Gilbert hopes recent good news spurs more activity

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - A walk down Avenue G today shows a smattering of empty store fronts, cracked sidewalks and dilapidated curbing. A dismal sight on the surface. But a look deeper shows the story may be just the opposite.

With the Eisentraut family reopening and reinvigorating the Fox Theater and Jimmy and Hitomi Wendorf announcing plans for the Hesse building at 7th and G, life is being breathed back into a hope that Fort Madison’s Main Street district can, once again, become a retail destination for the city.

Visits downtown for Chinese or a beverage after business hours show parking spaces are rare, especially on the west end of the district with people taking in an evening movie or stopping at Faeth’s Cigar Store to have a drink and visit with friends.

Fort Madison Main Street Coordinator Cassie Gilbert says she’s excited with what’s happened in the past three months and hopes that it serves as a springboard if not for the first time, then maybe a second or third time.

C.U.R.E. Business Solutions is poised to reopen in the 600 block of Avenue E. C.U.R.E. was formerly downtown in a location close to where it is going back. A fire forced them to move out to the west end of town, but the firm is very close to reopening in a building purchased from Brenda Derr when she moved her location two blocks west and added an old-fashioned ice cream station.

Dave Taylor has taken over 10th Street Station and is a shining example of how a new owner can take over an existing customer base and make it work.

Dr. Roy Tinguely has opened up an office on the south side of the 700 block of Avenue G after years with Fort Madison Physicians and Surgeons on the Fort Madison Community Hospital campus.

Gilbert said the recent growth in the district needs to inspire others that dreams of business ownership is not as far off as it may seem.

“The Hesse building idea is great, it’s different,” said Gilbert, who’s been with the Main Street District since July. “One of the things we need to do in order to distinguish ourselves from other downtowns is come up with these unique ideas. And let people know that we are a historic downtown, but we want to have great ideas...”

“It’s a historic downtown, but we want to have great ideas...”

-Cassie Gilbert, Main Street Coordinator

Reflecting on Main Street

Fort Madison Main Street Coordinator Cassie Gilbert ‘reflects’ on JoLynn Shoe Shoppe that has since closed due to the retirement of owner Gary Pilkington. The building now sits as one of the business-ready storefronts along Avenue G.

storefront being repaired.

Gilbert said 2016 was a rough year with longstanding businesses like Bonnie Howard’s The Bookmark and Gary Pilkington’s JoLynn Shoe Shoppe closing due to retirements. She said that’s going to happen, but the younger generation should realize there is potential in those businesses and those now vacant store fronts.

“We have at least five new businesses or owners here, one of those is moving back,” she said. “2016 was a bit of a disappointment for folks that were here.”

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INSIDE TODAY: The Fort Madison Chamber recognizes more of its members with a visit and some treats. See page 6
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Upper-floor living is part of efforts

GROWTH - Continued from Page 1

of a rough year. We had a few flagship stores close and that’s going to happen. But we need to show the opportunities to take over those businesses, as well as being places for them to start their own business.”

Barker Financial out of Iowa City has taken ownership of the old Lee County Bank building, the Cattermole Library, and the Sears Building but are only looking at fully rehabbing the first two. Options for the Sears building are still up in the air.

“The lower story retail sections need work, but they aren’t in bad shape,” Gilbert said. “Right now, having them finish two buildings is better than none.”

Gilbert said the upper story apartments, which is the key to the rehabilitation efforts due to the federal funds being earmarked from flood relief funds, are another great thing that’s going on in the Main Street District.

“We do have a lot of really nice apartments down here. Right now we have at least two that are available, if not more. If I know about them, they are usually posted on our Facebook and then I can get interested people connected with the business owners.”

Gilbert said anyone with potential business ideas should reach out her to help clear up their ideas and get options for help getting started.

“One of the first things they should do is call us because we may have access to resources they haven’t thought of,” she said. “Small Business Development Center can help with business plans, figuring out financing and stuff like that. I have access through Main Street Iowa that can help as well. The city has loans available as well as tax credits that can be applied for if you own the building.”

She said another good starting place is the Chamber or Main Street Facebook pages and websites.

“My overall focus now is filling the empty spaces we have. Quite a few on 800, 900 and 700 blocks of Avenue G. 600 block is ok. That’s my first go-to thing and that’s what I’ve been working on since the beginning of the year.

Christy Kelly, owner of Bunque to Gens, said she’s excited now for what may be happening.

“I think it’s great future-wise,” she said. “It’s going to be more business for everybody, right?”

But she said the current structure won’t change her business plans or hours, but she left the option open for the future.

“But who’s to say what the future holds with everything just being new,” Kelly said.

Historic places

The old Lee County Bank building is slated to have renovations completed this summer. Fort Madison leaders are finalizing paperwork to be the responsible party for federal funding that will be used by Barker Financial of Iowa City to renovate the building for residential and commercial use.

Pen City Current will not publish its digital e-Edition on Easter Sunday, April 16 & Monday, April 17 in order to enjoy the holiday with our families.

However, any breaking news will continue to be posted to our website at pencitycurrent.com.

We wish you & yours a wonderful Easter.

Pen City current

You won’t hear a PEEP out of us this Easter

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PUBLIC NOTICE
ORDINANCE NO. D-042
AN ORDINANCE VACATING 15TH PLACE AND 16TH, 17TH AND 19TH STREETS SOUTH OF AVENUE P

Be it enacted by the City Council of the City of Fort Madison, Iowa:

SECTION 1. The City Council of the City of Fort Madison does hereby vacate 15th Place and 16th, 17th and 19th Streets south of Avenue P in the City of Fort Madison, being more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the northeast corner of Block 33 in said subdivision; then Easterly 66 feet to the Northwest corner of Block 33 in said subdivision; then Easterly 66 feet to the line of Avenue "P" (formerly known as Potowenok St.) to the South line of said South West Addition; being more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the Northeast corner of Block 31 in said subdivision; then Easterly 66 feet to the Northwest corner of Block 30 in said subdivision; thence Easterly 72.5 feet to the Southeast corner of Block 30; thence Southwesterly 72.5 feet to the Southeast corner of Block 31; thence Northerly to the point of beginning.

5th Place (formerly known as Knapp Street): From the South right-of-way line of Avenue "P" (formerly known as Potowenok St.) to the South line of said South West Addition; being more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the Northeast corner of Block 31 in said subdivision; then Easterly 66 feet to the Northwest corner of Block 30 in said subdivision; thence Easterly 72.5 feet to the Southeast corner of Block 30; thence Southwesterly 72.5 feet to the Southeast corner of Block 31; thence Northerly to the point of beginning.

SECTION 2. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed.

SECTION 3. If any section, provision, or part of this ordinance shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of this ordinance as a whole or any section, provision, or part thereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

Passed and Approved by the City Council at this 4th day of April, 2017.

Bradley A. Randolph,
Mayor

Steffensmeier Welding & Mfg., Inc.

Laser Operator Needed

Responsibilities to be included but are not limited to the following:

• Create Nest programs based on customers Purchase Orders and drawings.
• Revise programs to eliminate errors, and retest programs to check that problems have been solved.
• Analyze job orders, drawings, specifications, and design data to calculate dimensions, tool selection, machine speeds, and feed rates.
• Observe machines on trial runs or conduct computer simulations to ensure that programs and machinery will function properly and produce items that meet specifications.
• Modify existing programs to enhance efficiency.
• Sort shop orders into groups to maximize materials utilization and minimize machine setup time.
• Compare computer printouts with original part specifications to verify accuracy of instructions.
• Perform preventative maintenance or minor repairs on machines.
• General housekeeping on and around the laser and the laser room.

Required Skills:

• Computers and Electronics—Knowledge of computer hardware and software, including applications and programming.
• Mechanical—Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
• Mathematics—Knowledge of arithmetic, geometry, and their applications.
• Production and Processing—Knowledge of raw materials, production processes, quality control, costs, and other techniques for maximizing the effective manufacture and distribution of goods.
• English Language—Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
• Education and Training—Associates Degree or equivalent experience.
• Customer and Personal Service—Knowledge of principles and practices for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.

Hours: 2nd Shift M-F 3:00 p.m. to 12:00
Pay Rate: Depending on experience


How to apply:

Please send a Resume to: kevinm@steffweld.com or visit our website for an application http://www.steffweld.com

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New Construction Built in 2017

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• 4 Bedrooms w/ Master Suite
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• Upgraded Kitchen includes Walnut Counter Tops & Upper Glass Cabinetry

All Green Oak Homes come with warranties and low utility bills!

Call Jill at 319-470-2540 to view!

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New Construction Built in 2017

• Spacious Lot and a Half Yard
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• Granite Counter Tops
• 4 Bedrooms w/ Master Suite
• 3 Full Baths
• 9 ft. Finished Basement
• Modern Open Floor Plan
• New Family Friendly Neighborhood
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• Upgraded Kitchen with Upper Glass Cabinetry

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http://www.greenoakdevelopment-ia.com/
Great River Regional Waste Authority’s
Earth Day Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event
Saturday April 22nd, 2017 ~ 9:00am to 12:00pm
Located in Central Park
Fort Madison Residents Only, No Businesses Please

Great River Regional Waste Authority will be accepting the following Household Hazardous Waste items during the Annual Community Clean Up Event. We encourage you to call ahead and make an appointment for the collection.

- Fertilizers, Herbicides, Insecticides, Pesticides
- Oil Based Paints, Paint Thinners & Solvents
- Household & Auto Cleaning Products
- Car Batteries, Motor Oil, Antifreeze
- Car Batteries and Rechargeable Batteries
- Swimming Pool Chemicals
- Propane Tanks
- AND MORE!

*No Latex Paints Please

Call 319-372-6140 to schedule your appointed time or to check to see if your items qualify for this event.

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