison City Councilman Travis Seidel was pronounced dead this morning at a local hospital.

According to an obituary from King-Lynk Funeral Home, Seidel died at 6:55 a.m. at Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center in Fort Madison.

Seidel served the city's 3rd Ward as



SEIDEL

councilman for three years. He was first elected in 2015 and then resigned in 2018 after a legal issue.

Seidel was elected unopposed in the 2015 election with 110 votes.

His full obituary ap-

pears in today's Pen City Current.

His family will meet with friends from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Tuesday, December 20 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. Services will follow the visitation at 11 a.m. at the funeral home with Pastor Darek Lozano officiating. Burial will be held in Oakland Cemetery.

STATE NEWS

Jobless rate up 3.1% for November

PCC Staff

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 3.1 percent in November, while the labor force participation rate held steady at 67.7 percent and 500 jobs were added. The U.S. labor force participation rate fell to 62.1 percent in November and the national unemployment rate remained unchanged at 3.7 percent.

Despite surveyed employers reporting that they added jobs, the number of unemployed Iowans rose to 52,400 in November from 49,700 in October, but remains 12,700 lower than one year ago.

The total number of working Iowans decreased by 3,400 in November to 1,659,000 but remains 48,300 higher than one year ago.

"Historical trends during the holiday season and throughout the winter months tend to show a rise in unemployment. On balance, Iowa employers kept hiring in November despite indications about the potential for future downturns," said Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development. "As companies continue to navigate the ripples from record inflation and supply chain issues, Iowa still has almost 79,000 open jobs. That far exceeds the number of unemployed in Iowa, and IWD will remain laser-focused on helping make connections between the unemployed and employers."

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

Surveyed businesses in Iowa added a net 500 jobs in November, raising total nonfarm employment to 1,586,100 jobs. November marks the eighth consecutive increase in jobs added within our state. Iowa now has added 23,700 jobs since the last loss in March. Private sectors

See **JOBS**, page 3

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WEATHER

FRI 16 Dec.....Cold with chance of flurries, 27° F/20° F
SAT 17 Dec.....Mostly cloudy and cold, 27° F/13° F
SUN 18 Dec.....Sunny and cold, 27° F/15° F

OpenWeatherMap

IOWA LOTTERY

LOTTO AMERICA 12/14.....18 21 22 30 32, Star Ball: 3 All Star Bonus: 4
LUCKY FOR LIFE 12/14.....2 4 6 17 20, Lucky Ball: 5
PICK 3 12/14 MIDDAY.....8 4 2
PICK 3 12/14 EVENING.....2 3 1
PICK 4 12/14 MIDDAY.....5 8 5 7
PICK 4 12/14 EVENING.....9 5 4 1
POWERBALL 12/14.....36 51 59 66 68, Powerball: 25 Power Play: 10

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Scene Around the Area/Sports



Courtesy Photo

Lee County Republicans recently held their annual Christmas dinner at the Pilot Grove Community Room in Donnellson. Everyone enjoyed a delicious carry-in meal followed by a spirited white elephant gift exchange. Collette Lindeman received the 2022 Ambassador of the Year award. Collette assisted in many activities throughout the year especially during the mid-term election process. Congratulations, Collette! Pictured L-R, Sandy Johnson, Finance Chair, Collette, and James Green, Lee County Republican Chair.

Fishing heats up with warmer temps and rain

DES MOINES - The following is the weekly fishing report from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for southeast Iowa.

Lake Macbride

The lake is ice free with the exception of east of the causeway. Black Crappie - Slow. Muskellunge - Fair. Wiper (Hybrid Striped Bass) - Slow.

Sand Lake

The lake is still ice free. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. Rainbow Trout - Fair.

Most lakes in the Macbride District have opened back up from rain, wind, and warm temperatures. For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

Lake Miami

Little fishing pressure lately. Water temperatures are in the 30s. Skim ice is forming on the colder mornings.

Lake Sugema

Fishing pressure has been light. Water temperatures are in the 30s. Skim ice is forming on the colder mornings, making fishing from shore difficult.

Lake Wapello

Water temperatures are in the 30s. Skim ice is forming on the colder mornings.

Ottumwa Park Pond South (Trout Pond)

Skim ice is forming; fishing from shore will be difficult. Trout were stocked recently. You need a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. Rainbow Trout - Fair: Try small in-line spinners or small jigs.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 903.93 msl; recreation pool is 904 msl. Water temperatures are around 40 degrees. Skim ice is forming in the coves, making fishing difficult. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean and dry equipment before transporting to another waterbody. Walleye - No Report: Effective January 1, 2023 there will be a 15-inch minimum length limit on walleye. All walleyes measuring less than 15 inches must be immediately released unharmed. This regulation does not apply to the Chariton River below Rathbun dam; the upper limit of the regulation will be the Wayne/Appanoose county line.

Red Haw Lake

Red Haw State Park has partially reopened. Visitors can access the beach and north boat ramp area, but are asked to avoid the campground.

Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

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For more information or help finding a dentist, payment source, or transportation, call the I-Smile™ team at 1.800.458.6672 or email RPRahn@LeeCountyHD.org

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PEN CITY CURRENT
 It's Black & White and Read all over

Member LION Publishers
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Pen City Current, www.PenCityCurrent.com, and Pen e-Saver are products of Market Street Publishing, LLC. Pen City Current is published Monday through Friday mornings by 6AM.

Founded in 2016
 P.O. Box 366 | Fort Madison, IA

Obituaries/From the Front

OBITUARIES

TRAVIS C. SEIDEL

Travis Claude Seidel, 47, of Fort Madison passed away on Thursday, December 15, 2022 at 6:55 AM at the Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center ER.



SEIDEL

He was born on October 7, 1975 in Ft. Madison to Claude and Tyris Scott Seidel. On October 21, 2001 he married Angela Parson and they later divorced. Travis was a logger and a jack of all trades. He enjoyed cooking, smoking meat, his animals and tinkering. Most of all he loved his family, especially his son, Ledgend.

Survivors include his daughter, Emily Seidel of Kansas City, KS; his son, Ledgend Seidel of Ft. Madison; his mother, Tyris (Bob) Cummings of Basco, IL; his father, Claude (Tina) Seidel of Kirksville, MO; his sister, Christy Lozano of West Des Moines; step siblings, Mindy (Jody) McLeland of Mt. Pleasant, Bob Cummings of Keokuk and Renea Starr of Memphis, TN and several nieces and nephews. Travis was preceded in death by his grandparents and his brother-in-law, Angelo Lozano II.

The family will meet with friends from 9 AM-11 AM on Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. The funeral service will follow the visitation at 11 AM at the funeral home with Pastor Darek Lozano officiating. Burial will be held in Oakland Cemetery.

A memorial has been established in his memory and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

MARY B. MULLIKIN

Mary Belle Mullikin, 92, of Keokuk, passed away on Tuesday, December 13, 2022, at River Hills Village in Keokuk, Iowa.

Mary was born on November 3, 1930, in Keokuk, Iowa, the daughter of Sherman B. and Helen (Petty) Mullikin. She was employed at Northwestern Bell for many years, working her way to supervisor before retiring in 1984 after thirty-four years of service. She lived in Keokuk and Des Moines for most of her life and was a member of First Christian Church in Keokuk.

Mary is survived by her cousins.

Mary is preceded in death by her parents and one sister.

According to her wishes, no services will be held. Burial will take place at Sandusky Cemetery in Sandusky, Iowa.

Memorials may be directed to the charity of the donor's choice.

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

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

Job participation rate holds steady

JOBS - Continued from Page 1

combined to shed 200 jobs in November, with hiring in leisure and hospitality and construction being offset by job losses in trade and professional services. Government saw some hiring at the state and local levels, adding 700 jobs in November. Government now is up 4,300 jobs versus last year, while total nonfarm employment combined has added 42,800 jobs annually.

Leisure and hospitality gained 2,000 jobs in November to lead all sectors. Gains were evenly split between arts, entertainment, and recreation along with accommodations and food services. This sector also has added jobs in every month since March, with 12,200 positions gained during that span. Construction added 1,000 jobs in November as firms worked later into the fall to wrap up projects this year. Despite the hiring this month, this sector has shown little trend over the past 12 months. Other gains were minor and included other services (+400) and information (+200). Job losses in November were visible across many sectors -- led by trade, transportation, and utilities, which experienced layoffs in retail trade (-1,100). Part of this loss can be attributed to gas stations and convenience stores lowering staffing levels in November. Professional and business services also trended down this month (-1,000), with administrative support and waste management fueling much of the drop. Smaller November losses included finance and insurance (-800) and education, health care and social assistance (-700).

Compared to last November, leisure and hospitality and manufacturing are tied for the most jobs gained (+13,700). Accommodations and food services has added much of the employment for leisure and hospitality industries, although arts, entertainment, and recreation has advanced by 20.8 percent during the last 12 months. Manufacturing has been resilient and steadily advanced over the year with hiring in durable goods shops alone gaining 9,000 jobs. However, November's slight decline of 300 jobs halts 11 consecutive months of job gains stretching back to the labor dispute in 2021.



Lunch Specials
Dec 12 - 16
11am - 1pm

Monday, December 12
Pork Loin, Loaded Potatoes

Tuesday, December 13
Tater Tot Casserole, Green Beans

Wednesday, December 14
Roast Beef Sandwich, Cheese Potatoes

Thursday, December 15
Fried Chicken Dinners

Friday, December 16
Beef & Noodles, Mashed Potato, Corn

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Scene Around the Area/Iowa News

Grassley gets polices added to defense bill

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) secured the inclusion of a broad array of bipartisan policies in defense authorization legislation, which passed the Senate tonight. The bills, authored or backed by Grassley will provide new rights for survivors of sexual violence, support law enforcement’s efforts in the fight against cybercrime and deadly drugs, help to locate vulnerable missing persons and improve government accountability.

Survivors’ Bill of Rights in the States Act

This bill builds on Grassley’s prior work to secure rights for survivors of sexual assault by encouraging states to adopt the same protections for survivors of state sex crimes that Grassley helped to establish at the federal level.

Kevin and Avonte’s Law Reauthorization

Named in honor of Kevin Curtis Wills of Jefferson, Iowa, this bipartisan bill assists communities in locating individuals with autism, Alzheimer’s and related conditions that cause them to wander from safety.

National Computer Forensics Institute Reauthorization Act

This bipartisan bill with Sen. Feinstein (D-Calif.) reauthorizes the national Computer Forensics Institute, which provides training to state and local law enforcement agencies to better respond a rise in computer-based crimes.

Securing Inspector General Independence Act

This bipartisan bill with Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.) requires any administration to provide a “substantive rationale, including detailed and case-specific reasons” prior to removing an inspector general, and limits the use of administrative leave for IGs.

FBI Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act

This bipartisan bill with Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) further protects whistleblowers at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from retaliation. By allowing FBI employees to appeal retaliation claims to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) – a board already utilized by several other federal law enforcement agencies to ensure whistleblowers have the right to a fair, third-party hearing.

Military Justice Improvement and Increasing Prevention Act

Since 2013, Grassley and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) have led the effort to improve justice for survivors of sexual assault and other serious crimes in the military. While a portion of this bipartisan bill was adopted last year, key provisions to fully remove prosecutions from the chain of command and expand the list of crimes covered under the new system were omitted. This year’s bill codifies the remaining provisions.



Courtesy photo

Aubrey Weber of the Central Lee Agricultural Education department and FFA program at Central Lee High School is pictured with her beef production SAE project(Supervised Agricultural Experience Program). Aubrey manages 40 acres of row crop ground as well for an additional SAE.

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DAILY SPECIALS

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WHERE: Fort Madison Family YMCA

DEADLINE: January 4th, 2023

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There’s Snow
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Pen City Current will not publish an e-Edition Friday, December 23 through Monday, January 2.
Our special 2022 Year In Review editions will publish
Tuesday, January 3 through Thursday, January 5.
Breaking news will continue to be published on our website 24/7.

As we take time for our family this holiday, we thank you for your support and patronage and wish you all a very Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!

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Classifieds/Public Notices

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC NOTICE
LEE COUNTY BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 7, 2022**

The Lee County Board of Supervisors met at the Lee County Administration Building in Fort Madison on Monday, November 7, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Matt Pflug, Garry Seyb, Ron Fedler, Rick Larkin, Chuck

**LOST &
FOUND**

LOST CAT



Lost: Male, long-haired Siamese cat with blue eyes. Missing from North 4th Street in Keokuk since December 6. Was wearing a black collar with skulls and a bell on it. If found please call or text Rachel at 435.632.2718.

**HELP
WANTED**

Water Treatment Plant

**Full Time
Laboratory
Technician/
Operator**

Performs routine laboratory work analyzing wastewater and sludge samples. Maintains the quality control program, inventory of chemicals, and monitors industrial waste for billing purposes.

**DESIRED MINIMUM
QUALIFICATIONS**

- Education and Experience:
1. Graduation from high school diploma or GED equivalent
 2. Valid Iowa driver's license
 3. Obtain a Grade II Wastewater Certification in the State of Iowa.
 4. Certified Laboratory Assistant preferred
 5. Ability to perform complex laboratory analyses

Apply at City Hall, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, IA or email applications to jcul-len@fortmadison-ia.com by Friday, December 16th, 2022.



Holmes.

All votes are unanimous unless indicated otherwise.

The Board opened the meeting by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moved by Fedler, seconded by Larkin, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

There was no Public Input.

Sheriff Stacy Weber recognized Deputies Jacob Riley, Kyle Haney and Intern Jace Marshall for performing heroic life saving measures.

Moved by Fedler, seconded by Seyb, to approve an Iowa Department of Transportation Federal-Aid Agreement for a Diesel Emission Reduction Act Project. Motion carried.

Moved by Seyb, seconded by Larkin, to approve a revised application for use of Lee County Road Right-of-Way for Utilities and Tile Lines, with a 48-inch requirement for fiber optic cable. Motion carried.

Moved by Holmes, seconded by Seyb, to approve Resolution #2022-100. Roll call: Holmes-aye, Seyb-aye, Larkin-aye, Fedler-aye and Pflug-aye.

**HELP
WANTED**

Water Treatment Plant

**Full Time
Operator**

Operates and repairs all pumps and appurtenances necessary to produce high quality and adequate quantity of water to meet system demands. Performs routine maintenance on equipment, collects and analyzes water samples, and completes inspections.

**DESIRED MINIMUM
QUALIFICATIONS**

- Education and Experience:
1. Graduation from high school diploma or GED equivalent
 2. Valid Iowa driver's license
 3. Obtain a Grade II Water Treatment License in the State of Iowa
 4. Ability to perform basic laboratory analyses

Apply at City Hall, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, IA or email applications to jcul-len@fortmadison-ia.com by Friday, December 16th, 2022.



**RESOLUTION
#2022-100**

A resolution of the Board of Supervisors of Lee County agreeing to apply for financial assistance with the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development to finance a Rapid Response Vehicle. Be it further resolved that the Board of Supervisors of Lee County, authorize Matt Pflug, Chairman and/or Denise Fraise, Auditor to sign all documents relating to the USDA Rural Development loan and/or grant.

PASSED and APPROVED this 7th day of November 2022.

Lee County Board of Supervisors. /s/ Matt Pflug, Chairman; /s/ Garry Seyb, Vice-Chairman; /s/ Ron Fedler, Member; /s/ Rick Larkin, Member; and /s/ Chuck Holmes, Member. Attest: /s/ Denise Fraise, Auditor. Motion carried.

Moved by Seyb, seconded by Larkin, to approve hiring a full-time EMT. Motion carried.

Moved by Seyb, seconded by Holmes, to approve the Lee County EMS Bereavement Policy. Motion carried.

Moved by Holmes, seconded by Fedler, to approve a contract with North Central Emergency Vehicles for an ambulance remount, at a cost of \$156,265.85. Motion carried.

Moved by Seyb, seconded by Larkin, to approve three contracts with North Central Emergency Vehicles to lock in pricing on a 2023 Ford E 450 Ambulance at a cost of \$199,125.59, a 2024 Ford E 450 Ambulance at a cost of \$211,434.00 and a 2025 Ford E 450 Ambulance at a cost of \$214,434.00. Motion carried.

Moved by Seyb, seconded by Larkin, to approve a Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund Application to obtain an extra \$100,000.00 in ARPA funds. Motion carried.

Moved by Fedler, seconded by Holmes, to approve five tax abatement resolutions. Roll call: Fedler-aye, Holmes-aye, Larkin-aye, Seyb-aye and Pflug-aye.

**RESOLUTION
NO. 2022-99**

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Lee County has by Ordinance Number VI-11 adopted a plan for a County-wide Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption District in Lee County, Iowa; and,

WHEREAS, Iowa Code Section 404.4 provides for prior approval of eligibility for a tax exemption by the governing body of the County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF LEE COUNTY, IOWA, that they hereby approve the application of: Rae Fedler 2125 West Point Road West Point IA 52656

For exemption from taxation according to the provisions of Iowa Code Section 404.3, §3. Said applications shall be forwarded to the County Assessor for review pursuant to the provisions of Section 404.5 Code of Iowa.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 7th day of November 2022.

Lee County Board of Supervisors. /s/ Matt Pflug, Chairman; /s/ Garry Seyb, Vice-Chairman; /s/ Ron Fedler, Member; and /s/ Chuck Holmes, Member. Attest: /s/ Denise Fraise, Auditor. Motion carried.

**RESOLUTION
NO. 2022-101**

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Lee County has by Ordinance Number VI-11 adopted a plan for a County-wide Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption District in Lee County, Iowa; and,

WHEREAS, Iowa Code Section 404.4 provides for

prior approval of eligibility for a tax exemption by the governing body of the County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF LEE COUNTY, IOWA, that they hereby approve the application of: Randy and Kathy Pieper 3320 Timber Ridge Drive Fort Madison IA 52627

For exemption from taxation according to the provisions of Iowa Code Section 404.3, §3. Said applications shall be forwarded to the County Assessor for review pursuant to the provisions of Section 404.5 Code of Iowa.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 7th day of November 2022.

Lee County Board of Supervisors. /s/ Matt Pflug, Chairman; /s/ Garry Seyb, Vice-Chairman; /s/ Ron Fedler, Member; and /s/ Chuck Holmes, Member. Attest: /s/ Denise Fraise, Auditor. Motion carried.

**RESOLUTION
NO. 2022-102**

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Lee County has by Ordinance Number VI-11 adopted a plan for a County-wide Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption District in Lee County, Iowa; and,

WHEREAS, Iowa Code Section 404.4 provides for prior approval of eligibility for a tax exemption by the governing body of the County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF LEE COUNTY, IOWA, that

they hereby approve the application of: Randy and Kathy Pieper 3320 Timber Ridge Drive Fort Madison IA 52627

For exemption from taxation according to the provisions of Iowa Code Section 404.3, §3. Said applications shall be forwarded to the County Assessor for review pursuant to the provisions of Section 404.5 Code of Iowa.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 7th day of November 2022.

Lee County Board of Supervisors. /s/ Matt Pflug, Chairman; /s/ Garry Seyb, Vice-Chairman; /s/ Ron Fedler, Member; /s/ Rick Larkin, Member; and /s/ Chuck Holmes, Member. Attest: /s/ Denise Fraise, Auditor. Motion carried.

**RESOLUTION
NO. 2022-103**



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Classifieds/Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICES

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Lee County has by Ordinance Number VI-11 adopted a plan for a County-wide Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption District in Lee County, Iowa; and,

WHEREAS, Iowa Code Section 404.4 provides for prior approval of eligibility for a tax exemption by the governing body of the County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF LEE COUNTY, IOWA, that they hereby approve the application of: Brett and Kelly Denney 2078 290th Avenue Fort Madison IA 52627

For exemption from taxation according to the provisions of Iowa Code Section 404.3, §3. Said applications shall be forwarded to the County Assessor for review pursuant to the provisions of Section 404.5 Code of Iowa.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 7th day of November 2022.

Lee County Board of Supervisors. /s/ Matt Pflug, Chairman; /s/ Garry Seyb, Vice-Chairman; /s/ Ron Fedler, Member; /s/ Rick Larkin, Member; and /s/ Chuck Holmes, Mem-

ber. Attest: /s/ Denise Fraise, Auditor. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-104

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Lee County has by Ordinance Number VI-11 adopted a plan for a County-wide Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption District in Lee County, Iowa; and,

WHEREAS, Iowa Code Section 404.4 provides for prior approval of eligibility for a tax exemption by the governing body of the County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF LEE COUNTY, IOWA, that they hereby approve the application of: Martin and Deanna Wellman 3071 Old Quarry Road Wever IA 52658

For exemption from taxation according to the provisions of Iowa Code Section 404.3, §3. Said applications shall be forwarded to the County Assessor for review pursuant to the provisions of Section 404.5 Code of Iowa.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 7th day of November 2022.

Lee County Board of Supervisors. /s/ Matt Pflug, Chairman; /s/ Garry Seyb, Vice-Chairman; /s/ Ron Fedler, Member; /s/ Rick Larkin, Member; and /s/ Chuck Holmes, Mem-

ber. Attest: /s/ Denise Fraise, Auditor. Motion carried.

Moved by Larkin, seconded by Holmes, to approve the Monday, October 24 and the Tuesday, October 25, 2022 Board Minutes. Motion carried.

Moved by Larkin, seconded by Holmes, to approve the payment of claims. Motion carried.

Moved by Fedler, seconded by Holmes, to approve a step increase for Lia Risser, EO Education Specialist 1, from \$21.64/hr. to \$22.25/hr., effective 11/15/22; a step increase for Peggy Peterson, Records Clerk, from \$18.00/hr. to \$18.50/hr., effective 11/30/22; a step increase for Jeff Hoskins, Shop Foreman, from \$31.55/hr. to \$31.79/hr., effective 11/18/22 and a step increase for Sherri Hartson, Engineering Programs Manager, from \$26.93/hr. to \$27.15/hr., effective 11/18/22. Motion carried.

Received and filed the Recorder's Report of Fees Collected for the months of September and October 2022, a Manure Management Annual Update for Jason Newberry in Des Moines Township, a Manure Management Annual Update for Merigold in Green Bay Township, a Manure Management Annual Update for Sandy Bottom Swine in Des Moines Township, the Treasurer's Report of Fees Collected for the

month of October 2022 and the Auditor's Report of Fees Collected for the month of October 2022.

Committee Reports: Larkin reported on a Fort Madison Partners Board meeting. Seyb reported on a Childcare Coalition meeting and an Economic Development Board meeting. Holmes reported on a Conservation Board meeting and a Children First Board meeting. Pflug reported on a Board of Health meeting.

At 11:00 a.m., a motion was made by Holmes, seconded by Fedler, to adjourn. Motion carried. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at the Administration Building in Fort Madison.

Matt Pflug, Chairman
Attest: Denise Fraise,
Lee County Auditor

Claims paid November 7, 2022

ABC Fire Extng, svcs 141.95
Access Systems, svcs 151.62
Agriland FS, fuel 3363.99
Airgas USA, splys 366.81
All Seasons Music, svcs 217.39
Alliant Energy, svcs 4155.02
Amazon, splys 255.17
Amerigroup, rfnds 132.57
AMI Pipe/sply, splys 23.50
AssuredPartners, svcs

..... 3474.00
T Bell, svcs 450.00
Benco Dntl, equip 4785.38
Blades/Green, svcs 869.00
Blessing Hlth, svcs 693.60
B & C Salvage, svcs 234.00
B Bonar, svcs 200.00
N Booten, exps 206.50
Bnd Tree Med, splys 6256.59
K Brookhiser, rent 185.00
Building Mtrl, splys.. 91.12
Cntrl IA Juv Dtnt, svcs 1868.97
D Chaney, exps 122.00
City/Donnellson, svcs 102.82
Comm Action, svcs 861.00
M Cook, exps..... 169.00
CJ Cooper/Assoc, svcs 115.00
D Coovert, svcs 200.00
Cullen Pest, svcs.... 381.00
Democrat Co, publ.. 50.30
Darkside Tint, splys 3014.00
Dvnprt Printing, splys 100.05
M Davis, svcs 559.72
DM Stamp Mfg, splys 297.00
Dodd Prtg/Stat, splys 314.25
Dnnlsln Lumber, equip 457.23
Dnnlsln Tire, svcs 1540.00
Douds Stone, mtrl 250.00
Drain Doctor, svcs .. 305.00
Elevate Oral Care, svcs 140.00
Family Res, svcs .. 1399.50
Farm/Home, splys 131.96

Fastenal Co, equip .. 34.70
Floyds EZ Way, svcs 135.00
FM Water, svcs..... 140.09
French-Reneker, svcs 2353.46
Sunshine Child, equip 5199.13
Garratt-Callahan, svcs 750.00
Gateway Stl Pipe, splys 2750.00
L Glasscock, exps 265.76
N Granaman, svcs 1412.43
Great Prairie AEA, svcs 1363.08
GRRWA, svcs..... 10.55
GrtAmer Financial, equip 174.42
M Gregory, rfnds... 157.61
H & L TRUCK, veh 243217.00
Hancock Co Hlth, svcs 1732.50
Hrtricks Lmbr, parts 220.68
Henderson Prod, splys 39864.09
Hstrc Hotel IA, rent 300.00
Home Thrpy Sol, svcs 2384.40
J Hudson, exps..... 17.00
Huffman Welding, equip 428.11
Ideal Rdy Mix, mtrl 1006.05
Ilmberger Entrps, rent 185.00
IMWCA, ins..... 13018.00
Intrst All Battery, splys 49.00
IA DOT, svcs..... 58.24
IA Div Labor Svcs, prmts 120.00
T Jacobsmeier, svcs 200.00
S Jeffries, exps 231.50

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Miller reaches settlement with Medicaid vendor

DES MOINES — Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller announced a \$44.4 million settlement with Centene Corp. over allegations the managed care company over-billed the state's Medicaid program for pharmacy benefits and services.

Centene, the largest Medicaid managed care insurer in the nation, operates as Iowa Total Care in the state. It is one of three managed care organizations under the state's Medicaid program.

"We are pleased to come to a resolution with Centene in this matter," AG Miller said. "Medicaid funds are a vital resource for so many Iowans. Ensuring these dollars are used as intended means that our health care system is in a better spot to help our residents."

The settlement proceeds will be split between the State of Iowa and the Federal Medicaid program pursuant to federal Medicaid requirements.

Miller's office reviewed Centene's operations in Iowa after a string of investigations and settlements between the company and other states. The review found irregularities in Centene's practices related to the reporting of pharmacy benefit services costs in the Medicaid program, including the pricing of prescription drugs.

The state of Iowa's Medicaid program provides coverage to about 805,000 Iowans, and it does so through the use of managed care organizations (MCOs). Centene's Iowa Total Care administered its pharmacy benefits through Envolve, a Centene-owned pharmacy benefits manager.

Centene allegedly used Envolve to deceptively receive payments that it was not entitled to; falsified reports related to the work under its provider agreement with the state; and misrepresented the cost of pharmacy services.

The AG's office also alleges that Envolve and Centene failed to disclose or pass on some retail discounts to the state, inflating fees and costs for Iowans.

Under the settlement, Centene, which does not admit wrongdoing, must provide full transparency related to the payment of all pharmacy benefit claims, including the exact amount paid to the pharmacy for each pharmaceutical claim.

Broadband project to be completed by end of 2023

UPDATE - Continued from Page 1

they are pushing that for a year to get away from other area capital campaigns taking place the same year.

"We'd ask that you just roll your contribution over for one more year and then we'll do our capital campaign in 2024," he said.

Fraise said the group has come a long way in the past 10 years.

"Today feels pretty normal but that wasn't the case five or 10 years ago. People didn't know each other," he said.

Two of the major steps forward for LCEDG have been the acquisition of the new office building, the former KL Megla building, and then installing the Career Advantage Center at the same facility.

LCEDG Vice President Emily Benjamin said every 8th and 9th grader in Keokuk, Fort Madison, and Central Lee schools have come through the CAC this fall, but the push now is to focus on the older students with programmed and work-based learning.

One of the most eye-opening discussions was around natural gas.

Fraise said the county has lost three projects this year to other areas due to the lack of natural gas supply, despite the county being the location of choice for two of them.

Fraise said the problem is an expensive one, and a frustrating one.

"We chased a project for a couple years that will ultimately go to Clinton, because we were the site of choice in the whole United States except we couldn't deliver the natural gas," he said.

"That project was hundreds of millions of dollars and we didn't have the gas."

He said the solution is a \$100 million project. So LCEDG has engaged Southeast Iowa Regional Planning and Greater Burlington Partnership to create a study at a cost of \$65,000.

He said the study was an engineering study and a legal review of getting more natural gas in Southeast Iowa.

"We greenlit that. We don't want to just sit and talk about stuff," Fraise said.

Iowa Fertilizer Co, Alliant Energy, Roquette, Liberty Utilities, and others have come in to put money in that project. He said the study will be completed by the year's end and a meeting has already been set for Jan. 5 with Iowa Economic Development Authority's Director Debi Durham.

"Debi is very interested in this project and she has some state and federal money they could perhaps use in this project," he said.

Fencl outlined the broadband expansion project that will create a redundant service loop for Danville Telecom and will provide fiber optic cable to 121 homes in Lee County with potential to drop more as funding becomes available.

Fencl said construction on the \$5.4 million project should begin when the frost is out of the ground and is scheduled to be completed before the end of 2023.

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