

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and **Read** all over

Wednesday, March 1, 2023 | 8 pages | Volume 7 • Issue 47



www.pencitycurrent.com

Central Lee looking at \$10.70 levy

LEVY TALK: Central Lee board may rethink debt service levy

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

DONNELLSON – The Central Lee School District's 2023-24 financial picture looks very similar to previous years, but not all 'Is have been dotted and Ts have been crossed'.

At Tuesday morning's Central Lee School Board workshop, the board heard from Superintendent Dr. Andy Crozier about how the finances for the upcoming year is shaping up.

A correction in how multi-residential properties are assessed by the state has given school districts an additional 30 days this

year to have budgets finalized.

The district is looking at a 10.67 levy, which includes a \$2.16 debt service levy on Central Lee's bonded debt. The district can levy up to \$2.70 per the \$13 million construction bond issued when the district improved district facilities.

But Crozier said that's an issue for further diligence.

"I think we need to do some more learning about the benefits of that process and obviously spend time educating our constituents," Crozier said.

See **LEVY**, page 5

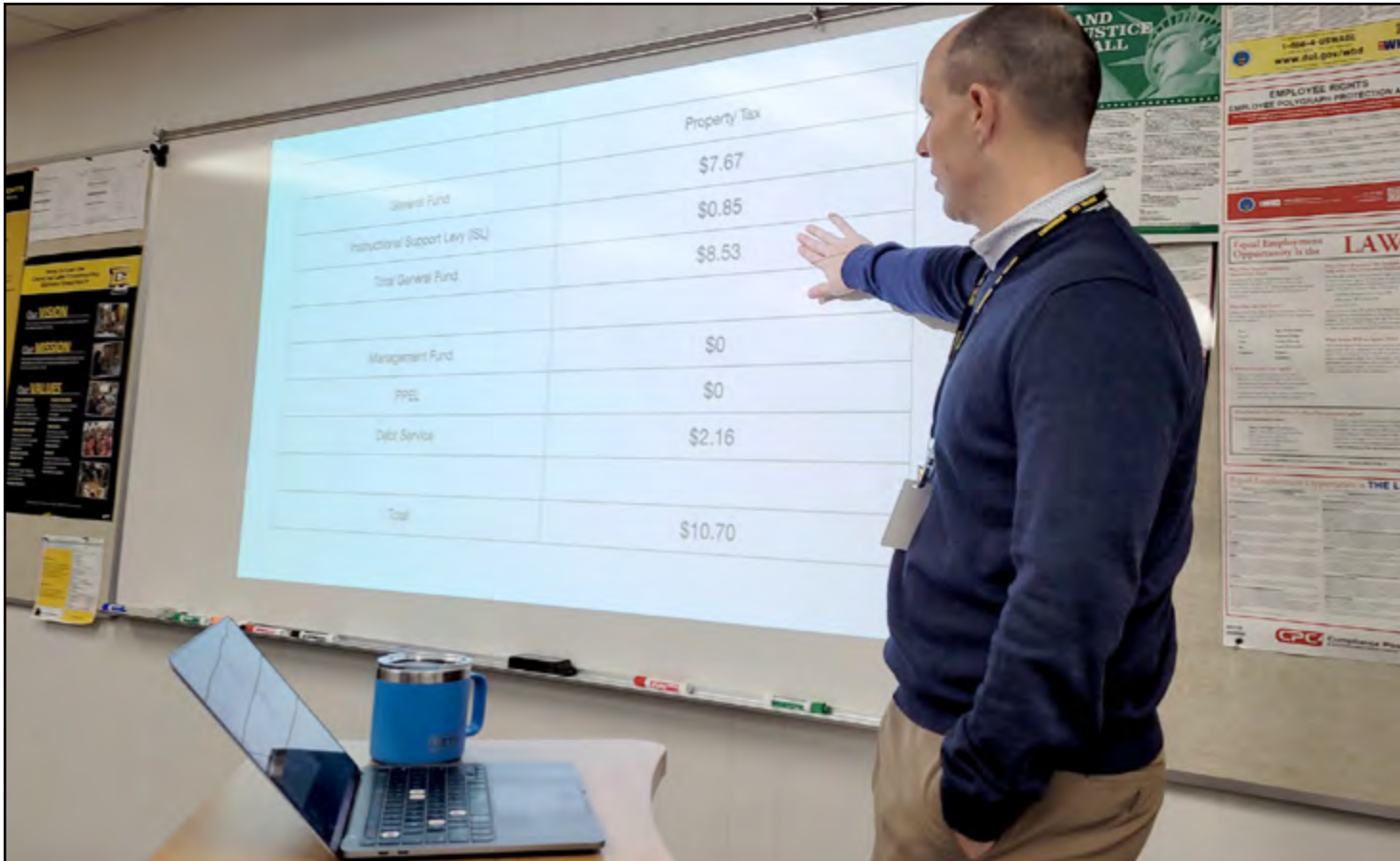


Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Central Lee Superintendent Dr. Andy Crozier outlines the makeup of the proposed property tax levy for the 2023-24 school year. The district has until the end of April to finalize the budget this year.

IOWA NEWS

State picks Odyssey to administer school ESAs

DES MOINES – The state of Iowa has selected Odyssey to administer its new Students First education savings accounts (ESAs).

Governor Kim Reynolds signed the Students First Act into law on January 24, 2023. The program will provide K-12 students who attend accredited private (nonpublic) schools in Iowa

with educational funding equal to "per pupil" funds allocated annually to Iowa's public schools. It goes into effect for the 2023-2024 school year.

The state issued a request for proposal (RFP) on January 26, 2023, and selected Odyssey through a competitive solicitation process that generated four applicants.

Odyssey was chosen based on its ability to manage all aspects of program administration, including applications, financial transactions, compliance, fraud prevention, and customer service. Odyssey currently manages ESA programs in two states.

See **ACCOUNTS**, page 3

SHOW CHOIR

Top schools head to the Hound Dome for Invite

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - It's that time of year again.

You should get a wristband and see this one because it's one of the biggest ever.

The Fort Madison Show Choir's annual Bloodhound Invitational is this weekend and Director Taylor Stoddard says this one is shaping up to be the biggest ever.

Stoddard said this year will involve 25 performances, including three from local groups.

"This gym will be packed the entire day. This year is bigger than most," he said.

"I would say this is our biggest event and fundraiser. Just because it brings in so many people. 16 groups, including our three performances. There will be 25 performances and six groups will perform twice."

The event starts with performances at 9 a.m. with awards being presented at close to 11 p.m. However, the kitchen will be open starting at 8 a.m.

Stoddard said it's the reputation of the event and the level of competition that's bringing so many schools. The event will feature performance levels from middle school to Class 4A.

Southeast Polk is making the trip down and Stoddard said they are one of the most improved squads in the state.

"The competition has grown, and we have a good reputation. We have great judges every year. This runs smoothly and the recent success of Fort Madison show choirs also makes it a great event to be at," Stoddard said.

Fort Madison is having a top-shelf

See **SHOW**, page 8

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WEATHER

WED 01 Mar Mostly sunny, 55° F/ 31° F

THU 02 Mar Mostly cloudy, 45° F/ 32° F

FRI 03 Mar Wintry mix, 37° F/ 23° F

IOWA LOTTERY

LOTTO AMERICA 02/27 12 17 41 43 51, Star Ball: 5 All Star Bonus: 3

LUCKY FOR LIFE 02/27 2 3 17 38 40, Lucky Ball: 8

PICK 3 02/27 MIDDAY 8 8 7

PICK 3 02/27 EVENING 0 9 7

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Obituaries/From the Front

OBITUARIES

JOHN L. LABONTE

John Leonard LaBonte, 87, of Warsaw, Illinois, passed away on Sunday, February 26, 2023, at his home in Warsaw.

John was born on October 26, 1935, in Warsaw, Illinois, the son of Elmer and Hazel (Mathes) LaBonte. He was united in marriage to Judy Scott in Fairfield, Iowa, on March 12, 1956. They were later divorced. On June 30, 1979, he was united in marriage to Helen Alice LaBonte at Trinity United Methodist Church in Warsaw. She preceded him in death on March 29, 2022.

John was employed at factories in Keokuk throughout his working career, retiring from Champion International. He also farmed on the side throughout the years. John was known as a hard worker and did odd jobs throughout Warsaw in his younger years, such as painting buildings. In his free time, he enjoyed gardening, mowing and dancing in his younger years. John was an active member of his community, and moved bandstands to main street for dances.

John is survived by one son: Scott (Barbara Winestock-LaBonte) LaBonte of Santa Rosa, California; two daughters: Ellen LaBonte of Yuma, Arizona, and Nancy (Ken) Rose of Buena Vista, Colorado; two step-daughters: Sandy Johnson of Keokuk, Iowa, and Cheryl Johnson of Warsaw; two step-sons: Bill (Sherry) Johnson of Keokuk, Iowa, and Joe (Rose) Johnson of Bloomfield, Iowa; two brothers: Carroll (Mary Kay Woolson) LaBonte and Rod (Barb) LaBonte, both of Warsaw; one sister Maxine LaBonte of Burlington, Iowa; and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and cousins.

John is preceded in death by his parents, his wife Helen, his brother Terry LaBonte and his step-son Johnny.

Funeral Services will be held at 12 pm (noon) on Saturday, March 4, 2023, at Printy Funeral Home in Warsaw, with burial to follow at Oakland Cemetery in Warsaw. Visitation will be held on Saturday from 10 am to 12 pm (noon) at Printy Funeral Home in Warsaw directly before the service.

Memorials may be directed to ASPCA Animal Rescue (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*).

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

Printy Funeral Home of Warsaw is in charge of arrangements.



LABONTE

Details about ESA application process due in coming weeks

ACCOUNTS - Continued from Page 1

The state of Iowa will now begin the contract negotiation process with Odyssey. Once a contract is finalized, a team including staff from the Office of the Governor, Department of Education, Department of Management, and Office of the Chief Information Officer, will work with Odyssey to implement the application process and technology platform.

Details about the application process, including when it will begin and how families will verify school enrollment and/or income eligibility, will be provided in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, families interested in the Students First ESA program can find information about eligibility and answers to frequently asked questions on the Iowa Department of Education website. The webpage is updated regularly, and families are encouraged to sign up to receive notifications when new information is posted.

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Wednesday, March 1

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Thursday, March 2

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Charles Vandenberg, Editor

(319).371.1670
charles.v@pencitycurrent.com

Lee K. Vandenberg, Sales Manager

(319).371.4125
lee.v@pencitycurrent.com

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PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

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Obituaries/Iowa News

OBITUARIES

LUCILLE F. JORGENSON

Lucille Fern "Judy" Jorgenson, 74, of Montrose, Iowa, passed away on Monday, February 27, 2023, at Montrose Health Center in Montrose, Iowa.

Judy was born on February 19, 1949, in St. Paul, Minnesota, the daughter of Francis and Irene L. (Larson) Clark. She was united in marriage to Wayne Allen Jorgenson in St. Paul, Minnesota, he survives.



JORGENSON

Judy was a homemaker and her family was everything to her. She was the heart of her family and was always there when you needed her. She enjoyed spending her free time solving puzzle books, crocheting, and listening to music. She was an excellent cook, making food for friends and family alike.

Judy is survived by her husband Wayne of Montrose; her daughter Tabitha (Harley Rader) Jorgenson of Montrose; her son Keith (Roberta) Jorgenson of Montrose; four grandchildren: Brett (Terra) DeBrackeleire of Odessa, Texas, Merrissa (Jake Dawkins) of Keokuk, Blake (Andrea) Jorgenson of Montrose, and Kyle (Liz Rubey) Jorgenson of Fort Madison; six great-grandchildren: Joel and Evan DeBrackeleire, Josie and Jase Jorgenson, and Daniel and Adlynn Dawkins; and nine siblings: Marshall (Sylvia) Owens, Robert Owens, Faye Cossentine, Betty Campbell, Laurie Cutts, Alice Clark, Patty Clark, Peggy Clark and Perry Clark. Other survives include numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Judy is preceded in death by her parents and two sisters: Helen Larson Chaplin and Joann Solid.

Funeral services will be held at 12 pm (Noon) on Friday, March 3, 2023, at DeJong-Greaves-Printy Funeral Home in Keokuk, with burial to follow at Keokuk National Cemetery in Keokuk. Visitation will be held at the funeral home on Friday from 10 am to 12 pm (Noon) directly before the service.

Memorials may be directed to the American Legion Post #41 or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

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

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

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.

OBITUARIES

CLELL L. HAUSER

Clell Laver Hauser, 86, of West Point, IA, passed away at 7:07 p.m. on Monday, February 27, 2023 at Southeast Iowa Regional Hospice House in West Burlington, IA. He was born on August 22, 1936 in Medill, MO to George &



HAUSER

Lois Brothton Hauser. He married Patricia A. Durand Kirchner on December 28, 1990 in Burlington, IA. He was a truck driver for 42 years and enjoyed flowers and spending time with his family.

Clell is survived by: his wife: Pat Hauser of West Point, IA; 2-sons: Randy Hauser of Montana & Brian (Traci) Hauser of Belgrade, MT; 2-step daughters: Peg (Rich) Mohrfeld of Fort Madison, IA & Cheryl (Jamie) Hawk of Montrose, IA; 1-step son: Todd (Chance) Kirchner of Muscatine, IA; 4-grandchildren: Shasta (Eric) Locke, Colbi (Kyle) Peterson, Casey Hauser & Nicholas Hauser; 5-great grandchildren: Steven, Morgan & Kristin Locke, Camden & Keelynn Peterson; 1-sister: Delores Sims of Fort Madison, IA and 2-brothers: Rex Hauser of Boise, ID & Max Hauser of Franklin, VA. He was preceded in death by his parents and 3-sisters.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A graveside service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 2, 2023 at Oakland Cemetery with Frank Durand officiating. On-line condolences to the Hauser family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

Bill to limit carbon pipelines passes committee

DES MOINES — Today, one week after hundreds of landowners and advocates rallied at the Capitol for a full ban on eminent domain, the House Judiciary Committee passed HF 368. While the bill would require pipeline companies to acquire at least 90 percent of the affected route miles through voluntary or preexisting easements, the bill does not include a full ban on eminent domain. A full ban on the use of eminent domain for carbon pipelines is supported by 80% of Iowans, according to Food & Water Action polling.

The bill would also pause all carbon pipeline development until the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administra-

tion (PHMSA) develops updated safety rules for the hazardous pipelines. These rules are currently under investigation by the federal agency in light of a 2020 carbon pipeline rupture that sent 49 people to the hospital and left many with lingering health effects. Earlier this year, 30 groups sent a letter to PHMSA requesting the agency instruct states to halt permitting approvals for the dangerous pipelines while the rulemaking was ongoing.

This month, the Iowa Utilities Board established a hearing schedule for Summit Carbon Solutions' proposed pipeline, beginning in October, meaning this legislative session is make or break for the carbon pipeline threat.

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Sports/Iowa News

Hounds wrestlers land 11 on 1st team All-Southeast

PCC Staff

FORT MADISON – Fort Madison hauled in a wheelbarrow full of post-season Southeast Conference all-conference honors this week.

In the first-ever sanctioned girls wrestling program, the Lady Hounds put six girls on the 1st team led by state qualifiers sophomore Haley Kemper and freshman Mara Smith.

Those two are joined by sophomore Chloe Sokolik, senior Mya Blanchard, freshman Mady Emmett and sophomore Sadie Brandon.

Washington's Teegan Sulentich was named Wrestler of the year.

Fort Madison's Marquel Warner was named to the Academic All-Conference, along with Haley Craft, Suptisara Lumsuan, Marie Reseguir, Jordyn Burch, Haley Lampe and Juniper Strickland.

Smith and Kemper each secured wins at the state's inaugural Girls State Wrestling meet, with both girls going 1-2 on the tournament's first day.

On the boys' side, the Bloodhounds landed five players on the first team lead by junior Ike Thacher. Thacher wrestled his way to 4th place at 195 lbs at last week's IHSAA State Wrestling Tournament in Des Moines.

Joining Thacher on the first team were junior Nolan Riddle, senior Aidan Pennock, junior Teague Smith, and sophomore Cory Arnett.

Sophomore Logan Pennock and Daniel Sokolik both were named 2nd team All-Conference.

Keokuk's Tate O'Shea runner up at 138 lbs at last week's tournament was named Wrestler of the Year.

The Hounds finished the year 5-0 in conference wrestling wrapping up their fifth consecutive conference title. Burlington was runner-up at 4-1.

The boys Academic All-Conference included Smith, Thacher, Riddle, Henry Wiseman, and Landon Rudd, Madison Sherwood and Xander Wellman.

Players Workshop to host Coffee and Stagecraft

BURLINGTON - Players Workshop will hold the third in its series of free "Coffee and Stagecraft" workshops on Sat., Mar. 11, 2023, from 10 a.m. until approximately noon, at the Workshop, 1431 Grove St., Burlington. The Workshop, entitled "Makeup and Hair--From Conception to Stage" will be conducted by longtime PW member and make-up artist Libba Flores, who will teach "tricks of the trade" for the use of stage makeup and hairstyling, to help portray character and plot. The program will begin in the Workshop lobby for coffee and introduction of the topic and then will move backstage for practical application. The public is invited, the event is completely free, and no pre-registration is required.

Upcoming "Coffee and Stagecraft" workshops will be on Sat., Apr. 15, 10:00 a.m. until noon, when the topic will be "Props (Gathering and Management)," and the final workshop in the series will be on Sat., May 20, from 10:00 am. until noon, with the topic "Light and Sound Design and Tech--From Conception to Stage."

Central Lee board mulls debt service levy

LEVY - Continued from Page 1

"Just because we have the authority to do so, doesn't mean it's in the best interest of our community. Our board has always done a nice job of getting feedback on these types of things before making any changes."

The district is also considering bumping the levy on the management fund. Crozier said for each \$100,000 the district adds to the management fund, an increase of just under 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation is incurred.

"If we add \$200,000 you can see that levels off that line a little more," Crozier said pointing to a map on the wall showing how the fund will bottom out after a couple years if nothing is done.

Board President Mark Hulsebus said that's an issue that the board needs to consider heavily. Crozier said he'd like to see about \$500,000 in the fund year over year.

The management fund can be used for property & casualty insurance, worker's compensation, early retirement incentives, local government risk pools, equipment break/fix, unemployment, and mediation/litigation.

"We have already paid our insurance bill for the year so the remaining expenditures for the year will be limited. We did offer a small early retirement package, but only have three staff members who qualify for that which will be paid out this summer."

The \$10.70 levy is a preliminary number that will likely move slightly depending on how valuation and income tax

updates come in.

Crozier said the district currently has an income surtax as part of its revenue stream. He said that helps balance the demand as it's a tax on income tax.

"For example, when I do my taxes, at the end of the process, the income surtax percent is calculated based off my qualified state income tax. It's a means for leveling the playing field between property owners and income earners," Crozier said.

"This allows for individuals who own little property but make a lot of money to pay their fair share. Farmers like the income surtax and individuals who do not own a lot of property are not as big of fans. Balance is best when utilizing income surtax."

The district's current levy of \$10.76/\$1,000 is the lowest of the seven closest schools. Fort Madison's \$11.76 is the second lowest in the grouping. Keokuk's current levy is \$15.29, the second highest with New London at \$15.68.

Central Lee is also the only district in the state that currently has no voted or regular Physical Plant and Equipment Levy. But part of the reason is that the district just put \$13 million into upgrades that were completed two years ago and don't have a lot of physical improvement needs at this point.

The district generates about \$3.4 million in property tax and receives \$5.6 million in state aid, the rest of the funds supporting the district's \$13 million budget comes from open enrollment.

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Classifieds/Public Notices

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC NOTICE
LEE COUNTY BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
JANUARY 5, 2023**

The Lee County Board of Supervisors met at the Lee County Administration Building in Fort Madison on Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 10:30 a.m.

Present: Ron Fedler, Tom Schulz, Charles Holmes.

Present by Go To Meeting: Garry Seyb and Matt Pflug.

All votes are unanimous unless indicated otherwise.

Moved by Holmes,

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

Moved by Pflug, seconded by Holmes, to approve the following wording for the ballot for a Special Election on March 7, 2023: "Shall the Lee County Board of Supervisors be authorized to impose an ad valorem property tax for the purposes of creation and maintenance of a stable revenue stream for its essential EMS services, in the amount of .75 (75 cents) per \$1,000.00 (One Thousand Dollars) of assessed value on all taxable property within the county to be used for

funding of emergency medical services for a maximum period of 10 (ten) years?". Motion carried.

At 10:32 a.m. a motion was made by Fedler, seconded by Schulz, to adjourn. Motion carried. The next meeting will be held on Monday, January 9, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at the Administration Building in Fort Madison.

Garry Seyb, Chairman
Attest: Denise Fraise,
Lee County Auditor

**PUBLIC NOTICE
LEE COUNTY BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING**

**MINUTES
JANUARY 9, 2023**

The Lee County Board of Supervisors met at the Lee County Administration Building in Fort Madison on Monday, January 9, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Garry Seyb, Ron Fedler, Chuck Holmes, Matt Pflug and Tom Schulz.

All votes are unanimous unless indicated otherwise.

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

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

Public Input-Representatives for Mariannette Miller-Meeks office informed the Board that John Kaufmann will be our district's representative to hear issues from constituents. Mr. Kaufmann's information will be available soon.

Moved by Pflug, seconded by Holmes, to approve a tax abatement resolution.

Roll call: Pflug-aye, Holmes-aye, Fedler-aye, Schulz-aye and Seyb-aye.

RESOLUTION #2023-28

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: Randall Hayes 2195 300th Street Montrose IA 52639

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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 9th day of January 2023.

Lee County Board of Supervisors /s/ Garry Seyb, Chairman; /s/ Ron Fedler,

Vice-Chair; /s/ Chuck Holmes, Member; /s/ Matt Pflug, Member and /s/ Tom Schulz, Member. Attest: /s/ Denise Fraise, Auditor. Motion carried.

Moved by Fedler, seconded by Holmes, to approve the Tuesday, January 3 and Thursday, January 5, 2022 Board Minutes. Motion carried.

Moved by Pflug, seconded by Schulz, to approve the payment of claims.

Motion carried.

Moved by Schulz, seconded by Pflug, to

approve a status change from full-time to temporary part-time for Steven Steffensmeier, Maintenance Class II in Secondary Roads, effective 1/1/23 and a step increase for Jon Boudewyn, Correctional Officer, from \$22.41/hr. to \$24.05/hr., effective 12/30/22. Motion carried.

Received and filed the Recorder's Report of Fees Collected for the month of November 2022, the Treasurer's Report of Fees Collected for the month of December 2022 and the Auditor's Report of Fees Collected for the month of December 2022

Committee Reports: Pflug reported on a Board of Health meeting. Seyb reported on a Pioneer Cemetery Commission meeting and gave an update on opioid settlement funds. Health Department Administrator Michele Ross gave an update on covid numbers.

At 10:30 a.m. a motion was made by Holmes, seconded by Fedler, to adjourn. Motion carried. The next meeting will be held on Monday, January 16, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at the Administration Building in Fort Madison.

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

Claims paid
January 9, 2023

Agriland FS, fuel
..... 3723.31

Airgas USA, splys 378.75
AirMedCare, ins.. 2820.00
Alliant Enrgy, svcs 5262.43
Blessing Hlth, svcs 130.00
B Bonar, svcs 200.00
Bound Tree, splys 2492.20
Brozene Hydrlic, svcs 583.72
Capital One, veh 199882.07
CenturyLink, svcs 8.07
City/Donnellson, svcs 119.37
CNA Surety, svcs.... 100.00
Democrat Co, publ.. 41.55
L DeFord, exps 161.00
DM Co Auditor, svcs 350.00
RK Dixon, equip ... 1144.46
Dodd Prtg, splys ... 721.10
Dnnllsn Lmbr, equip 183.20
Drake Hdwr, equip 9602.09
Farm/Home, splys 313.88
Fed Engrng, svcs 625.00
R Fedler, exps 117.00
Floyds EZ Way, svcs 135.00
F Gida, exps 110.00
N Granaman, svcs 1400.68
GRRWA, svcs 130.00
Hall Excvtng, svcs .. 150.00
S Hansen, svcs 312.00

Hellige Lawn, svcs.. 690.00
M Hellige, exps 615.00
Huffman Wldng, equip 25.77
HyVee Catering, splys 2395.34
ICONNECTYOU, svcs 160.00
ICS Jail, splys 756.74
Ideal Rdy Mix, mtrl 2477.87
IMWCA, ins 13018.00
IA Dept/Inspc/Appl, splys 335.00
IA Off/St Med, svcs 4123.00
ISAC, reg 630.00
Jireh Inc, fuel 1018.56
J Johnson, exps 50.50
P Kaltefleiter, exps 410.80
Kempkers, splys ... 203.61
Klingner Assoc, svcs 5124.00
Kuckelman Atty Trust, land 70000.00
R Kuntz, svcs 200.00

LeeCo Treas, costs 20042.52
Liberty Util, gas 643.88
Lincare, splys 175.00
Mail Svcs, pstg 1200.03
Mediacom, svcs 224.50
Mid Cntry Mchnry, equip 1577.02
MidAmer Enrgy, gas 423.78
R Millmier, exps 46.00
L Mullins, exps 379.00
Mutual Whl, parts.. 180.61
NAPA Auto, parts.. 399.28
AT Conf, svcs 255.02
M Park, exps 142.98
Penn City Assc, dues 600.00
M Pflug, exps 128.00
Pilot Grove Bnk, splys 416.00
Pitney Bowes, pstg 100.00
Prairie Farms, splys 268.60
R&J Qlty Decal, svcs 112.50

RicohUSA, splys... 210.68
RSM US LLP, svcs 333.00
Safeguard US, equip 3596.22
J Schneider, svcs 110.00
SmileMakers, splys 103.90
M Terhune, exps ... 456.50
A Timpe, svcs 130.00
Vanguard Appr, svcs 7912.50
L Vermazen, exps 6.00
Vertical Comm, svcs 133.37
Mike Walker, svcs... 200.00
West Pt Utility, svcs 219.77
Wex Bank, Fuels 7492.97
Windstream, svcs ... 498.96
M Wooster, svcs ... 2400.00
R Young, svcs 65.00
1st Ayd Corp, splys 46.39

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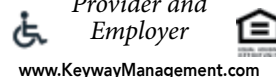
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Iowa News/From the Front

Milestones kicks off March for Meals

DAVENPORT - Milestones Area Agency on Aging will be kicking off their "March For Meals" campaign on Wednesday, March 1. The campaign seeks to bring attention to the growing issue of food insecurity for Older Iowans, specifically the increased need for home meal delivery.

The agency saw a dramatic increase in the demand for home meal deliveries during the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, emergency funding sources such as the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), have since been expended. This leaves Milestones with the challenge of maintaining an increased volume of senior meals, under the pre-COVID level of funding. Rising food and employment costs have further added to the challenge.

"We are faced with having to serve more with less," said Milestones Nutrition Programs Director Pam Taylor. "Our top priority will always be serving meals to those who need them the most, but the challenge grows larger every day."

Milestones delivered over 275,000 home delivered meals across 17 Southeastern Iowa counties in 2022 and the need is only expected to increase.

"Since COVID, we have seen a steady increase in requests for home meal deliveries," said Taylor. "There have been no signs of that demand slowing down."

According to Milestones CEO Becky Passman, funding is a critical component in meeting this demand.

"Emergency funding allowed us to expand our nutrition programs, but those sources are no longer available," said Passman. "Private contributions are even more critical to enabling us to sustain these programs."

As a National Average, the Older Americans Act funds 40% of the total cost to provide senior nutrition services; the other 60% of funding that serves seniors each year comes from state and/or local sources and private donations from foundations, corporations and individuals.



PCC File Photo

Fort Madison Swingspan will be on display again as a host performer at this weekend's Bloodhound Show Choir Invitational. Wristbands for the show starting at 9 a.m. are just \$10 at the door for the whole day.

Some of the best Iowa show choirs headed to FM

SHOW - Continued from Page 1

year, as well. Stoddard said the students have really bought into the program and it's showing. He said the Hounds, which compete in 3A, are now starting to hold their own with 4A schools.

"The real difference this year is the kids have really bought in. They've realized if they put in the work, they are going to enjoy it that much more. The hard work makes it more fun. That has allowed us to work on things we haven't been able to do until this year," he said.

Judges this year will include Jerry Kreitser from Mt. Mercy, Matt Huth from Waukee High School, David Haas of Iowa City West, Michael Reese of Davenport Central, and Mike Esser, a show choir

clinician from LaCrosse.

Stoddard said there aren't a lot of competitions scheduled for that weekend, only three across the state, so that's part of the increased draw to the invitational.

Wristbands will be for sale for \$10 at the door and Stoddard said there is still room for seating for the event.

"We're gonna pack this gym as full as we can get it."

He said there are still a couple slots left for volunteers, but most of the parents have stepped up to help make the show run smoothly.

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