FM fire goes high tech on training

80% of cost was donated by community

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - The Fort Madison fire department has a new tool that will simplify in-house fire extinguisher training. At Tuesday’s Fort Madison City Council meeting, Fire Chief Joey Herren had three firefighters on hand to demonstrate a new digital fire suppression training system that can be used for in-house training.

The new $15,000 Bullex training system is a high-tech digital system that has a digital display of different classifications and then a laser light from full-size battery operated fire extinguishers.

The extinguishers show a green laser circle on the digital board that shows a moving flame and then sensors indicate how efficient the digital circle is at putting out the flame.

“We did extinguisher training around the city for different groups and factories and always had to haul a pan around and have a live fire and created a mess where we were at. And they saw this project and asked to run with it,” Herren said.

“Always had to have nice weather and adjust for wind and then clean up the extinguisher foam and we saw this idea and thought it would be a nice thing to add to all the training we do in town,” said Lt. Neal Gather.

“We can do this in the winter and even do this inside.”

Eng. Chad Hannum said the new technology will making cleaner, safer and more efficient.

“We saw employees that were hesitant, we’re firefighters so we’re used to doing this the old way, but this is nice.”

“Now we can do this in the winter,” Herren said.

“We needed this tool and I think this will be a benefit to our department.”

Herren said the new tool wouldn’t add much to the department budget.

Roadside reboot would cost county $200K

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

MONTROSE - An effort aimed at re-energizing a county roadside maintenance program was a topic of discussion among supervisors on Tuesday.

At the regular meeting of the Lee County Board of Supervisors, the board heard from Jeff Chase, the Des Moines County Roadside superintendent, as to his department’s approach to handling roadside vegetation in that county.

Chase appeared at the request of Margo Sprenger who is spearheading the effort in Lee County to bring back the county’s Integrated Roadside Vegetation Maintenance program. Sprenger has been pushing the board to reinstate the program after seeing the county mow down a lot of Iowa native vegetation deep into the ditches. The program was cut in 2006 by the board under budget constraints.

“I don’t think there was the interest or any real excitement at the end last time,” Board Chairman Rick Larkin said. “It seemed like it just went on for a couple years and we had to make some budgets cuts to something that wouldn’t effect our mandated projects. When we discontinued the program it saved us about $100,000.”

Chase said as the program developed in Des Moines County, the

WEST BURLINGTON - Holy Trinity boys’ head coach John Hellige jazzed his starting lineup Tuesday night and the result was music to his ears.

His Crusaders went into West Burlington and knocked off the 11-2 Falcons by one point, 46-45, Tuesday night in Southeast Iowa Superconference boys action.

“We went to a bigger lineup to start the game and create some scoring,” Hellige said. “We started with Bailey (Merschman) and Jack (Stinson) and moved Cory to 1 and he played extremely well at point. Hopper led all scorers with 27 points including a 3-pointer at the end of the third quarter. “Cory’s 30-footer at the end of the 3rd quarter was a huge momentum changer at the end of the 3rd quarter.

Hoppes had all scorers with 27 points including a long 3-pointer at the end of the third quarter.

The Crusaders were down by 2 at the first quarter and then by 6 at the half 27-21.

“We went into halftime down by 6 and then Connor (Conrad) came up to me at halftime and said he wanted to play,” Hellige said. “I wanted to make sure he wasn’t going to do anything to hurt his knee any more so we let him warm up and then he played the whole half.

The Lee County Board of Supervisors is considering reinstating a roadside vegetation program that would help native plants resurface in Lee County ditches.

Native weeds

See HTC, page 3
Since I’ve talked to a couple of different people, they have some favorite spots they want to make sure they don’t get mowed. The more of them I can find out about, we can mark those.”

-Margo Sprenger
County resident

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Cost of the program came down due to decreased fertilizer costs.

The Des Moines County roadside program falls under the direction of the roads department, where Lee County is considering having Lee County Conservation Board inherit the program. Lee County Engineer Ernie Steffensen, who oversees the secondary roads program in Lee County said he believes the program should be under the Conservation Board.

After the board meeting, supervisors went into on-going budget workshops and Tom Buckley, the Lee County Conservation Board director, gave his budget presentation. As an addendum to his budget proposal, Buckley included approximately $200,000 to pay for the roadside program.

“You know, you don’t know. I’m cautiously optimistic, let’s put it that way. I thought (the supervisors) were interested in what Jeff had to say,” Sprenger said.

Buckley, who’s retiring at the end of June, said there could be some cost savings through a program called the Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund, but the budget he presented was reflective of what actual costs may be.

“A significant part of the first budgeting would be the salary-and-benefits part for two people,” he said. “And then I think the best approach, if the program is reinstated, would be to do a roadside inventory similar to what was done in 1989 so we can figure out exactly what needs to be done and what problematic areas we have.

“The budget included equipment costs and fertilizer and seed expenditures, but he said the Living Trust funds could help provide some additional seed, probably about an additional $7,000 in seed.

“Hopefully the supervisors will feel that’s affordable. It’s always tough to add extra to the budget,” Sprenger said. “I also like the idea that they were going to ask if they could work with Des Moines County on sharing some equipment. And Jeff is a wonderful resource person.”

The idea to reinstate the roadside program was submitted to supervisors last year but was left out of the budget for 2016-2017.

“Tom and Ernie both did request it last year. Hopefully, we’re seeing a few more citizens and government groups wanting this. If the supervisors would hear from people or people would give them a call and tell them they do agree with the advantages of this program that would help too,” Sprenger said.

“Since I’ve talked to a couple of different people, they have some favorite spots and they want to make sure they don’t get mowed. The more of them I can find out about, we can mark those. Ernie was receptive to that idea and even suggested something like that. Those are very valuable and unique areas of the county and if people are aware of places where pheasants or quail are being seen, we can go a bit easier. We can do it in a way that’s least disruptive.”

Sprenger said she is willing to speak with people concerned about the topic or people who have places they would like to have the county pay special attention to. She said she can be reached at 563-321-1788 for anyone who would like additional information on the program.

Buckley said the program started as a part of secondary roads and then became its own department with its own budget outside of roads and conservation. But an independent county auditor recommended that the program be absorbed into the Conservation Board budget.

“There is an IRVM professional group within the state that is a good place to find out what is going on in the field and get some tips and tricks for what will make that program successful. This would allow the roadside manager to get involved in that education and that would be helpful,” Buckley said.

He also said a truck could be inherited from the Conservation Board at a reduced cost of buying a vehicle. Buckley said he has already budgeted to trade out a vehicle and could transfer that instead and purchase a new vehicle for the board at a savings of about $10,000.

Since 1990, the LRTF has funded more than $17 million for research and demonstration projects, vegetation inventories, education and training programs, gateway landscape, snow and erosion control, and roadside enhancements, according to the Iowa Department of Transportation.
Hopper scores 24 in win

And you know... I’d take Connor at 75% any time and that was big for us to have him there.”

Conrad hasn’t played in the past three games and was leading the team in scoring at about 10 points per game before breaking his knee last week.

The Crusaders held a slim two-point margin starting the fourth period thanks to Hopper’s 3-pointer.

West Burlington could only muster three points in the period until the last minute when HTC held a 44-37 lead. In the last minute the Falcons put up 8 points to the Crusaders two, but the two were just enough as the Crusaders move to 7-6 on the year.

This team has beat 6 teams we should have beat and we’ve lost to 6 teams that I thought we should have lost to. I’ve known since this summer what this team is capable of and they showed a little bit of that tonight,” Hellige said.

Merschman was second on the team in scoring with 9, followed by Stinson and Connor Hellweg with 4 and Pothitakis with 2.

In the junior varsity game, the Falcons got the best of HTC 55-51 despite being tied at 51 with less than a minute remaining.

Reed Fehseke had 18 for HTC followed by Brant Bredemeyer and Matt Hellige each had 5 points and Quentin Schneider had 4.

He’s a Hopper

HTC senior Cory Hopper, above dumped in 24 as the Crusaders upset W. Burlington Tuesday.

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Bloodhounds ride Kokjohn’s 24 to win at Burlington

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON - The Fort Madison Bloodhounds got 24 points out of Treavor Kokjohn en route to a 61-45 victory in Southeast Conference boys basketball action Tuesday.

The Hounds have won 6 of the last 7 games with the only loss coming to 6th rated Mt. Pleasant a week ago. The 24 is a season-high for Kokjohn and FMHS Head Coach Ryan Wilson said Kokjohn has the ability to have those performances every night.

“I think he was really close to a double-double with nine to 11 boards,” Wilson said. “He was strong with the ball and used his athleticism most of the night.”

The Hounds came out of the game quickly with a 12-7 first quarter lead but then let the Grayhounds within two with less than a minute left in the half at 27-25. Wilson then had the Hounds run a set play to get junior Kaleb Cresswell free on the perimeter and Cresswell connected on a 3-pointer to re-establish the five-point lead.

The momentum continued in the third quarter as the Hounds built on Cresswell’s 3 and ran out a 15-0 run before Burlington could get the ball in the bucket again. Cresswell finished with 14 points on the night followed by senior CJ Richardson’s 10. The two are 3rd and 4th in the conference in scoring at 14.8 and 12.8 per game, respectively.

Burlington was led by Jackson Green with 17 points, 9 rebounds and 7 assists. John Wood in Quincy on Saturday.

Other Hounds scoring were Logan Rashid with 7 points, Alex Gully with 3, Shemyouredd-Donald had two points and Lorenzo Riles had 1.

The Hounds move to 9-3 and the season and travel to John Wood in Quincy on Saturday.

Lady Hounds drop 9th straight

PCC STAFF

BURLINGTON - The Fort Madison girls varsity basketball team suffered it’s ninth loss in a row with a 46-36 loss at Burlington.

The loss moves the Lady Hounds to 3-11 on the year, but several players continue to put up decent numbers during the stretch and the Hounds have found themselves in just about every game they’ve played this year.

Fort Madison and the Grayhounds were tied at the end of the first quarter and then the Bloodhounds pulled ahead by two going into the locker-rooms at halftime 19-17. But the third quarter, which has been a curse for the Hounds in most games, did them in again as Burlington outscored FMHS 18-9 for a 35-26 lead going into the final period.

The Hounds were out-scored 11 to 8 down the stretch to put the game away.

“We shot a dismal 13/40 from the field for 33% and 7/17 from the charity stripe,” said Head Coach Jim Cramer.

Mercedes Trimble led Fort Madison in scoring with 14 points going 3 for 3 from the 3-point line. Amber Dilsaver, coming off a 35 point performance against Monmouth-Roseville on Saturday scored 11 points and Mariah Trindle added 6 points. Dilsav er hauled in 13 boards followed by Mercedes Trimble with 5. The Bloodhounds were led in assists by Taylor Shannon with four to go along with her four steals and 2 points.

Emily Mitchell also scored 2 and Kamryn Bai ley had one to round out the scoring for FMHS.

The Bloodhounds travel to Quincy, Ill., Saturday.