Democrat leaders warn IPERS may be in GOP crosshairs

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
Pen City Current Editor

FORT MADISON - With the GOP-led Chapter 20 restructure being signed into law, many Democrats in the Iowa legislature are worried now about possible changes to the employees' retirement system. Democrats including State Rep. Jerry Kearns (D-Keokuk) and State Sen. Joe Bolkcom (D-Iowa City) have a lingering fear that, considering the swiftness of changes being signed into law, changes to the Iowa Public Employees Retirement System (IPERS) may be closer than some anticipated.

“The collective bargaining bill came down 10 days from the time we saw it until it was signed into law,” Bolkcom said Wednesday. "It changed more than 40 years of practices without much deliberation at all. That was a greased product and that was step 1,” he said.

Bolkcom said step 2 is taking a look at retirement benefits. He said Governor Terry Branstad has appointed business leaders to make recommendations for changes to IPERS.

“This question then becomes what are the recommendations? What kind of input will current beneficiaries and those currently paying in have?” Bolkcom said. "Governor Terry Branstad has appointed business leaders to make recommendations for changes to IPERS."

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"The way the collective bargaining bill went through with little to no public input, people should be very concerned about any changes to this system. It could be very detrimental."

He claimed the collective bargaining issue was brought to the table by a billionaire interests. “Their agenda doesn’t like public unions and they don’t like public retirement systems. I don’t put it past these guys to come in here and drastically change this system for our state’s employees.”

Danny Homan, President of AFSCME Council 61, who filed suit on Monday, on behalf of the union and its membership, for injunctive relief of the new collective bargaining law agreed with Bolkcom.

“We agree with Senator Bolkcom’s warning cries that IPERS-covered employees or retirees should watch their back. The overreaching, power-hungry attacks of the new GOP trifecta, so far, has showed no bounds. While we have yet to see IPERS-cutting legislation, the newly-formed study group suggests changes may be coming. Take a lesson from the collective bargaining fight: ‘tweaks’ are seldom just that, Homan said.

But State Rep. Dave Heaton (R-Mount Pleasant) said there could be merits to looking at a defined contribution system rather than a defined benefit system.

Currently the IPERS system collects a percentage of Iowa’s public employees’ salary coupled with a percentage from the employer to fund the system, then guarantees a benefit upon retirement. Employees can choose several options at retirement including a lump sum payment, monthly payments or to hold money for dependents. Conservative groups are suggesting replacing it with a defined contribution program, similar to a 401(k) plan, which is less risky for the employer because it does not promise a specific benefit when a worker retires, which conversely would add risk to the employees’ retirement plan.

“You know there is always that defined-contribution against def- ined-benefit argument,” Heaton said. “You always have the uncertainty that concerns a lot of people. With a defined benefit plan they know what they’re gonna get based on contributions. I think my state workers are concerned about the security of their pension and they see IPERS, page 2

Science fair

The Holy Trinity Catholic Science fair was held Wednesday. At right clockwise, a project by Laura Mehmerart, Kayla Box and Alexa Dingman talks about protein’s impact on blood sugars. Instructor Ernie Mehmert, Kayla Box and Alexa Dingman talks about protein’s impact on blood sugars and Jake Pothitakis talks about which tooth brushes are best.

Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PCPC

No details released concerning body

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCPC Editor

LEE COUNTY - Information is still being held very close to the vest by state officials looking into the death of a Fairfield man found on the morning of Feb. 12 by Skunk River.

Lestina did say, however, that he does not feel that there is any risk to the public in general as a result of the incident. The body, discovered at Indian Path Park off Highway 61 at around 11 a.m. on the 12th, was identified to the Pen City Current by the man’s sister, Gina Ollom of Fairfield, as James Merlin Nelson, 47, formerly of Fairfield.

According to Ollom, Nelson had been working construction at the Iowa Fertilizer Company in Waver, but she was unaware of his occupation at the time of his death. An autopsy has been ordered, but no information or results have been released to anyone, according to Lestina.

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SPORTS: Hounds vs. Panthers for third time this season.

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No details released concerning body
OBITUARIES

MICHAEL L. MALLORY

Michael L. Mallory, 74, of Ft. Madison passed away on Sunday, February 19, 2017 at 12:15 AM at the Wapello Specialty Care Center.

He was born on October 17, 1942 in Peoria, IL to Cecil and Iola Day Mallory. Michael worked at GE in Burlington and was also a janitor at Ft. Madison High School. On April 30, 2004 he married Susan Othmer in Keokuk. He enjoyed fishing, cooking, playing card games and collecting baseball cards.

Survivors include his wife, Susan Othmer Mallory of Keokuk; three daughters, Marlo Meyer of Burlington, Michelle Palmer of Overland Park, KS and Carrie Mallory of Ft. Madison; two sons, Matt Mallory of Ft. Madison and Mark Palmer of Texas; eighteen grandchildren; two sisters, Cecile Amerson of Peoria, IL and Suzette Williams of Michigan; one brother, Robert Mallory of Arkansas; several nieces and nephews.

Per his wishes, cremation has been entrusted to King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory and there will be no formal services at this time. A memorial has been established in his memory and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

Task Force arrests three FM residents on drug charges

The Lee County Narcotics Task Force reports the arrest of three Fort Madison, Iowa residents on misdemeanor and felony drug charges. Bradley Glenn Traman, 30, Robert Daniel Wagner, 50, and Sherri Lynn Donaldson (photo not provided), 23, all of 2703 Avenue M, Fort Madison, Iowa were arrested on February 21, 2017 at their residence on misdemeanor and felony drug charges. Traman is charged with Possession with Intent to Deliver Methamphetamine, Less Than Five Grams Second or Subsequent Offense, a class C felony with an enhancement. Maintaining a Drug House, an aggravated misdemeanor, Possession Of Methamphetamine, a serious misdemeanor, Possession Of Marijuana, a serious misdemeanor, and Possession Of Drug Paraphernalia, a simple misdemeanor. If convicted, Traman faces up to 34 years and 30 days in a state correctional facility.

Wagner and Donaldson are both charged with Maintaining A Drug House, an aggravated misdemeanor, and Possession Of Drug Paraphernalia, a simple misdemeanor. If convicted, Donaldson and Wagner each face up to 1 year and 30 days in a state correctional facility.

The arrests of Wagner, Donaldson, and Traman stem from an investigation by the Lee County Narcotics Task Force into allegations that they were involved in the use and/or distribution of illegal narcotics in the Fort Madison area.

The Lee County Attorney’s Office, Fort Madison Police Department, Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement, Lee County Sheriff’s Office, and the 8th Judicial District of Probation and Parole assisted the Lee County Narcotics Task Force in this investigation.
Splendor in the woods...with privacy...AND an AMAZING home. Call today on this brick beauty perched atop a hill overlooking Ft. Madison and almost 6 acres of ground. Offered are 3 bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, a formal living & dining room, a large great room/kitchen/breakfast room combo and a study/office. The home is beautifully finished with beautiful cherry cabinetry & bookshelves lining the walls. All of this with STUNNING hardwood floors! This beautiful home offering top-of-the-line features throughout.

Listing #20160805 • $460,000
3 BR, 3.50 BA • 3 car garage • 3,723 sq. ft.

Splendor in the woods...with privacy...AND an AMAZING home. Call today on this brick beauty perched atop a hill overlooking Ft. Madison and almost 6 acres of ground. Offered are 3 bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, a formal living & dining room, a large great room/kitchen/breakfast room combo and a study/office. The home is beautifully finished with beautiful cherry cabinetry & bookshelves lining the walls. All of this with STUNNING hardwood floors! This beautiful home offering top-of-the-line features throughout.

Listing #20160805 • $460,000
3 BR, 3.50 BA • 3 car garage • 3,723 sq. ft.
3 BR • 2.50 BA • 2 car garage • 2,400 sq. ft. • 10,150 sq. ft. lot
Lovely tri-level home on a quiet cul de sac offering numerous upgrades. There are 3 bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths, a large living room, dining room and open kitchen with newer stainless steel appliances and a breakfast bar. Newer windows, HVAC, new floor coverings on main and lower level and freshly painted throughout. The large backyard is completely fenced and has a 24 x 16 patterned concrete patio. Don't miss out on this wonderful family home.
Listing #20163404 • $167,500

4 BR • 3 BA • 2 car garage • 1,349 sq. ft. • 9,160 sq. ft. lot
From the inviting entrance to the serene back yard, you will enjoy it ALL and everything in between!!! This very well maintained 4 bedroom, 3 bath home has everything your family will need to call this Home. There is a beautiful screened porch and a deck off the back of the house, all overlooking a meticulously landscaped large yard. Call today on this amazing home situated on a quiet, safe cul de sac!!!
Listing #20163339 • $164,900

3 BR • 2 BA • 2 car garage • 1,168 sq. ft. • 0.54 acres
Lovely family home comfortably situated at the end of a cul de sac, where you can enjoy the woods and the privacy! There is an inviting deck off the back of the home overlooking the woods and beautiful vinyl fencing. There are newer mechanics and a newer roof, 2 fireplaces and lots of storage!! Don't miss out on this beauty.
Listing #20163951 • $139,000

4 BR • 1.75 BA • 3 car garage • 2,052 sq. ft. • 8,700 sq. ft. lot
Beautiful 4 bedroom home with large rooms, recently reconditioned and ready to move into. This home features stainless steel appliances, main floor laundry, eat in kitchen and formal dining room, main floor office or bedroom, open staircase, large living room and big bedrooms. Newer roof, siding and gutters on house. 24' X 36' insulated garage and workshop, plus carport. Large wrap porch great location near Old Settlers Park.
Listing #20163776 • $129,500

3 BR • 1 BA • 1 car garage • 1,248 sq. ft. • 0.37 acres
Well-kept ranch on a beautiful, large corner lot in West Point, IA. New wooden privacy fence surrounding the entire back yard. There is also an attached garage and storage shed. A large wooden deck leads to the front door where you can sit and enjoy those beautiful Iowa summer sunsets! PLUS a covered deck in the back for those rainy days. This house is a rare find.
Listing #20164234 • $119,900

3 car garage • 1,635 sq. ft.
Amazing cedar log sided home in a quiet and private setting, well-appointed guest house, and 26x32 metal building. The main home offers beautiful hardwood flooring with an awesome open floor plan. Enjoy summer evenings on the nice walk-out patio area. This is a dream home!!!
Listing #20161863 • $299,000

3,119 sq. ft. • 14,500 sq. ft. lot
From the period wrought iron fencing to the amazing stained oak staircase...from the impressive arches to the large wrap porch, this beautiful turn of the century (20th) home offers all the beauty and elegance of that era. This is a beautifully appointed home with all the modern conveniences. There is an extra large lot for your family to enjoy!!!
Listing #20162159 • $164,000

3 BR, 3 BA

2 BR, 3 BA, 4.3 ACRES

SPLendor in the woods...with privacy...AND a view...AND an AMAZING home. Call today on this brick BEAUTIFUL PERIOD HOME

3 BR • 2.50BA
2 car garage
2,834 sq. ft.
14,868 sq. ft. lot
Amazing family home on a large corner lot in Farmington, IA. 2 fireplaces, beautiful woodwork, a beautiful open front porch, a large yard and an oversized garage!!
Listing #20164117 $127,500

3 BR • 3BA
2,754 sq. ft.
3,550 sq. ft. lot
Gorgeous, turn-key home with large patio minimum maintenance. UPDATES GALORE!!! Practically perfect in every way, this 1841 home includes the latest improvements while keeping its Victorian charm.
Listing #23006122 $99,999

2 car garage • 2,527 sq. ft.
UNIQUELY beautiful 9.38 river bluff acreage. This home boasts many updates including complete master suite, heat and A/C, Septic system, deck, roof & gutters, flooring,and the list goes on. This private property includes fenced in barn area for animal lovers, mature fruit trees plus trees have been dropped for a beautiful panoramic river view that will last for years! Owner also plans to leave a John Deer mower and new snow blower!!
Listing #20162733 • $269,000
We’d love to help you find your dream home!

2BR • 1BA
2 car garage
868 sq. ft.
7,000 sq. ft. lot
PRICE REDUCED! Rare opportunity to own a renovated home at a great price!! Large, shaded yard and a 2 car garage. Located in a nice neighborhood on a corner lot. Seller is motivated and offering a 1 year AHS Home Warranty!
Listing #20163035
$52,000

2BR • 1BA
2 car garage
1,330 sq. ft.
7,250 sq. ft. lot
RENOVATED BY $13,100! Affordable with lots of potential!!! Nice size kitchen with breakfast bar plus dining area, spacious living room w/fireplace. Sit on a corner lot.
Listing #20160368
$59,900

3BR • 1BA
2 car garage
928 sq. ft.
1,087 sq. ft. lot
Very nice maintenance-free home by Lincoln School with a 75 X 145 fenced yard, nice patio, fire pit and child’s play set! Some very nice built-ins, some original hardwood flooring, full basement laundry area. Also find extra parking, garage and carport area on the paved alley.
Listing #20164148
$72,500

5BR • 1.75BA
1 car garage
1,904 sq. ft.
1,903 sq. ft. lot
Great family home on large corner lot in the middle of Ft. Madison. Large living / dining area with original craftsman woodwork and built-ins, 14 x 22 garage on the alley with 2 additional storage sheds. Nice front porch, rear deck, and a great sunroom on the East.
Listing #20162346
$86,950

3BR • 1.50BA
1.460 sq. ft.
3,625 sq. ft. lot
Reasonably priced home has had new doors installed, new bathroom fixtures, and freshly painted. With it's vinyl siding and fenced rear yard, it's ready for your family!!
Listing #20162025
$25,500

2BR • 1.25BA
1,119 sq. ft.
6,500 sq. ft. lot
Brick rancher on Ave E close to Old Settlers Park, has full basement mostly finished, picket fence, newer windows, roof, etc.
Listing #20162502
$88,900

2BR • 1.50BA
2 car garage
679 sq. ft.
6,500 sq. ft. lot
Nice, small home. Seller has purchased and remodeled. Excellent condition.
Listing #20164161
$62,500

2BR • 1BA
2 car garage
930 sq. ft.
7,280 sq. ft. lot
This 2 bedroom home in Montrose has been a rental property and sells as is. Priced way below assessed value to sell quickly!
Listing #20164279
$38,500

2BR • 1BA
1.75BA
7,000 sq. ft. lot
Reasonable with lots of potential!!! Nice size kitchen with breakfast bar plus dining area, spacious living room w/fireplace. Sit on a corner lot.
Listing #20162025
$25,500

2BR • 1BA
1 car garage
1,224 sq. ft.
1,224 sq. ft. lot
A house with character! Wrap-around porch, original hardwood in formal dining room/living room combo, main floor laundry, nice size eat-in kitchen including appliances, dining room has original fireplace, basement and 1 car garage.
Listing #20162543
$53,000

3BR • 1.75BA
1 car garage
888 sq. ft.
9,450 sq. ft. lot
RARE RANCH with large fenced back yard and attached garage! Updated windows and kitchen, newer HVAC and water heater. Family Room in the basement. Just waiting for your own personal touch!
Listing #20163423
$74,900

Land
50.82 acres
2,213,719 sq. ft.
Ideal 50 acre m/l parcel to develop. Close to new 4-8 Middle School and Baxter Rec Plex. TREMENDOUS DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY.
Listing #20162779
$559,020

Land
14.65 acres
638,514 sq. ft.
Just outside city limits, perfect for housing development or small farm for horses or small livestock, over half tillable. City water is available. 30’ X 60’ building is totally insulated, heated and air conditioned with 200 amp service.
Listing #20162574
$249,000

HOPE ASSOCIATES
REAL ESTATE
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903 Avenue G • Fort Madison
hopeassociatesre.com
seia.rapmls.com

PENDING
2BR • 1BA
1 car garage
733 sq. ft.
9,116 sq. ft. lot
Country living in the city! Large fenced lot with garden including blackberry bushes, grapes, rhubarb, and asparagus, along with apple and peach trees. Large shop attached to the garage and a storage shed. Sit on the front deck and enjoy the country scenery! In Farmington.
Listing #20163103
$39,999

PENDING
2BR • 1BA
1 car garage
2,672 sq. ft.
7,250 sq. ft. lot
Move-in ready with many updates including kitchen WITH appliances, fresh paint, newer electrical (100 AMP breaker), new water lines at street and more! The home is clean as a whistle and ready to move in!
Listing #20161431
$42,500

PENDING
2BR • 1BA
1 car garage
1,144 sq. ft.
3,625 sq. ft. lot
A house with character! Wrap-around porch, original hardwood in formal dining room/living room combo, main floor laundry, nice size eat-in kitchen including appliances, dining room has original fireplace, basement and 1 car garage.
Listing #20162543
$53,000

PENDING
Multi-family Duplex
2,672 sq. ft.
7,250 sq. ft. lot
Income property. Potential for $875/month income or more. Side-by-side duplex with 2-2 bedroom, 1 bath apartments. West side has a long term renter and east side is vacant.
Listing #20162154
$49,500
Bloodhounds face Panthers for third time this year

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - The Fort Madison boys basketball team has had a rough experience with No. 6-ranked Mt. Pleasant this year, but there's an old coach's adage that says it's hard to beat the same team three times in a season.

Head Coach Ryan Wilson will be hoping that holds true to form as the Bloodhounds take on the Panthers in Mt. Pleasant on Thursday at 7 p.m. in the District 11 championship. The winner will face the winner of District 12 in Fairfield on Feb. 27 at 7 p.m. for the right to go to state.

FMHS advanced with a hard-fought 52-48 win over Chariton on Monday. Mt. Pleasant advanced with a 67-30 win over Mt. Pleasant on Feb. 10 at 11.8 points per game. Kokjohn is right behind while Treavor James-Kokjohn is scoring at a just under 10 points per game. FMHS senior CJ Richardson is right there at 11.7 points per game and the Panthers' Colin Mullford is scoring at a just under 10 points per game.

"Mt. Pleasant has got a lot of talent and people that can score. So our priority will be to limit Sartorius and hope when that happens, we can also limit the others." -Ryan Smith, FMHS Head Coach

Dribble stop

Fort Madison senior CJ Richardson drives against Lim Chuol of Chariton on Monday night's District 11 win.

Against Keokuk Monday, Sartorius was held to just 13 by the Chiefs, but that focus opened up the inside and 6'9" senior Tom O'Connor dumped in 19, a full 10 points over his season average. Magnani got his 12.

James-Kokjohn leads Fort Madison with 18 points Monday night. Richardson said "Mt. Pleasant and and we won four, "

Wilson knows his team is scoring, 10 points per game. "It's just like going into a night Muscatine on a night when Muskies' junior Joe Weiskamp, who leads Class 3A in scoring, threw up 42.

Fort Madison finished the season 14-7 and in second place in the conference with the only conference losses coming to Mt. Pleasant on Jan. 10 38-64 and on Jan. 27 41-78 at home.

Wilson knows his team will have its hands full but when it's win or go home anything can happen. Six of the top 10 scorers in the Southeast Conference will be on display Monday, led by junior Brady Sartorius, who led the conference in scoring at 22 points per game, while Kaleb Cresswell leads Fort Madison at 15 points per game and was 2nd in the conference. The Panther's junior Jordan Magnani averages 12 points per outing, while Treavor James-Kokjohn is right behind at 11.8 points per game.

FMHS senior CJ Richardson is right there at 11.7 points per game and the Panthers' Colin Mullford is scoring at a just under 10 points per game.

"It's just like going into Chariton... you have to contain their best. We held (Lim) Chuol to four points below his average and we won four," Wilson said "Mt. Pleasant has got a lot of talent and people that can score. So our No. 1 priority will be to limit (Sartorius) and hope when that happens we find we can also limit the others. But obviously, he's a focus so we'll do what we can to contain him."
Democrats warn state employees to watch IPERS talk in Des Moines

From the Front/Sports

Don't want to take a chance.

"That's the issue. As the governor said recently, changing our pension plan is not a quick decision to make. It'll take a lot of thought... But sooner or later we're gonna have to contribute more to the fund."

Heaton, who was one of six Republicans to vote against the collective bargaining bill, citing it was too much in favor of management, said he wouldn't support any bill to change IPERS that wasn't fully vetted.

"There's not going to be any bill any time soon that will say we're going to defined contributions, I don't think. I won't support it. Not on something that hasn't been given great thought and is actuarily sound. It has to be a good plan that is adequately funded. This is a big deal... a multi-billion dollar discussion and whether or not there will be a choice. But when you provide employees a choice, all the statistics that prove your fund is solvent are at risk if you don't know who's contributing and how much."

Kearns said people need to be on the lookout as the GOP-led legislature is moving very quickly with their agenda.

"I would just tell people the same thing that AFSCME is. Keep an eye on what is going on, whether you're contributing now or taking benefits... everyone needs to be watching."

Bolkcom said public employees only need to look back at how the collective bargaining bill was swept through.

"No one campaigned in the last elections on drastically changing 180,000 public employees' health care and working conditions, and then come in and turned it on its head. They came in and took only 10 days to do it, " Bolkcom said.

"People need to be alert. This is on the agenda and it's just a matter of time before a proposal comes up. If they do it like they did that, there will be very little opportunity for input or to stop it. Current beneficiaries and those putting into the system should be definitely concerned."

Democrats warn state employees to watch IPERS talk in Des Moines

**Reflecting pond**

The Kuhlmeier Pond in Riverview Park provides a mirror like reflection of a cotton-candy sky over Fort Madison on a beautiful Sunday evening.

**Wilson says a big crowd helps team**

DISTRICTS - Continued from Page 7

both at 5.5 boards per game to lead the Panthers. Senior Austin Rose is averaging five per game for the Hounds.

The Hounds are going to have to find away to cut the rebounding advantage the Panthers held in the first two games, 27-16 and 26-13.

"We've been talking all year, rebounding is effort," Wilson said.

"There have been lots of teams that are bigger than us, but if we give the effort that should take care of it. They play good defense and they'll try to force us to miss shots. Hopefully we'll knock more shots down to help negate that."

The Hounds have won four in a row and six of the last seven and Wilson says if they continue to play like they have been the Hounds should be in the game.

"I would say that we have a shot to win if we play like we have," he said. "But we also know that Mt. Pleasant brings an intensity that is a lot higher than others. We know what they will bring and we have to step our game up a notch or two from the previous two games."

Wilson said he was pleased with the turnout at Chariton, but said students having Monday off may have hurt a bit.

"We're hoping to have a great turnout and fan support with a big student section. That always helps the kids play harder and motivates them," he said.

Wilson says a big crowd helps team

DISTRICTS - Continued from Page 7

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