Board wants return on investment

The Lee County Board of Supervisors have spent the last two days dissecting budget numbers from various departments. Today they debated economic development contributions.

**Budget time**

The Lee County Board of Supervisors held their budget workshop Monday and Tuesday and when reviewing commitments to the economic development group stopped and dissected the contributions to Lee County Economic Development Group.

In the current 2017 fiscal year budget, the county is contributing $210,000 to the group. Board member Ron Fedler said LCEDG has traditionally split the money 40% expansion efforts, 40% retention efforts and 10% for attracting new business.

"That's still 10% unaccounted for but you're always going to have a certain percentage of businesses that products get outdated or they haven't kept up or whatever. You need something to replace those and I don't think 10% is enough to help with that replacement," Fedler said.

Supervisor Don Hunold said it may be time for the boards to get together and discuss how the money is being spent, even if that means a year from now when current Chief Executive Office Joe Steil has had a year with the group.

"Well a year from now maybe we should sit down and say 'You've got a year under your belt with new leadership. Where are we at? What did we do? Did we bring jobs in? For $210,000 I want to know what they did. I don't think that's asking for anything anybody else wouldn't ask." Steil said the percentages are literal per agreements reached between the two entities, but he also said the actual numbers paint a different picture.

"Based upon the strategic plan of LCEDG it was broken down for 10% on new business attraction. The board would just like to see more dollars going towards business attraction because that helps expand their tax base and that's very important. We are confident there is more than 10% going to that and we're going to address that in a meeting with them." "We're into this for $210,000 a year and we've been doing that for what 10, 12 years now," Supervisor Gary Folluo said.

"Our job is to increase tax base, we're putting up $210,000 per year to enhance the tax base and 10% isn't doing it."

He said he'd like to see the LCEDG commit to a certain amount of time to new business attraction, but Supervisor Matt Plugh said that would be hard to track.

"I would like to see LCEDG earmark 20% of their time dedicated to attraction and I think that's something we would accomplish before we approve this budget," Folluo said.

"You're never gonna track everything, but at least if it's in their mindset that the Board of Supervisor says this is what we want and we're funding you at 210K, this is what we're asking you to do."
Director of Pharmacy. has helped many with some pre-tax benefits to help that's going to need some hard consideration as to difficult to make one go away and keep the other. So have a mandate on the insurance, it's going to be very those existing conditions back in place, but if we don't tax penalty, “ he said.

that very citizen has to have insurance or be subject to those claims. We needed to put things in place that pre-existing conditions then we needed to offset the tions. But the  law also said if were going to abolish the insurance industry.

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Will the members of Congress act the same way they knew he would, “ Pieper said.

“On the flip side, we have the house and senate that however unlikely, but now we have a willing president. Will the members of Congress act the same way they did before? The speculation is likely not.” He said it would be difficult to separate the parts of the program that most Americans like, such as no pre-existing conditions, to stay in place, while allowing other areas like mandatory coverage to be removed. The no pre-existing condition law was a black-eye to the insurance industry.

“The law completely abolished pre-existing condi- tions. But the law also said if were going to abolish pre-existing conditions then we needed to offset the huge costs insurance companies incurred by inheriting those claims. We needed to put things in place that gives all individuals coverage so now there’s a mandate that very citizen has to have insurance or be subject to tax penalty,” he said.

“No human being likely would say we're gonna put those existing conditions back in place, but if we don’t have a mandate on the insurance, it's going to be very difficult to make one go away and keep the other. So that's going to need some hard consideration as to how that sorts it self out. Many out there lobby for state-based high risk pools, but something will have to happen if the mandates go away.”

The continued emergence of health savings accounts has helped many with some pre-tax benefits to help supplement the high-deductibles incurred by some in their employer or market based plans. Pieper said also having more transparency in the costs of procedures would help consumers as well.”

“For a long time our whole country has agreed to medical procedures without knowing what it costs. This will allow individuals to make proper purchasing decisions and find where to have procedures done. And it will also help create a more uniform pricing structure across the country.”

“The new law for any one concerned about a knee-jerk reaction, the political process is in place. The bills have to be created through the House and the Senate and through the standard process. The presi- dent can’t say this is going to happen. One thing the president can’t suspend enforcement. He can say some of the laws and regulations such as the individ- ual mandate he can choose to direct regulators to not enforce certain aspects. But that will not effect budget items. Those subsidies are budget items and they have to be passed through Congress. So we don’t have to be too worried about that.”

But he said people should maintain their insurance programs and make sure they have coverage, because all the current laws are still in effect and there are tax penalties if you don’t carry insurance.

“Once the President’s there and gives suggestions to the Republican legislature, we want to be paying close attention to that commentary. Now we know that the Republican party is playing for real. They weren’t playing for real when they sent those previous bills on ACA through. They did what they knew they could. That’s really not playing for real, but now they will be able to play for real.”

Pieper is co-founder of Group Benefit Partners, who formed the business in 2009 with Jerry Koeing and can be reached at 866-496-3102.

But the environment is more than ripe for quick, sweeping change.

“One the flip side, we have the house and senate that passed legislation through in November that would have completely repealed the ACA and that made it to President Obama’s desk. He vetoed it, which everyone knew he would,” Pieper said.

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The Employee of the Month is an initiative developed by the Reward & Recognition team. Each month a FMCH employee is honored for going above and beyond for the good of the patient, their co-workers and the organization.

Steil said the LCEDG and the board have scheduled a meeting for Jan. 20 to discuss the efforts and how

Meetings set for Jan. 20

INVESTMENT - Continued from Page 1

wanting to come through the door,” he said. Fedler showed an instance out of Fort Madison that he said showed the dangers of not putting more effort into recruitment.

“We had a Fort Madison cardboard plant and they were bought out by a larger company just to close them down. They bought them out to eliminate the competi- tion, and there’s nothing the city or the county could do to stop it, and that could happen again sometime to a business in our county. You just don’t know,” he said.

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MT. PLEASANT - The Fort Madison varsity boys basketball team has seen some good teams this year in a couple of losses, but when the Bloodhounds rolled into the house of the 6th ranked team in the state, they saw something a little different.

Mt. Pleasant, currently ranked 6th in Class 3a, showed Fort Madison in the first two minutes that there’s a whole different level of play in the Southeast Conference as they handed the Bloodhounds a 64-38 loss. The loss drops the Hounds to 7-3 in the conference and also saddles them with their first conference loss of the year.

Head coach Ryan Wilson is already counting down the days for a rematch.

“We’re gonna see them again in 17 days,” Wilson said after the game. “Hopefully we learn from this and are better come that time.”

The Panthers jumped out to 10-0 first quarter run sparked by a bucket and 3-pointer from junior Jordan Magnini who was averaging just at 11 points per game coming into the contest.

The Bloodhounds were focused on containing Brady Sartorius who leads the Southeast Conference in scoring at about 20 points per outing. FMHS senior guard CJ Richard-son seemed to have the junior standout in check in the first half giving up only four points, but Mt. Pleasant just turned to others to pick up the scoring. Sartorius ended with 20 points, finding his rhythm late in the third period.

The Hounds didn’t get on the board until Richard-son connected on the back end of two free throws and then converted on the next time down the floor. Another free throw by Lorenzo Riles was all the points the Bloodhounds would get in the first quarter.

Junior Kaleb Creswell was stymied the first peri-

Looking for a lane

FMHS’ Landon Bentley surveys the situation as he brings the ball up against Mt. Pleasant’s Jordan Magnani Tuesday on the road. The Hounds suffered their worst defeat of the year, 64-38 at the hands of the 6th ranked Panthers. Below Lorenzo Riles waits for Magnani to clear before going up for a shot.

What’s the next game?

Wilson said the Panthers are a better team once they get going. “We had 10 turnovers in the first half and gave up 10 to 15 offensive rebounds and you can’t win games when those things happen.”

The Hounds play host to Keokuk on Friday in junior varsity/varsity girls/varsity boys match-up. The game will feature the Coaches vs Cancer event to raise money to help fight cancer.

Task force breaks up Keokuk drug house

The Lee County Narcotics Task Force reports the arrest of four, Keokuk, Iowa residents on misdemeanor drug charges.

Jonathan Ray Forquer, 30, Portia Anne Smeltser, 28, and William McDermott, 26, all of 1118 Bank Street, Keokuk, Iowa were arrested on January 6, 2016 at 1118 Bank Street on misdemeanor drug charges.

Forquer faces charges of Possession of Drug Paraphernalia, a simple misdemeanor, Maintaining a Drug House, an aggravated misdemeanor, and Possession of Methamphetamine, a serious misdemeanor. If convicted, Forquer faces up to 10 years and 30 days in a state correctional facility.

Agnew faces charges of Possession of Drug Paraphernalia, a simple misdemeanor, Maintaining a Drug House, an aggravated misdemeanor, Possession of Methamphetamine and, Possession of Marijuana, a serious misdemeanor. Agnew was also arrested on a warrant out of Missouri. If convicted, Agnew faces up to 4 years and 30 days.

McDermott faces charges of Possession of Marijuana, a serious misdemeanor. Maintaining a Drug House, an aggravated misdemeanor, and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia, a simple misdemeanor. If convicted, McDermott faces up to 3 years and 30 days in a state correctional facility.

Portia Anne Smeltser, 28, was also arrested at the residence. Smeltser faces charges of Possession of Methamphetamine, a serious misdemeanor, and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia, a simple misdemeanor. If convicted, Smeltser faces up to 1 year and 30 days in a state correctional facility.

The arrests of these individuals stems from an investigation by the Lee County Narcotics Task Force into allegations that they were involved in the use of illegal narcotics in the Lee County area.

The Lee County Attorney’s Office, Keokuk Police Department, Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement Parole, and the Iowa State Penitentiary K9 Unit assisted the Lee County Narcotics Task Force in this investigation.

The defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The Lee County Narcotics Task Force is funded in part by the U.S. Department of Justice and the funds administered by the Iowa Governor’s Office of Drug Control Policy.
Lady Hounds lose despite Trimble’s 14

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR
FORT MADISON - The Fort Madison Lady Hounds put two in double figures and put up 32 points in the 2nd and 3rd quarters but in the end lost their 6th game in a row Tuesday.
Mt. Pleasant, behind the eight 3-pointers, dropped FMHS 53-41 in Southeast Conference girls basketball action.
Madie Williamson, who was only averaging around eight points per game hit six 3-pointers on her way to 21 for the game. The Panthers’ leading scorer Sarah Moffett was held to only 8.
Fort Madison was led by Melissa Trimble with 14 points and Amber Dilaver with 11.
“We only shot 33% from the field and that poor shooting wasn’t good enough to overcome Williamson’s 21,” said FMHS Head Coach Charlie Knipe.
The Hounds found themselves in a bit of a hole out of the gate managing only 5 points in the first quarter to the Panthers’ 14, but then stormed back in the second period outscoring the visiting 17 to 9 trimming the lead to only one at the half.
Both teams combined for 34 points in the third period but Mt. Pleasant got the lion’s share with 19 to pull ahead by 5. Fort Madison struggled in the final period with only four points and the Panthers cruised the rest of the way.
Dilaver and Trimble each had 6 rebounds to lead the Hounds.
Other scorers for FMHS included Taylor Shannon with 6, Mariah Trimble with 3, and Brittanie Harris with 2.
The Lady Hounds host Keokuk on Friday as part of the Coaches v. Cancer benefit. Everyone should wear pink and donations will go to help fight cancer.

Goin’ baseline
FMHS’ Mercedes Trimble (35) scored 14 for the Lady Hounds in Tuesday’s loss to Mt. Pleasant.

Crusaders back on track with win at VB
Conrad sits with bum knee, Hopper scores 3 in win

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR
If someone had told HTC boys head coach John Hellige that his senior shooting specialists Connor Conrad and Cory Hopper would be held to a combined three points and come out with a win, he may have asked to be pinched.
But that’s exactly what happened Tuesday night, not the pinching, but the Crusaders snapped a 3-game losing streak with a 45-36 win on the road at Van Buren in Southeast Iowa Superconference-South boys action.
The win moves HTC back to .500 on the season at 5-5.
The Crusaders got a season-high 14 points from junior Bailey Merschman to offset the 3 points from Conrad and Hopper who were leading the SEISC-South in scoring at close to 19 points each.
According to Hellige, Conrad injured his right knee on the second play of the game and didn’t play in the rest of the first half and played only one possession after the break. Hopper only made a free throw in the first half and two free throws in the second half.
“This was a total team effort...very balanced scoring,” Hellige said.
“They really keyed in on Cory and Connor so we played 11 kids and everyone contributed.”
The Crusaders were able to keep their distance from the Warriors through the second half, allowing Hellige to keep Conrad on the bench. HTC had a 7-point lead after three periods, which held up as the two teams traded buckets the rest of the way.
“He’s fine,” Hellige said of Conrad. “We just didn’t want to risk anything.”
Rounding out the scoring for the Crusaders was Nick Pothitakis with 8 points, including two second-half 3-pointers. Coltin Thorstenson had 7, Ben Tingley with 6 points all on two 3-pointers in the first half.
Connor Hellweg added 5 and Jack Stinson put in a bucket.
JV wins on Fehseke’s 20
In the junior varsity game, the Crusaders were led by Reed Fehseke with 20 points including four second-half 3-pointers en route to a 48-45 win.
Brant Holtkamp and Quentin Schneider each had 8, Matt Hellweg had 6, Kyle Breedenmeyer had 3, Adam Rauenbueler had 2 and Blake Crabtree added a point.
The Crusaders play host to WACO on Friday with a junior varsity boys/varsity girls/varsity boys triple header beginning at 4:30.