

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Monday, March 25, 2024 | 6 pages | Volume 8 • Issue 55



www.pencitycurrent.com

RUNG HAS DREAM TEAM

CANCER BATTLE: Community rallies around FM family's battle with stage IV cancer

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Mikey Rung is in the battle of his life...for his life.

The 41-year-old Fort Madison man who has given so much to youth and family in this community is facing Stage IV cancer that has trespassed its way into his colon and liver. He's in the midst of heavy chemo, what he calls "Pac Man", eating away at abnormal cells infiltrating his body.

That's all we're gonna say about that. Because this is battle of praying... fighting... persisting... and winning.

The Rungs have formed Mikey's Dream Team, a support system featuring a blue-and-lime green color scheme that will be a part of Pen City Current through the end of April to help generate energy behind this family's battle.

The team is giving out blue wristbands for free will donations to help offset medical and travel costs associated with this battle. Those wristbands can be obtained by contacting Jason Scheetz at 319-470-6488, Jessica Peitz at 319-470-3152, or Amanda Huebner at 319-470-9558. You can also drop donations off at Connection Bank where an account has been set up. You can also mail donations to Connection Bank c/o Lyndsey Schmitz, 636 Avenue G, Fort Madison, IA 52627.

"After the diagnosis, the support came right away. I'm a big sports guy and my dream team and I, we're going to beat this. I got everyone I need surrounding me to beat this. My wife has just taken this and run with it as a sounding board."

Mike's story can also be found at the following link on Caring Bridges: <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/mikeysdream-team>.

Rung was diagnosed the last week in January and was undergoing chemo within two weeks, an aggressive schedule to match an aggressive disease.

"I'm a doer. Tell me what to do and I'm

See RUNGS, page 4



Courtesy photos

Student athletes and just students in general have taken up the fight with Mikey's Dream Team, a community-wide assembly to help the Mike Rung family fight off the cancer Rung was diagnosed with in late January. Wristbands are available for free will donations.



COMMENTARY



We all matter, and we need to hear it often

(With the indulgence of our readership and a nod to the mental health of our communities, today's Beside the Point has been offered to Mike Maher of Counseling Associates, Inc. Mike has had a profound, life-saving influence on me over the past three years and it's our pleasure to step aside and let him connect to our audience for a very important message.)

Life is always teaching us, so the saying goes. A saying I believe, and have often used myself with the added query: But are we willing to learn?

I have found over time that life will even repeat its lessons... perhaps until we submit and learn. In recent weeks I have been faced with a series of tragedies that have impacted people close to me, although not impacting me directly. Avoidable tragedy. Tragedy likely causing anguish and misery for decades to come for the family and friends of those directly affected by those events.

Unfortunately, (or fortunately depending on the perspective), in my line of work I have learned to befriend pain, sadness, grief, loss, change, challenge, hardship, and countless other terms we use to describe the struggles of humanity. In so doing, I think I have learned a profound truth about people: There is really very little that separates us. We may have different hobbies, interests, personalities, lifestyles, or political ideologies, but in the end we all pretty much want the same thing. Everyone wants to be treated with respect and kindness.

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WEATHER

MON 25 Mar.....Rainy & breezy, 57° F/ 41° F
TUE 26 Mar.....Rain likely, 49° F/ 24° F
WED 27 Mar.....Mostly sunny, 46° F/ 27° F

IOWA LOTTERY

DOUBLE PLAY 03/23.....18 24 43 46 47, Powerball: 11
LOTTO AMERICA 03/23.....5 7 12 41 52, Star Ball: 4 All Star Bonus: 2
LUCKY FOR LIFE 03/23.....13 8 13 29, Lucky Ball: 11
MEGA MILLIONS 03/22.....3 8 31 35 44, Mega Ball: 16 Megaplier: 3
PICK 3 MIDDAY 03/21, 03/22, 03/23.....619, 682, 200
PICK 3 EVENING 03/21, 03/22, 03/23.....579, 302, 573
PICK 4 MIDDAY 03/21, 03/22, 03/23.....3053, 9061, 7494
PICK 4 EVENING 03/21, 03/22, 03/23.....3267, 9823, 4423
POWERBALL 03/23.....6 23 25 34 51, Powerball: 3 Power Play: 2

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Iowa News/Obituaries

Hohls win state tourism award for Harvestville

DES MOINES - The Iowa Tourism Office presented 24 awards recognizing excellence in the tourism industry during the 2024 Iowa Tourism Conference in Des Moines this week.

"These awards recognize the hard work and dedication of our tourism industry partners and the appeal of Iowa as a destination," said Amy Zeigler, state tourism office manager. "We look forward to building on the positive momentum for continued success in 2024."

Awards, divided into metro and rural distinctions, were made in 13 categories. In addition, conference attendees voted for the People's Choice Award; nominees were the second-highest scoring nominations.

Harvestville Farm was awarded "Outstanding Retail Experience" at the

ceremony along with being a People's Choice Nominee for "Outstanding Attraction."

Harvestville Farm took to social media following the award ceremony to personally thank their loyal customers. "We are beyond humbled that we were just awarded the "Outstanding Retail Experience" in the state by Travel Iowa! This would not be possible without all of the amazing support of our customers over the past 19 years. We would not be the business we are today without you! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

This award comes just one year after Harvestville Farm was awarded "Outstanding Dining Businesses" at the 2023 Iowa Tourism Conference for their successful Farm to Table Dinner Series.



Adam and Julie Hohl received the Iowa Tourism Office's Outstanding Retail Experience and were nominated for Outstanding Attraction on a people's choice nomination at last week's Iowa Tourism awards ceremony.

Denning qualifies for Ameriprise distinction

FORT MADISON - Joshua Denning, CRPC®, CLTC® a Private Wealth Advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC in Fort Madison, IA, has qualified for the company's Circle of Success annual recognition program and will be honored for this achievement in 2024.

To earn this achieve-

ment, Denning established himself as one of the company's top advisors. Only a select number of high-performing advisors earn this distinction.

He has 26 years of experience with Ameriprise Financial.

As a Private Wealth Advisor, Denning provides financial advice

that is anchored in a solid understanding of client needs and expectations and provided in one-on-one relationships with his clients. For more information, please contact Joshua at (319) 372-8923, visit the Ameriprise office at 701 Ave G, or visit their website ameripriseadvisors.com/Joshua.r.denning.

OBITUARIES

DALE B. POLLMEIER

Dale B. Pollmeier, 73, of Ft. Madison, IA, passed away on Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 12:15 PM at the Donnellson Health Care Center.

He was born on February 4, 1951 in Ft. Madison to John and Mary Jarvis Pollmeier. On August 7, 1970 he married Linda Sanford in Ft. Madison. Dale worked in maintenance at



POLLMEIER

FMCH and retired after forty-three years of service and also owned Dale's Sausage Shop. He was a member of Holy Family Parish, the Knights of Columbus, The Pastime Club and served in the US Army. Dale was very handy and could make or fix anything. He was a avid craftsman and created many pieces, especially for his family. He loved working around the house and in the yard and enjoyed hunting and mushroom hunting.

Survivors include his wife, Linda Pollmeier of Ft. Madison; two sons, John Pollmeier of Fairhope, AL and Mark (Jamie) Pollmeier of Ft. Scott Kansas; one daughter, Sara (James) Poe of Ft. Madison; six grandchildren, Coy and Tate Pollmeier, Kelsey and Austin Heidbreder, Lanie and Alyssa Fincher and one great grandchild, Harper Heston; one brother, David Pollmeier of Ft. Madison; five sisters, Viola Stuecker of St. Paul, Carol Helling of Farmington, Donna Schinstock of Donnellson, Shirley Gabel of Donnellson and Marylou Meierotto of Springfield, MO and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Charlie.

The family will meet with friends from 1-3 PM on Sunday, March 24, 2024 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A wake service will be held at 3 PM following the visitation. The Memorial Mass will be held on Monday, March 25, 2024 at 10:30 AM at Sacred Heart Church with Rev. Tony Trosley officiating. In lieu of flowers, a memorial has been established in his memory and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.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.



Lunch Specials
March 25-29
11am - 1pm

Monday, March 25

Tenderloin, Fries, Oreo Fluff

Tuesday, March 26

Goulash, Cottage Cheese, Breadstick

Wednesday, March 27

Tater Tot Casserole, Applesauce

THURSDAY, MARCH 28

FRIED CHICKEN DINNERS

Friday, March 29

Fish & Shrimp Dinners

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PEN CITY CURRENT
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From the Front/Classifieds

Prayer, meditation, and a little heavy metal work

RUNGS - Continued from Page 1

going to do it. Let's go. Let it rip," Rung said.

It's a foundation that permeates the family's philosophy. He said it's too easy to go the other way, so you go hard at the battle with the support of loved ones and the community in general.

"I try not to be emotional. The support means the world. The hope and fighting and everyone having my back has been amazing. My family is my No. 1 team, but just the amount of support from the school and the community and friends and the Caring Bridge - it means the world. It helps me. I'm ready to battle and ready to beat this thing," he said through broken words.

"When you get that diagnosis, it's easy to go down rabbit holes and stuff. I just use that power. Sometimes I think of those things and it takes you right out, but I believe in God and Jesus and can get right back on a positive mindset. We're going to beat this."

A friend of his in the Navy said they have a mantra - Win the Minute, the hour, the day. It's emblazoned on the blue and green wristbands.

"That's been a good starting point for where my mind is," he said.

Rung and his wife Ashley (Windsor), have four children, Chandler, Maddox, Layne, and Harper. Chandler is a junior in college while Maddox and Layne both attend Holy Trinity Catholic High School, and Harper is a 5th grader in the system.

Rung has spent almost all of his spare time as a parent coaching in one capacity or another.

He played a year of junior college baseball at Southeastern Community College and then helped his cousin Adam coach at the high school level. He was head coach

of the HTC baseball program and then did stints with junior varsity and junior high soccer and basketball. He's also been prominent in the YMCA soccer program for years.

He works at Axalta and, aside from chemo days, still goes to work every day. He said the chemo to date hasn't shown any harsh side effects which has allowed him to keep the right frame of mind and keep daily schedules and commitments.

"When I have my chemo days I've been out. I just had the fourth treatment Thursday and, knock on wood, and with God's blessing, there have been no adverse side effects. We've been very fortunate," Rung said.

Mike and Ashley have been listening to an audio book from actor Matthew McConaughey and have taken up another battle creed - persist, pivot, or concede. Rung said conceding is not an option.

"It's just another one of these random things. We find these things that pop up and there are a lot of good takeaways from that," he said.

"You take in everything, and you realize how thankful you are for everything. It's the greatest feeling in the world, and it makes you feel appreciated and thankful for life."

He said the support that's come from Caring Bridges journal and from the Dream Team effort is hard to put into words.

"It's unbelievable. Unbelievable. I can't even explain it sometimes," he said.

"You have a bad minute here or there. And then here comes a text or something through Caring Bridge. There are these little signs everywhere. Hey, God's got me, and he's got my team, and it feels great."

The family calls his team the "Rungulators". He said it

comes from a popular 90's hip-hop song "Regulators" by Warren G and Nate Dogg. But it's been on the family crest for years.

"We even named our little boat after it. Throughout our family, that's a name we use."

All of his medical care is taking place currently at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. He said the quickest path was Iowa City where they were able to get him up there right away and after just two weeks, he was able to start chemo.

Now he uses prayer, a healthier diet, meditation, some relaxation techniques, and some 90s music to keep emotions in check and stay on his path forward.

"Doctors want me on a low fiber diet. I've always been a snack food guy so I'm a bit more healthy with that now," he said.

"Daily prayer, some meditation things, and music have been my go-to. I'll put on the headphones and just zone out for a bit. With this last week being March Madness, it has kinda been a perfect way to get my mind off things."

It's certainly a tough thing to keep a mind away from, but Rung said the concentration of support his family has received is the biggest weapon in the arsenal.

Rung is due for another scan in April to monitor the chemotherapy.

(Editor's Note: Through the end of April, Pen City Current will change the colors of their E-edition to the Dream Team blue and green to create energy around support for the Rung family. We all have our private battles and some of those get pretty dark and scary. We must meet them with the congruent energy of support and love. Pen City Current encourages all our readers to find a wristband in the next two weeks and, once again, help one of our own.)

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE MEETING NOTICE

City of Fort Madison PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
Tuesday, March 26, 2024
6:00pm
Council Chambers City Hall
811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, IA 52627

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes - February 27, 2024 Meeting
3. Review and recommend Council Approval of

Floodplain Code Updates.
 4. Zoning Code Updates:
 • B-3, B-4 zoning map review of the Corridor to the west end.
 • Continue adjusting uses for B-3, B-4 (and B-1, and B-2 as needed).
 • Review uses list in regard to changes from last meeting.
 5. Adjournment

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given

that a public hearing will be held by the Fort Madison City Council at 5:30 P.M. on Tuesday, April 2, 2024, at the Council Chambers of Fort Madison City Hall at 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, Iowa, at which time and place a hearing will be conducted regarding an amendment to Fort Madison Municipal Code, Title 10, Zoning, Chapter 25, Floodplain Management.

You may obtain further information or express your views concerning this issue either in person or through an authorized representative at the public hearing, or prior to the meeting by fax at (319) 372-8661, by telephone at (319) 372-7700 ext. 206, by e-mail at cityclerk@fortmadison-ia.com or in writing to the Fort Madison City Clerk, P.O. Box 240, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, Iowa, 52627 no later than 4:30 PM on April 2, 2024.

A copy of the ordinance is available for review at the City Clerk's office.
 Justina M. Cullen
 City Clerk

PUBLIC NOTICE CITY OF WEST BURLINGTON Planning and Zoning

Commission Meeting Tuesday, March 26, 2024 5:30 PM West Burlington City Hall 122 Broadway Street

TENTATIVE AGENDA

- CALL TO ORDER
 ROLL CALL
 PERFECTING & APPROVAL OF AGENDA
 PERFECTING & APPROVAL OF MINUTES
1. Consider approval of minutes from the Planning and Zoning meeting on March 14, 2024
 - PUBLIC HEARING NEW BUSINESS
 1. Consider regulations for a proposed Recreational Vehicle Park Zoning District
 2. Consider setting a Public Hearing date of May 2, 2024, to consider establishing a new zoning district "R-6 Recreational Vehicle Park District"
 - OLD BUSINESS
 - ADJOURN

PUBLIC NOTICE PROCEEDINGS FORT MADISON CITY COUNCIL 3/19/2024

At 5:30 P.M., Council met in adjourned session on Tuesday, March 19,

2024. Mayor Mohrfeld presided with Council Members Thele, Roller, Gray, Andrews, Rink and Yager present. Council Member Amandus was absent.

On motion, Council approved the Consent Agenda: Minutes of 3/5/2024; Setting public hearing for 5:15 P.M. on Tuesday, 4/2/2024, concerning the proposed 24/25 Fiscal Year Maximum Property Tax Levy; Setting public hearing for 5:30 P.M. on Tuesday, 4/2/2024, concerning the Floodplain Management Zoning Code; Claims dated 3/13/2024, February Financial Report; and Payroll of 3/8/2024.

At 5:41 P.M., Mohrfeld opened the public hearing concerning the Natural Gas Franchise Agreement with MidAmerican Energy Company. With no oral or written comments, Mohrfeld closed the public hearing at 5:42 P.M. On motion, Council approved the first reading to amend Ordinance D-70, Mid-American Energy Company Franchise Agreement.

At 5:43 P.M., Mohrfeld opened the public hearing concerning PIP 2023-02, Fort Madison PORT Phase IV Trail. With no

oral or written comments, Mohrfeld closed the public hearing at 5:44 P.M. On motion, Council adopted Resolution No. 2024-22, to adopt plans, specifications, form of contract and estimate of cost for PIP 2023-02, Fort Madison PORT Phase IV Trail. On motion, Council adopted Resolution No. 2024-23, to award a construction contract in the amount of \$379,121.06 to Blue Top Excavating, LLC, of Wever, Iowa and approving the contract and bonds of Blue Top Excavating, LLC, pending receipt of the documents.

On motion, Council approved Ordinance D-109, amending Ordinance D-55, Title 9, Chapter 15: Operation of Golf Carts, ATVs and UTVs. On motion, Council approved the second reading amending Ordinance D-47, Title 2, Chapter 4: Civil Service Commission.

On motion, Council approved the Mayor's signature on a Three-Year Lease Agreement with Building Materials, Inc. On motion, Council approved the Mayor's signature on a Five-Year Lease Agreement for farmland at the Water Treatment Plant with A

Do you have time - to help stop crime?

Visit any of these Facebook pages to learn more about what the Neighborhood Watch Program is & how to start your own group or join an existing group!

Join us today to help keep our communities safer!



CAUTION

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Classifieds/Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICES

& R Enterprise, Ltd. of Montrose, Iowa. On motion, Council approved a recommendation from the Fort Madison Beautification Committee to contract with Martin Gardner Architecture Firm, of Marion, Iowa for architectural and historian services for the rehabilitation of facades within downtown Fort Madison. On motion, Council approved Special

Event Permit: Cottontail Dash, March 30, 2024. On motion, Council approved Special Event Permit: Downtown Summer Markets, June 6, July 11 & August 8, 2024 and to waive permit fees.

The meeting adjourned at 6:12 P.M.
/s/ Matt J. Mohrfeld,
Mayor
ATTEST: /s/ Justina M. Cullen, City Clerk

EXPENDITURES	
General	\$27,082.23
Special Rev.	13,499.64
Road Use	33,609.32
Debt	0.00
Capital	6,838.12
Water	15,565.74
Sewer	9,852.01
Sld Waste, IWC	20,414.54
SW Utility	293.33
	\$127,154.93

REVENUES	
General	\$105,981.21
Special Rev.	122,492.63
Road Use	84,356.15
Debt	46,036.71
Capital	0.00
Water	27,193.65
Sewer	1,498.27
Sld Wst & IWC	166.59
Sewer	21.63
	\$387,746.84

Claims - March 19, 2024

PAYROLL		3/8/2024
General	\$	223,306.18
Road Use		26,042.30
Water		39,998.21
Sewer		32,182.47
Solid Waste		16,694.59
Airport		312.77
Storm Water		3,177.82
		\$341,714.34

..... 220.00
ARAMARK UNIFORM SERVICES, UNIFORM/SHOP SUPPLIES 100.28
AT&T MOBILITY, PHONES/HOT SPOTS 1,789.72
B&B PROPANE, HEAT 799.66
BJ 'S PERFORMANCE, REPLACE TIRES ..115.00
BUILDING MATERIALS

INC, SHOPTON ROOF/SUPPLIES 6,945.32
BURLINGTON MUNI WATER, WATER METERS 1,200.00
COURTESY DOOR SALES & SERVICE, REPAIR GARAGE DOORS 451.00
CULLEN PEST CONTROL, QUARTERLY PEST CONTROL.. 200.00
DAILY DEMOCRAT, PUBLICATIONS..... 298.00
DARRYL KANE, CLAMP REPAIR 75.00
DODD PRINTING & STATIONERY, INK/PAPER/PEN 190.43
DOUDS STONE, LLC, ROADSTONE..... 582.72
DUNKIN GARAGE & TOWING, OIL CHANGE 150.00
ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING, INSTALL RADIO/ANTENNA 1,798.57
EUROFINS ENVIRONMENT TESTING, WEEKLY SLUDGE SAMPLE 710.48
FARM & HOME SUPPLY, PAINT/PRIMER 95.88
FLOYD'S EZ WAY, FEBRUARY PICK-UP.. 503.50
FORT MADISON CHAMBER OF CO, TABLE SPONSOR..... 620.00
FRENCH-RENEKER-ASSOC., PROF FEE - 48TH ST CONNECTOR... 82.27
GALL'S, AN ARAMARK COMPANY, GUN RACK 693.93
GRAINGER, SWIVELS

..... 226.31
GRANICUS MOBILE APP - ANNUAL FEE .. 3,600.00
GREAT RIVER REGIONAL WASTE, GARBAGE COLLECTION.. 24,713.55
HACH COMPANY, TESTING SUPPLIES..... 177.54
HOWARD R GREEN COMPANY, PROF FEE - GIS 2,500.00
HUFFMAN WELDING & MACHINE, GATE WHEELS/BAND ... 413.49
HUMBURD AUTO SERVICE, REPAIRED TIRE 95.50
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IDEAL READY MIX COMPANY, TUBING FOR TRAIL LIGHTS 562.80
IOWA DEPT OF NATURAL RES., PERMIT FEE 85.00
JIM BAIER INC., REPLACED WATER PUMP/SEAT BELT 382.70
JL TIME & ATTENDANCE CO, NOV TIMECLOCK 735.35
KENNETH HONADEL, BOOT ALLOWANCE 299.59
KNAPHEIDE EQUIP CO., INSTALL VEHICLE PACKAGE 23,214.00
LEXIPOL LLC, TRAINING 1,459.84
LISCO, PHONE/INTERNET 1,955.36
MACQUEEN EQUIPMENT, HEAD OF SEWER CAMERA 1,844.12
MADISON TURF & TIM-

BER, FILTERS/SPOOL/FUEL 1,479.95
MASTERCARD, ZOOM 4,888.62
MELLER EXCAVATING & ASPHALT, OF FENCE DEMO.....6,611.00
MENARD, JANITORIAL SUPPLIES 204.39
MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY SERVICE, FOAM CONCENTRATE 1,241.00
MICROBAC LABORATORIES LLC, SLUDGE SAMPLE 155.64
MIDWEST SAFETY COUNSELORS, HYDROGEN CYANIDE 372.77
MIGUEL LANDEROS, NUISANCE 1,430.00
MOHRFELD ELECTRIC, INSTALL LIGHTS @ CH 1,454.52
MOTOR PARTS & EQUIPMENT CO, SPARK PLUG..... 230.21
MOWEN CLEANING SERVICE LLC, JANITORIAL SERVICE ...1,311.50
MUNICIPAL SUPPLY INC., WATER METERS 1,056.19
NFFPA, FIRE MEMBERSHIP 175.00
O'REILLY AUTOMOTIVE, INC., BATTERIES/FILTERS/PARTS 1,359.86
PANTHER UNIFORMS, INC., UNIFORM.... 582.93
POSTMASTER, FORT MADISON, PERMIT FEE 320.00
RED LION RENEWABLES, ELECTRIC 5,877.97

SANDRY FIRE SUPPLY, L.L.C., HARNESS 122.00
SOUTHEAST IA REGIONAL MED, PHYSICAL..... 2,710.00
SOUTHEASTERN COMMUNITY COL, TRAINING 2,410.00
STATE HYGIENIC LABORATORY, FLUORIDE SAMPLE 21.00
TIM'S REPAIR SHOP, FUEL 220.00
TRUCK REPAIR INC., ANTIFREEZE 1,066.39
USA BLUE BOOK, TESTING SUPPLIES..... 946.92
WALLJASPER VETERINARY CLINIC, JAN MONTHLY FEE 1,850.00
WALMAN OPTICAL, SAFETY GLASSES - K KERN..... 98.00
WATER SOLUTIONS UNLIMITED, CHEMICALS 4,607.08
WINDSTREAM, PHONE/INTERNET..... 370.09
TOTAL 127,154.93
GENERAL 27,082.23
SPECIAL REVENUES 12,415.21
ROAD USE..... 33,609.32
CAPITAL..... 6,838.12
WATER..... 15,565.74
WASTEWATER 9,852.01
SOLID WASTE 20,414.54
AIRPORT..... 1,084.43
STORM WATER ... 293.33
TOTAL 127,154.93

BUSINESS DIRECTORY



Patrick Profeta
General Manager


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Iowa News/From the Front

Bird joins effort to secure military reservist pay

DES MOINES—Iowa Attorney General Bird today joined a bipartisan 20-state coalition and the District of Columbia in urging the U.S. Supreme Court to make sure federal employees who serve in the military reserves do not lose their pay when deployed.

Federal law ensures that reservists who are federal employees are entitled to the same pay on deployment as they are in their civilian job. Without those protections, reservists may face drastic pay cuts when called to service, threatening their financial security and discouraging service. Despite Congress's guaranteeing full pay for reservist employees, a federal appeals court recently imposed restrictions on which reservists can receive it.

"Our military heroes should never face a pay cut for serving our country," said Attorney General Bird. "Protecting pay for servicemembers is not only the right thing to do, it is the law. My husband, Bob, served in the Army Reserve after 9/11, and I have seen first-hand the sacrifices our military heroes make to keep us safe. The least we can do is ensure that those who risk their lives for our safety get the pay they deserve."

No time to let poor thoughts fester

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Threads of life when woven into the fabric of interaction with others creates meaningful connection, even if only for a moment. Some of the most memorable events in my life have these elements at the core of the experience.

Another profound AND true saying says, you may forget what people say to you, but you will always remember how they made you feel. How are we doing in that? How are you doing in that effort? How am I doing?

That was the question I was left with after the series of tragedies. I came home from work a few weeks ago and was talking with my wife about these events and the sense of disbelief and shock and blurted out to her, "Somebody has to do something. I have to do something." And that is why you are reading my words this morning. It's like expecting Bob and Tom but getting Chuck and Mike...minus Chuck.

I would be remiss to not express my gratitude and appreciation to Chuck for granting me this forum to allow me to share some thoughts and ideas that have imposed settlement on my life. I look forward to reading *Beside the Point* every Sunday, just like you, and hope that over the next few minutes you will indulge me and maybe, just maybe, we begin to make a difference in our own little corner of the world and make it a better place.

Almost 14 years ago my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. A gut punch at the time. Life was sailing along. We had been married 25 years, had two great kids, celebrated our anniversary in Hawaii and came home to a diagnosis that pretty much changed everything. The kids are still great, the marriage is still going strong, but cancer changes things.

Through the course of her treatment, we were

referred to a doctor in the Integrative Medicine Department at Mayo Clinic to help her deal with the emotional impact of cancer and all the changes to her body. She talked with us about evidence-based approaches to manage stress. Her name escapes me now, but what she taught us was profound. She spoke about mindfulness and being intentional. She spoke about taking time to be intentional with others, to see others as people, not the role they fill in life. (Remember that "life is always teaching us" thing... lesson one, October 2010).

Being intentional became, and remains, my favorite expression. Doing something on purpose, for a purpose. I can't tell you the purpose for your life, but I can confidently say that being deliberate needs to be part of that purpose. It's memorable and meaningful. Doing this may not change everything, but it will make a difference to the recipient of that expression. Guaranteed. It's simple really. It takes no special training. No special skill. Just noticing. Making a phone call. Sending a text. Stopping someone on the street. Conveying a sentiment of interest. Being the difference in someone's life in some way today.

We need to be better people to the people around us. The people closest to us. We need to value others with authentic and sincere expressions of appreciation, consideration, compassion, recognition, and acknowledgement, among other similar actions.

I'm not suggesting every single interaction needs to have profound meaning, but we cannot leave room for the thought to fester in anyone's mind that they don't matter. That their life is unimportant. That everyone would be better off without them. That their life has no value. That circumstances are too much to overcome. They need to know that they are irreplaceable. That their life matters. That they matter.

Because that is the point.

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