

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Tuesday, September 17, 2024 | 6 pages | Volume 8 • Issue 149



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Meller Center gets \$250K

NORTH LEE FOUNDATION: Ricketts says a campaign is underway to raise more



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Lee County Health Department Administrator Michele Ross stands with Lee County EMS Assistant Director Jason Dinwiddie, left, and Ruth Taylor, right, showing a check for \$250,000 for the new Meller Family Health Center. The check was a donation from the North Lee Community Foundation. Taylor was one of the contributors to the foundation funds.

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – A campaign to help finish off the remaining costs of the new county health department/EMS facility officially kicked off Monday morning.

Roger Ricketts with the North Lee Community Foundation presented supervisors with a check for \$250,000 and said additional checks would be presented when

ground is broken.

Supervisor Chuck Holmes, who also sits on the foundation board of directors, said the foundation plans to send out information packs to every home in Lee County to kick off the campaign with hopes of raising \$500,000 towards the project.

Ricketts said the foundation has been working on rais-

See **DONATION**, page 4

BREAKING NEWS

Patient costs may be rising at SEIRMC

• New designation aimed at creating sustainable health care at Great River Health

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – Patients of physicians, clinics, and services provided by Great River Health Systems could be looking at some sticker shock for services provided after Aug. 1 of this year.

The predominant hospital system of southeast Iowa announced a change to its billing protocols with services beginning on that date. Great River Health is the umbrella company of Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Centers in West Burlington and Fort Madison, among 21 other clinics in Des Moines, Henry, and Lee counties.

According to an announcement from the health system on Monday, Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center Clinics - in West Burlington and Fort Madison, and Henry County Health Center Orthopedic Clinic, now follow a provider-based or hospital-based billing model for outpatient services.

Provider-based refers to the billing process for services received in a hospital-owned medical practice that is a clinically integrated department of the hospital, or outpatient clinics that are actually part of the hospital.

Officials said last week in an emailed statement to Pen City Current that the provider-based billing is the national model of practice for healthcare organizations that provide both hospital and physician services to their patients.

“Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center is taking proactive steps to ensure high-quality care remains available to all of our patients. We strive to maintain a high level of physician services in our communities. By converting to a provider-based billing model, Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center is ensur-

See **CO-PAYS**, page 6

COUNTY NEWS

Board of supervisors votes down labor lease - twice

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – The Labor Union office space currently located in the upstairs space above the Newberry Center in downtown Fort Madison got an eviction notice of sorts Monday.

The Lee County Board of Supervisors

considered a lease for \$500 a month plus the cost of property taxes applicable to the square footage of the upstairs office space, and interior maintenance costs, as part of their regular meeting Monday morning.

However, the motion to approve the lease and offer it to unions to consider was voted down by supervisors 3-2 with Ron Fedler and Matt Pflug, both Democrats,

voting against the lease, along with Chuck Holmes, a Republican. Garry Seyb and Tom Schulz voted in favor of the new lease. And for good measure, they voted it down twice.

After realizing that now the union was facing to have to vacate the premises, Pflug,

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WEATHER

TUE 17 Sep..... Sunny & warm, 86° F/ 57° F
WED 18 Sep..... Sunny & warm, 85° F/ 58° F
THU 19 Sep..... Sunny & warm, 87° F/ 64° F

IOWA LOTTERY

LUCKY FOR LIFE 09/15..... 12 10 22 27, Lucky Ball: 11
PICK 3 MIDDAY 09/15..... 3 4 8
PICK 3 EVENING 09/15..... 9 13
PICK 4 MIDDAY 09/15..... 9 2 8 4
PICK 4 EVENING 09/15..... 19 10

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

JANET L. NAVNTOFT

Janet Lee Navntoft, 76 years, of Fort Madison, Iowa died unexpectedly Saturday, September 14, 2024 at her home. She was born July 29, 1948, a daughter of Leon W. and Ann Lee (Woodard) Thompson. She first married Ronald Carter. They had two daughters, JoAnn and Angie. They later divorced. On December 30, 1988, she married Dale Kim Navntoft. He preceded her in death.



NAVNTOFT

She was a cheerleader and a 1966 graduate of Fort Madison High School. She worked as a dealer at the Emerald Lady, and later retired as a pit boss from the Catfish Bend Casino. When she was younger she worked for her parents at Tommy's Maid-Rite. Janet enjoyed lunch dates with her friends, and spending time with her family. She could always bring a smile to your face or make you laugh.

She is survived by her two daughters, JoAnn (Albert) Pritt of Weatherford, Texas and Angie (John) Gagne of Belleville, Illinois; two step-daughters, Melissa Flores and Elizabeth Ross both of Burlington, Iowa; three siblings: Stephen Thompson of Fort Madison, Joyce Thompson and Sandra Lehrke both of Columbia, Missouri; seven grandchildren: Ashley, Kyle, Amber, Robert, Andrew, Lauren, and Blaine; eight great grandchildren, several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband Dale, one brother Jerry Thompson, two grandsons Bryson and Tatum, and one nephew Dustin.

Her family will greet friends from 10:00 am - 11:00 am Thursday, September 19, 2024 at the Barr Memorial Chapel, Fort Madison. A Celebration of Life will follow and begin at 11:00 am at the funeral home, with Pastor Deb Marlin officiating. A memorial has been established for Southeast Iowa Regional Hospice. Barr Memorial Chapel is honored to serve the Navntoft family and an online guest book may be found at www.barrmemorialchapel.com.

OBITUARIES

PATRICIA A. VAN NIEWAAL

Patricia Ann Van Niewaal, 88, of Lomax, Illinois, passed away at 7:25 p.m. Friday, September 13, 2024 at the Southeast Iowa Regional Hospice House in West Burlington, Iowa.



VAN NIEWAAL

Patricia was born March 18, 1936 in Ottumwa, Iowa, the daughter of Harold and Ollie (Annis) Hartley. On August 24, 1957 she married Ronald D. Van Niewaal in Pella, Iowa. He preceded her in death July 9, 2019.

Mrs. VanNiewaal was raised and educated in the Ottumwa area. She began working at a young age to help provide for her family. Shortly after her marriage, she and Ronnie relocated to Lomax, where she would spend the rest of her life as homemaker. She loved her family and especially loved cooking for her children and grandchildren. She was a member of the Lomax Saddle Club and attended Wednesday bingo night in Lomax, where she provided meals and desserts to fund-raise for the Lomax Haunted House Boys. She also enjoyed attending the Auction House in Ft. Madison.

Survivors include four children: Vikki Bowers of Lomax, Rod (Jeannie) Van Niewaal of Carman, Illinois, Ronnie Walker of Keosauqua, Iowa and Melissa Walker of Ft. Madison; 16 grandchildren; several great-grandchildren and a special niece: Tina (Rick) Kienlen of Burlington.

Besides her husband, she was preceded in death by her parents; one son: Randy Van Niewaal; one daughter in infancy: Brenda Van Niewaal and three siblings: Harold and Harry Hartley and Dorothy Enloe.

The family plans a graveside service, for Ronald and Patricia, at 10:30 a.m. Friday, September 27, 2024 at Crane Cemetery, near Lomax, Illinois. The family plans to gather at The Pink Tavern following the service.

A memorial fund has been established in her memory. Contributions may be left at the service or mailed to the Patricia Van Niewaal Memorial Fund, c/o Banks & Beals Funeral Home, P.O. Box 503, LaHarpe, Illinois, 61450.

Pen City Current obituary policy

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

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Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center
Fort Madison 319-376-1135
Henry County Health Center
Mount Pleasant 319-385-5374

We would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who attended and/or contributed to the recent Rack 'Em for Rosie (Beelman) Benefit in early August and to everyone who has supported us following Rose's passing.



A special thank you to Sheri and John Hawk for organizing this event and anyone who helped along the way.

We'd also like to thank The Cabaret, Boonies, and The Eagles Club for hosting the event, and to all the local businesses that donated to the cause.

The Eagle's Club hosted Rose's Celebration of Life and we are grateful to all the volunteers that contributed their time and for the delicious food.

We are completely overwhelmed by the love, support, and generosity you have shown to us in this very difficult time. Your many acts of kindness continue to be a great comfort to us in our time of sorrow.

We will never forget the top-notch, compassionate care Rose and our family received at Mayo Clinic St. Mary's Campus (Rochester, MN), and Oakwood Care Center (Clear Lake, IA). We deeply appreciate the exceptional way you treated her and tenderness you showed.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to Ward-Van Slyke Funeral Home (Clear Lake, IA), and King-Lynk Funeral Home (Fort Madison, IA) for their professionalism and guidance.

*May God bless you all,
Rick Beelman and family*

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For the Record/Business News

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

09/12/24 – 11:07 a.m. – Fort Madison police arrested Dometriace J. Wilmando Virgil, 48, unknown address, in the 800 block of 10th Street on warrants for failure to appear, and delivery of marijuana with 1000 feet of a school. He was held in Lee County Jail.

09/12/24 – 1:38 p.m. – Fort Madison police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1400 block of 38th Street.

09/13/24 – 7:56 p.m. – Fort Madison police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1600 block of Avenue L.

09/14/24 – no time listed – Fort Madison police cited Tracy Ann Purinton, 56, of Fort Madison, in the 300 block of Avenue E, on a charge of violating a no-contact order.

09/14/24 – 8:52 a.m. – Fort Madison police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 1500 block of Avenue M.

09/15/24 – 1:09 a.m. – Fort Madison police arrested Matthew Jay Wells, 24, of Fort Madison in the 3400 block of Avenue Q, on charges of interference with official act and public intoxication. He was held in Lee County Jail.

09/15/23 – 5:23 p.m. – Fort Madison police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1700 block of Avenue H.

Keokuk Police Report

09/12/24 – 5:31 a.m. – Keokuk police responded to a report of a burglary in the 500 block of Burke Street.

09/12/24 – 9:07 a.m. – Keokuk police arrested a 12-year-

old female juvenile in the 2000 block of Orleans Avenue, on a charge of a minor-using tobacco/vapor products. There was no disposition listed.

09/12/24 – 11:39 a.m. – Keokuk police cited Vickie Sue Brennan, 55, of Keokuk in the 3500 block of Main Street, on charges of forgery or theft of lottery tickets.

09/12/24 – 12:39 p.m. – Keokuk police cited a 15-year-old female juvenile in the 2200 block of Middle Road on a charge of minor use of tobacco or vapor products.

09/12/24 – 1:13 p.m. – Keokuk police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 400 block of Main Street.

09/12/24 – 6:11 p.m. – Keokuk police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2100 block of Plank Road.

09/12/24 – 9:47 p.m. – Keokuk police cited Kieth Michael Boyle, 34, of Keokuk, at Johnson Street and McKinley Avenue, on charges of driving under suspension and operating an ATV/UTV.

09/12/24 – 10:32 p.m. – Keokuk police responded to a report of a one-vehicle accident in the 100 block of S. 5th Street. According to the report, a vehicle driven by James Russell Thomas, 35, of Havana, Ill, struck a utility pole causing it to bend over with power lines attached. Russell was charged with striking fixtures upon the highway. No injuries were reported.

09/13/24 – 1:13 a.m. – Keokuk police arrested Sean Timothy Albert Nelson, 26, of Keokuk, in the 400 block of N. 12th Street

on charges of possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of a controlled substance. He was held at Lee County Jail.

09/13/24 – 1:36 a.m. – Keokuk police arrested Georgia Rae Ann Cross, 20, of Warsaw, in the 400 block of N. 12th Street on charges of possession of a controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia. He was held in Lee County Jail.

09/13/24 – 9:10 a.m. – Keokuk police cited Charles Paul Jones, 31, of Hamilton, Ill., in the 300 block of N. Park Drive, on a charge of criminal mischief.

09/13/24 – 3:21 p.m. – Keokuk police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 3500 block of Main Street.

09/13/24 – 3:25 p.m. – Keokuk police responded to a report of vandalism in the 800 block of Morgan Street.

09/13/24 – 4:32 p.m. – Keokuk police arrested Norma Sue Burgess, 40, of Keokuk, in the 200 block of Concert, on a warrant for 5th-degree criminal mischief. She was held in Lee County Jail.

09/13/24 – 6:27 p.m. – Keokuk police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 300 block of Park Drive.

09/14/24 – 2:10 a.m. – Keokuk Police arrested Jacob Ryan McFarland, 29, of Keokuk, in the 100 block of S. 14th Street, on warrants for failure to appear and violation of probation. He was held in Lee County Jail.

09/14/24 – 7:06 a.m. – Keokuk police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 3500 block of Main Street.

09/15/24 – 2:01 a.m. – Keokuk Police arrested Shane Michael Baxter, 38, of Keokuk, in

the 100 block of N. 12th Street, on warrant for failure to appear. He was held in Lee County Jail.

09/15/24 – 11:22 a.m. – Keokuk police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2200 block of Main Street.

09/15/24 – 11:22 a.m. – Keokuk police responded to a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Main Street and Bank Street. According to the report a vehicle driven by William Charles Whitaker, 18, of Keokuk was stopped at the stop sign at Main and Bank streets. He began to turn left to head west and in crossing east bound traffic pulled in front of vehicle driven by Christopher Dean Spivey, 47, of Montrose causing the two vehicles to collide. Whitaker was charged with failure to yield. No injuries were reported.

09/15/24 – 12:35 p.m. – Keokuk police responded to a report of a larceny/theft reported at the police department.

09/16/24 – 2:11 a.m. – Keokuk police arrested Taylor Dean Burgess, 27, of Kahoka, Mo., on a warrant for failure to appear. He was held in Lee County Jail.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

09/12/24 – there was no activity reported.

09/15/24 – 12:59 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Danny Joe Abston, 55, of Farmington, at the intersection of N. Main Street and Orchard Street in Donnellson, on charges of OWI and stopping on paved part of highway. He was held in Lee County Jail.

Those listed above should be presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Koch Fertilizer to hold emergency drill Wednesday

WEVER - Koch Fertilizer is holding a planned emergency response drill on-site at the Wever, Iowa facility on Wednesday, September 18, from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM. This exercise is part of our continual safety training for employees in collaboration with local emergency services.

Details of the Drill:

Date: Wednesday, September 18

Time: 10:30 AM-12:00 PM

Location: Koch Fertilizer Wever, Iowa

This is a planned joint training exercise, and there is no cause for concern. The exercise is an opportunity for both Koch Fertilizer and local emergency response services to identify potential improvement opportunities and plan for enhanced safety measures.

Emergency response services participating in the drill include the Lee County Sheriff, Lee County Emergency Manager, Burlington Fire Chief, SEIRMC Emergency Manager, Wever Fire Chief, Ft. Madison Fire Chief, Lee County EMS leadership and area medical helicopters.

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From the Front

Labor group has 90 days

LEASE - Continued from Page 1

as part of the majority vote, offered a motion to have the vote reconsidered. On a second vote on the lease, Pflug again voted no as did Fedler and Holmes and the proposed lease failed again.

Fedler and Pflug cast their ballots because they opposed the increase in rent to the union, Holmes said the new rent amount doesn't go far enough to release the county from the optics of supplementing the union's rental fees.

Holmes said the rent should be set at \$891 a month to include all utilities and costs that the county incurs owning the property. He went so far as to label the proposed lease illegal. A recent report of the state auditor's office, along with an interpretation from Lee County Attorney Ross Braden, indicates the county must make a profit on rentals and must make property tax payments on any space they receive payments for.

Braden crafted the lease at the request of supervisors.

"I think we need to look at what's in the best interest of the taxpayer and not what is in the best interest of the tenant. To settle for a \$20 per month possible profit...is showing strong favoritism to the tenant and short-changing the property taxpayer," Holmes said.

Penny Logsdon, representing the labor conglomerate that utilizes the space, challenged supervisors again on their calculations and said the group has performed their own maintenance, is paying a fair price for the space, and is made up of Lee County residents and taxpayers.

"We are the taxpayers," she told Holmes.

Holmes said a reasonable rate of return for the county should be 5% on the costs which gave him the \$891 figure including inflation.

Lee County Attorney Ross Braden said supervisors could, in theory, submit another lease proposal to the labor organization, but Seyb said that would only increase the cost to the tenant.

"If they don't come up with a lease that will be acceptable to both parties, then the tenant will have to vacate," Braden said.

The current lease agreement, which is expired, only allowed for annual extensions, not month-to-month extensions, so it expired on Aug. 31. When the lease agreement was valid, it provided for a 90-day out from either party with written notice.

Seyb said after the meeting it was his understanding that with the vote that was taken defeating the proposed new lease agreement it would appear that the labor group would have to vacate the space. He agreed that a new proposal could be offered, but said the board already voted down a bare minimum increase that fit the legal requirements the county was up against, so he's not sure what other agreement could be proposed.

Countywide campaign starts for LCHD/EMS facility

DONATION - Continued from Page 1

ing funds for the project for some time.

"I'm here today because some time ago the North Lee Community Foundation wanted to help Lee County raise some dollars for the new Meller Family Health Center," he said.

"We've been working hard and quietly over the years to gather some money for that. And after you all break ground on the 14th, at that point, there will be some donors that will step up. I wanted to bring you a check for the first part of the dollars we've raised."

He said the foundation has committed themselves to raising at least \$500,000 and he had money still in the bank that was drawing interest.

"As you begin the building, I will be coming back here to bring you additional checks," he said.

He shared a few stories from one donor in Bettendorf, Iowa and another from Fort Madison.

The woman in Bettendorf grew up in Fort Madison and wanted Ricketts to know how important it was for her to get the Health Department out of the former prison property.

He also introduced Ruth Taylor as another donor who has made an undisclosed donation to the project on behalf of her and her husband Glen Taylor. Ruth worked at Sheaffer Pen for four decades and is a long-time resident of Fort Madison.

"She thought it was important enough for Lee County to have a health department facility that was accessible for elderly and easy to get to to help our citizens. So she wrote a check and I'll never tell you how much, but these are the people the health department helps on a daily basis," Ricketts said.

He said if anyone knows anybody who would donate a check to the health department, he, and Lee County Health Department Administrator Michele Ross, will go visit them.

"I've told a number of people that I will leave no stone unturned in my quest to find dollars to help build this building."

Holmes said the foundation is - I think this is supposed to be isn't, right??? charging a dime to the county for the campaign.

"We want everyone to know they are welcome to come forward and make a tax-deductible contribution to the North Lee County Foundation."

He said any dollars contributed to the fund will stay in that fund and would not be transferred to any other fund.

Chairman Garry Seyb said words aren't enough to express his gratitude to the foundation for stepping up to help with the project.

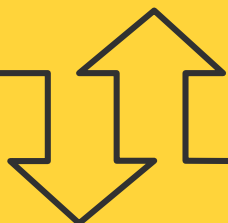
"This is really what is going to help put us over the mark and there are so many different organizations that have been part of this and North Lee will be one of those substantial foundational groups that help make this a reality," Seyb said.

"Our goal has been to build this building to support both our health department and EMS service without local tax dollar support. And we will not bond for this project. It's a testament to the trust people have in the foundation to help support this project."

The county currently has \$5,000,000 towards the \$6.5 million total project cost. Those funds include the foundation's initial contribution of \$250,000, \$1 million in remaining ARPA funds, a \$975,000 USDA Emergency Rural Health Care grant, a \$600,000 Community Development Block Grant, and a \$2.1 million federal appropriation secured by U.S. Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks.

A ground-breaking for the Meller Family Health Center is set for Oct. 14 at 1 p.m. out on the site which was donated to the project by Glen Meller and his family.

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Classifieds/Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE

A. Substantial Deviation from the 5-year Plan:

The Housing Authority (HA) will amend or modify its 5-Year Agency plan upon the occurrence of any of the following events during the term of an approved plan:

- A federal statutory or regulatory change is made effective and, in the opinion of the Authority, has either substantial programmatic or financial effects on the programs administered by the Authority, or creates substantial obligations or administrative burdens beyond the programs under administration at the start of the Plan year.
- Any other event that the Authority's Board

deletes to be a significant amendment or modification of the approved annual plan.

- A change to the Capital Fund Program 5 year Action Plan involving the addition of a new, non-emergency work item that costs in excess of 50% of the yearly grant amount. (A new work item is one that does not already appear in another approved Annual Statement for an open CFP or the current CFP Five-year Action Plan.)

B. Significant Amendment or Modification to the Annual Plan:

The Housing Authority will amend or modify its Annual Agency plan upon the occurrence of any of the following events

during the term of an approved plan:

- A federal statutory or regulatory change is made effective and, in the opinion of the Authority, has either substantial programmatic or financial effects on the programs administered by the Authority, or creates substantial obligations or administrative burdens beyond the programs under administration at the start of the Plan year.

- Any other event that the Authority's Board determines to be a significant amendment or modification of the approved annual plan.

A change to a Capital Fund Program Annual Statement (budget) involving the addition of a new,

non-emergency work item that costs in excess of 50% of the grant. (A new work item is one that does

not already appear in another approved Annual Statement for an open CFP or the current CFP

Five-year Action Plan.)
Michael Dear,
Executive Director

HELP WANTED

LEE COUNTY SECONDARY ROADS

ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN

Lee County is accepting applications for an Engineering Technician to work out of our Fort Madison Office. Duties will include surveying, inspection and testing of materials, computer aided drafting, the ability to become IDOT certified in inspection and other related work duties. The successful candidate will be classified as an Engineering Technician IE, IIE or IIIIE depending on their qualifications. The starting wage range is \$26.40 to \$28.51. Pay rates after 3 years of employment range from \$32.01 to \$34.90.

Lee County provides equal opportunity in employment to all persons regardless of age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, or disability.

For a job description, a list of qualifications, and to apply, download an application from our county's website, www.leecounty.org/employment.aspx and turn it into the County Engineer Office or email it to engineer@leecountyiowa.gov along with a resume. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

If you have any questions, please contact Lee County Engineer Office at (319) 372-2541 or email them to engineer@leecountyiowa.gov.

HELP WANTED

LEE COUNTY SECONDARY ROADS

MECHANIC CLASS II

Lee County is currently accepting applications for a Mechanic Class II to work out of our Central Shop near Donnellson, IA. The successful applicant will perform skilled mechanical work in the maintenance and repair of vehicles, and construction and maintenance equipment and all related mechanical equipment including but not limited to performing diagnostics; electrical repairs; gas welding and cutting; arc and mig welding; and work on hydraulic components. Maintains records of all parts and tools used in repair and assist in inventory of parts and equipment. Requires a high school graduate or G.E.D. equivalent and must possess a valid Class A commercial driver's license with air brake and tanker endorsements or the ability to obtain Class A within 60 days of hire.

Lee County provides equal opportunity in employment to all person regardless of age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, or disability. The position pay range is \$24.17 to \$29.51 per hour.

For a job description, a list of qualifications, and to apply, download an application from our county's website, www.leecounty.org/employment.aspx and turn it into the County Engineer Office or email it to engineer@leecountyiowa.gov along with a resume. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

If you have any questions, please contact Lee County Engineer Office at (319) 372-2541 or email them to engineer@leecountyiowa.gov.

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From the Front

Hospital says other regional providers doing same thing

CO-PAY - Continued from Page 1

ing it is reimbursed fairly for services it provides,” the statement indicated.

The information outlined how healthcare services received after August 1, 2024 will show two charges billed separately, even though they may happen at the same time. These charges include professional services or doctor care; and a separate charge for facility fees related to the clinic or hospital resources used.

Professional services cover being seen by a healthcare provider, or a test result read. Facility fees or hospital care cover room usage, equipment, supplies, and any additional healthcare staff involved in a patient’s care during their visit or procedure. Any labs, tests, or imaging done during the visit would also be expenses you may be responsible for. Your insurance plan coverage will be applied to both bills and the remaining balance will be billed to you. The health system is recommending that you consult directly with your insurance company to find out which portion of your charges will be covered under the new system.

Pen City Current and Great River Health had set an interview for Monday, Sept. 16 to discuss the

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- GRHS spokesperson

changes and its local impact, but that interview was canceled an hour before the interview was to take place and all questions were asked to be emailed for a response.

At the same time, a press release was emailed to all local media outlets outlining the changes that went into place six weeks ago.

An email with responses to questions from Pen City Current about the changes outlined the new structure.

The billing structure doesn’t address how copays will be applied to bills accrued after Aug. 1 and a hospital spokesperson said copays are under the purveyance of insurance companies.

“Co-pays are established by the insurance plan the patient is covered under. If the patient’s insurance plan requires that they pay a co-pay, we would accept it,” the spokesperson wrote. However, they didn’t specify if the co-pay would cover the same costs traditionally covered by a co-pay.

“If the patient’s insurance plan does not require that they pay a co-pay, then we will not be accepting one.”

The official said annual wellness exams are still covered as they were before up to the point that a patient discusses concerns that need further attention or testing.

“These will be billed accordingly. Preventative screenings like mammograms should see no changes in how they are billed.”

The hospital also said the change doesn’t necessarily mean most patients will be seeing increased costs on a regular basis for routine hospital visits that traditionally would be covered under co-pays.

“Not necessarily. The impact on costs will vary depending on the patient’s insurance plan and coverage,” the spokesperson wrote.

“While provider-based billing may result in separate charges for professional and facility fees, insurance plans often cover these differently. Some patients may see increases, while others may not experience a significant difference. We encourage patients to consult with their insurance providers to fully understand how their coverage applies under this model.”

Some states are starting to create and sign legislation that limits the amount hospitals can charge under facility fees, including prohibiting fees charged for telehealth services where the patient isn’t on a hospital campus, but still experience facility fees because the health care professional is located in hospital facilities.

When asked if the GRHS will be charging telehealth patients with facilities fees, the question was unanswered due to the expert on the service not being available.

The hospital official said this new billing system is used by hospitals across the country, including many in the region. However, they are not trying to limit patient choice.

“Our goal is not to limit patient choice, but to maintain a system that ensures the long-term sustainability of healthcare in our community, while providing patients with the clarity they need about their care and associated costs.

“We understand that any changes in healthcare billing can cause concern, and we take those concerns seriously. Our priority is to maintain open communication with our patients and the public to ensure they understand the reasons behind the change. While we recognized that transitions like this may lead to questions or frustration, we are committed to addressing those concerns and helping our community navigate these changes.

State Sen. Jeff Reichman (R-Montrose) said he was made aware of the situation late Friday and has reached out to the Department of Health and Human Services, but said the action is a consequence of Obamacare and the Biden Administration, and needs more attention.

“Once again, we have an organization that’s under a financial crush as a result of the “Affordable Care Act” and this Biden/Harris economy,” he wrote in an email to Pen City Current.

“Rules from this administration that have caused burdens on our healthcare that is still recovering from Covid, funding, and staffing issues,” Reichman wrote.

“At this time, we don’t have all the answers, so we definitely don’t have a solution. We are day one on this issue and it needs more attention. We would obviously like to have a solution to the issue that doesn’t involve people taking on more financial burden in this already troubled Biden/Harris economy.”

Efforts to reach Reps. Martin Graber and Matt Rinker were unsuccessful.

BACK PAIN?

Do You Have Hip Pain? Are You As Stiff As a Board When You Try to Get Up From a Chair? Have You Run Out of Hope?

How 5 Lies About Low BACK PAIN May Keep You Hurting, Frustrated & Exhausted...Forever!

NEW Scientific Breakthroughs Often Make Short Work of Low Back Pain...Just What Big Medical Centers and High Priced Clinics Are PRAYING You Never Figure Out On Your Own!

Hi, I'm Dr. Jason James, and if you've got any kind of back, hip or leg pain, your worries may be over in just a few minutes. Why? Because I'm the owner of James Healthcare & Assoc. clinic, and I've discovered what may be the best healing secrets for "bad backs"—EVER!



Dr. Jason James, D.C.

I'd be stupid to make such a claim if I couldn't back it up. But I am so confident we can help your back, I insist on giving you a **100% SATISFACTION PLEDGE** at James Healthcare. I hate empty promises, and I also hate the lies most folks have been told about their backs. That's why it's important I expose these MYTHS about back pain.

MYTH #1: Sciatica (pain down your leg) is always caused by a herniated disc!

No way...even though most doctors will sell you a \$3,000 MRI at the first sign of leg pain. But they don't tell you about a 5-inch muscle in the hip that can squeeze the sciatic nerve. And it feels EXACTLY like you've got the worst slipped disc on earth. It's a major discovery and...



The good news is that it can be easy and inexpensive to correct! How? Just keep reading! But first, here's a picture to show you where the pain comes from:

MYTH #2: Stiffness from Arthritis means you're getting old...and it must be the reason for all your pain and stiffness!

Not true, because thousands of folks with arthritis in their backs have absolutely NO PAIN! Then why do YOU feel like your back will snap if you bend forward or twist too fast? Because the truth is:

Your stiffness may be caused by a hidden, even more dangerous problem than arthritis, and it can lead to a hip replacement!

You see, most folks believe that something mysterious (like maybe an "arthritis fairy"?) waved a wand over them, and they're cursed... doomed to suffer forever.

But did you know that many arthritis problems are CAUSED by a combination of unseen imbalances in the spine and surrounding muscles? It's the most common cause of hip replacements but not that hard to correct if we catch it in time. It's like the tires on your car...

If the alignment is off just a teeny-weeny bit, at first you don't notice, but over a few thousand miles you start to see signs of wear...that is, if you're lucky enough to catch it before a flat on the freeway ruins your day. In your spine, you're lucky if you catch untreated imbalances before they ruin your spine! How to fix them? Just look at Myth #3.

MYTH #3: Your Back is "Out"!

Sure, that's exactly how it feels. But guess what, we found that's usually not the case. It sounds good, but we now know better. You see, there are 7 different reasons for that painful, locked-up and stuck feeling that causes so much misery:

- low-grade spasm
- pelvis torque and tension
- imbalance of hips

- fallen or dropped arches
- stiff vertebra joint
- adhesions in leg muscle
- pinched nerve

It's NOT just your spine, and it's NOT just your muscles. As a matter of fact, if one of the major muscles that stabilize the spine is partly spasmed, a "2nd stringer" will have to carry the load. But this is a serious problem...

It's like having your plumber doing all the dangerous electrical work!

Sure, he may get it done, and it may work at first, but how long until there's a fire? Or your back locks up? Which leads me to our next myth:

MYTH #4: "It's Only a Muscle!"

Boy, it's scary how many people think muscle problems are no big deal. Unfortunately, tight, bound-up, and spasmed or tight muscles can wear out joints faster than you can say, "Charley Horse"!

That's why it's important to examine the spine AT THE SAME TIME as the muscles that control it. It's also why we've had such outrageous success with even the worst backs at James Healthcare. Because we deal with BOTH the spine and muscles at the same time. We have spine doctors (chiropractors), pain doctors (nurse practitioners) and muscle professionals (therapists) and together they deliver an outstanding way to help "bad backs". This ties in to Myth #5 and the diagram:



MYTH #5: "Muscle Relaxants" will help your muscles heal! Good grief, NO!

Your muscles tighten up for a reason, and muscle relaxants are like turning back the clock on a time bomb...you know it's still going to blow up! Sure, you may feel better now, but you'll pay later...and pay "in spades"! So don't fall for these lies about your low back. They'll keep you hurting, frustrated and exhausted forever!

WOULDN'T YOU RATHER: Turn over in bed without pain waking you up?

Get up in the morning without being as stiff as a board?

Be able to stand for as long as you want without sitting down for relief?

Lean forward over the sink without that "stabbing" in your back or leg?

SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH:

A hidden muscle may be causing your SCIATICA! Does Your Back Seem "Too Old" for Your Own Body? Not everyone qualifies for treatment, so help us see if you do. If you check off even one box, drop what you're doing and call James Healthcare NOW. And bring this coupon when you come in for your **39-Point "Back-Pain Track-Down Exam"**. Now check off what describes you:

- Tension**...always tight across the beltline
- Bent**—crooked off to one side and can't stand up straight if your life depended on it
- Trigger Point**...zinging pain to butt-cheek
- Stiff as a board**...creak and groan when you first get out of bed in the morning
- Traitor**...can't trust your back and what it's going to do—or when!
- Vice-like**...constantly locked down tight!
- Shooting**...vicious but short-lived
- Lumbago**...hard to pin it down—just seems to hurt all the time, but it's hard to say where
- One-sided**...right at that "bone" on one side
- Jack hammer**...pounding off and on like a heartbeat a toothache in your back
- Aching** from 1-5 years
- Chronic pain** for over 5 years

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 612 Main Street

"I broke my back when I was 41 years old and have had problems from then on, until June 2017. Dr. James gave me my life back! I have very few back problems now. It is great to be able to do my everyday duties without back problems..."—Roger Kirchner

James Healthcare & ASSOCIATES, INC.

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