FMCSD, teachers union exchange offers

FMEA wants 3% plus step, District wants step

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - After a very quick meeting Wednesday afternoon, negotiations were underway between the Fort Madison School District and the Fort Madison Education Association.

After reading a brief statement, FMEA Chief Negotiator Angie Rothlauf, a teacher at Lincoln, told the board and about 65 people in attendance, the association is looking for a five-year contract with a 3% yearly increase. She also requested that the district retain bargaining rights, where applicable, as a process despite a change in Iowa law that pulled several articles from collective bargaining laws.

“We believe everyone in attendance sees the value of providing the highest level of instruction to the students of this community in an environment conducive to successful learning,” Rothlauf said.

While competitive salaries and benefits are essential, there are other also other critical factors that impact a district’s ability to keep educators. With that in mind, we ask the district to consider all aspects of our initial proposal that was prepared with that concept in mind. We are including all provisions in our current contract as part of the initial proposal. We realize that this includes some items that are excluded from formal bargaining. We are doing so to emphasize the fact that most of these items are critical to all employees,” Rothlauf outlined that the association was seeking a contract duration of five years with a proposed increase of 3% for each of the contract years in addition to earned steps.

Emily Ellington, the district’s lawyer, spoke to the board regarding the proposal that was prepared with that concept in mind. We are including all provisions in our current contract as part of the initial proposal. We realize that this includes some items that are excluded from formal bargaining. We are doing so to emphasize the fact that most of these items are critical to all employees. The Kensington

Employee injured at IFC facility Saturday

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

WEVER - An employee working at the Iowa Fertilizer Plant in Wever was seriously injured early Saturday morning.

According to plant spokesman Jesse Harris, the employee suffered serious, but not life-threatening injuries at about 4:30 a.m. Saturday morning. The employee was transported immediately to Great River Medical Center in Burlington and then moved to an Iowa City hospital for further treatment.

The fertilizer plant tested its alarms on Friday morning. In a Monday interview, Harris indicated that the alarms that day were part of the start up and testing processes and did not indicate an incident took place at that time.

“I did check with the plant and there were no incidents reported Friday morning, but there were alarm tests,” Harris had said in the Monday article.

Today, Harris said he didn’t want to create any confusion but had checked for earlier dates and not the weekend and with testing going on Friday, those were the alarms and testing he had checked on.

Harris said he thought the questions from the Pen City Current were pertaining to earlier in the week.

“I don’t want to create any confusion out there. This was a Saturday incident and we were testing our alarm systems on Friday at 10 a.m. Our thoughts and prayers are with the employee and the employee’s family,” he said. “Safety is the foundation of our operations and we will conduct a full review of the incident to determine what, if any, changes are necessary to prevent a similar incident in the future.”

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on behalf of the district, and kept her discussion to contract language and what will be “delete, permissive” and “delete excluded” which included 13 articles of the current contract.

Included in those, in part, were insurance, compensation, leaves, and dues among others. The “delete, excluded” language reflects changes to Chapter 20 laws that were implemented this year. Rothlauf said it was the association’s hope that all language, that is permissive language under the new law, would be retained in the contract.

The district also proposed that “each eligible employee’s base wages increase the equivalent of one step, as reflected in the salary schedule from the 2016 to 2017 contract”. A review of the current step increases in that contract showed the percent rates range from 1.08% for newest teachers to 1.48% for the most tenured teacher.

“To the extent that any step movement includes any Teacher Salary Supplement payment, the board identifies such supplemental payment as an excluded topic of bargaining” the offer indicated.

After the initial proposals were exchanged, the meeting was closed to the public.

“We hope we can work together to make it equitable for both sides,” Rothlauf said to contract language in contract.

“Contract - Continued from Page 1We hope we can make it equitable for both sides.”

- Susan Johnson, Lincoln Elementary teacher

said Lincoln Elementary teacher Susan Johnson after the meeting.

Mike Culbertson, Lee County Bank President, is pictured here presenting the check for $510 to Sandy Brown of PAW to help with septic issues at the no-kill animal shelter. The funds were raised as part of a bake sale held at the bank Monday.

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**OBITUARIES**

**EMILY JACOBSEMEIR**

Emily Jacobsemeir, 80, of Davenport, IA and formerly of Ft. Madison passed away on Tuesday, April 11, 2017 at 5:11 AM at the Clarissa C. Cook Hospice House in Bettendorf, IA.

She was born on November 2, 1936 in Ft. Madison to Manuel and Sara Pabon Cangas. Emily married Edward Kane in October of 1980 and he passed away in January of 1991. She then married Wendell Jacobsemeir in September 1, 2001 in Kedzie, IA. She was a member of Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church in Davenport and a former member of Sacred Heart Church in Ft. Madison. She enjoyed gardening, music, dancing, singing and bowling.

She is survived by her husband, Wendell Jacobsemeir of Davenport; a sister, Nettie Hernandez of Ft. Madison; a brother, Leonard Cangas of Des Moines; five step children Theresa Matlick of Parker, CO, Lisa Snodgrass of Quincy, IL, David (Stephanie) Jacobsemeir of Keokuk, Todd Jacobsemeir of Portland, OR and Sean (Theresa) Jacobsemeir of Davenport; nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and first husband. Emily asked for pardon of all whom she has injured and she forgives all who have injured her.

A memorial mass will be held on Monday, April 17, 2017 at 11 AM at Sacred Heart Church in Ft. Madison, the family will meet with friends from 10 AM until the time of the service at the church and burial will be in Sacred Heart Cemetery. Her wishes, cremation has been entrusted to King Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory.

A memorial has been established in her memory and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

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**For the Record**

**Fort Madison Police Department Report**

04/11/17 – 9:30 a.m. – Fort Madison police responded to a property damage accident at Chalk Ridge Road / Deive Drive. Driver was cited for disregarding a red light and lost control before crossing the center line and striking a shipping container.

A vehicle driven by Seth Thompson, 28, of West Des Moines, at the scene and was cited for a one-vehicle accident on Chalkridge Road. A driver vehicle by Seth Thomas Wright crossed the center line and lost control before striking a shipping container that was on the right side of the road. Wright was transported to Fort Madison Community Hospital for injuries sustained at the scene and was cited for not providing insurance. All persons in these listings are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

**Lee County Sheriff’s Department Report**

County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Vondelle Michelle Blue, 28, of West Des Moines, at the Polk County Jail, on a warrant for contempt – failure to pay court costs. She was jailed.

04/11/17 - 9:30 a.m. - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident on Chalk Ridge Road. A vehicle driven by Seth Thompson, 28, of West Des Moines, at the scene and was cited for a one-vehicle accident on Chalk Ridge Road. A vehicle driven by Seth Thomas Wright crossed the center line and lost control before striking a shipping container that was on the right side of the road. Wright was transported to Fort Madison Community Hospital for injuries sustained at the scene and was cited for not providing insurance. All persons in these listings are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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**The Pen City Current and www.pencitycurrent.com website are products of Market Street Publishing, LLC. The Pen City Current is published Sunday through Friday mornings.**
Local diner listed in USA Today sandwich poll

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - A national reader's choice contest currently shows a Fort Madison restaurant as one of the best loose meat sandwiches in the state of Iowa.

But that’s not good enough for owner Dave Taylor. He wants to be No. 1 and he’s asking for your help.

The USA Today is currently running a Reader’s Choice 2017 vote contest to find the best loose meat sandwich in Iowa and voters have until May 8 to choose their favorite.

“We’re asking for your help. We’re currently No. 2 in the poll and a place in Ottumwa is No. 1, but we think we’ve got a better sandwich.”

-Dave Taylor, owner 10th Street Station

The article in the national newspaper indicated the history of the local favorite was originally called a Tavern Sandwich in 1924 and then a “Maid-Rite” appeared in 1926, which is now a franchised regional brand.

“10th Street Station has been serving customers since 1929, and this Fort Madison favorite features several variations of the loose meat sandwich, including one with cheese and another with bacon and cheese,” the voting website reads.

Voting goes through May 8, with the winners being announced in the publication on May 12.

Taylor said he received an email on Thursday that the diner was in the running and was asked to send in some images for the publication and the picture showing in the voting page was taken locally and sent in.

“We were No. 3 but we have moved into No. 2. We’re asking everyone to vote one time a day every day until May 8.”

As of this morning, 16 Iowa restaurants were still in the running with the 10th Street Station in the 2nd spot. To vote click: http://www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-loose-meat-sandwich-in-iowa/10th-street-station-fort-madison/

Local News

10th Street Station wants your vote for best sandwich

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.

2092 303rd Avenue• Fort Madison, IA (319) 372-6140
VISIT US ONLINE:
www.facebook.com/grrwa
www.grrwa.com
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.
- Perform preventative maintenance or minor repairs on machines.
- General housekeeping on and around the laser and the laser room.
- 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.
- 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 pro-
  gramming.
- 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—Associate Degree or equivalent experience.
- Customer and Personal Service—Knowledge of principles and processes 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.

Company Benefit Package: Health, Vision, Life and Dental Insurance, Long Term and Short Term Disability, 401K, Profit
Sharing, Flexible Spending Account, Paid Holidays, and Company paid Uniforms.

How to apply:

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

Contact Information: Kevin Mehaffy, 1311 Pilot Grove Road, Pilot Grove, Iowa, 52648, 319-469-3961

Application Deadline: April 28th, 2016
Open House
Thursday, April 13 • 4:30-6pm
225 Avenue E
Hosted by Linda Reding

Beautiful 4 bedroom home with large rooms, recently redecorated 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

REDUCED
4 BR • 1.75 BA • 3 car garage • 2,052 sq. ft. 8,700 sq. ft. lot

410 Avenue G, Fort Madison, IA
319-372-1919

http://www.greenoakdevelopment-ia.com/

NEW CONSTRUCTION
26 Green Oak Court, Fort Madison Iowa
New Construction Built in 2017
• Spacious Lot and a Half Yard
• 3 Car Garage
• Fire Place
• Granite Counter Tops
• 4 Bedrooms w/ Master Suite
• 3 Full Baths
• 9 ft. Finished Basement
• Modern Open Floor Plan
• Covered Rear Porch
• New Family Friendly Neighborhood
• Great Central Location
• 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!

http://www.greenoakdevelopment-ia.com/

IN WEST POINT
• New Construction completed in 2017
• 3 Year Tax Abatement = $7,500 Savings!
• 3 Car Garage
• 4 Bedrooms w/ Master Suite
• 3 Full Baths
• 9 ft. Finished Basement
• Spacious Yard
• New Family Friendly Neighborhood
• Upgraded Kitchen includes Walnut Counter Tops & Upper Glass Cabinetry

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

Contact Jill at 319-470-2540 to view!

http://www.greenoakdevelopment-ia.com/
A time for new beginnings

When that includes a new home for you, let Hope help!

There are hundreds of great listings in the area and we can show all of them to you.

Give us a call today or click here to search them!

3684 Argyle Road, Keokuk
Listing #20164982 • $191,500

4BR • 2BA • 2 car garage
1,260 sq. ft. • 4.59 acres
Custom Designed, Energy Efficient home with an open floor plan, cathedral ceilings, on a hard surface road. Includes large deck extends the entire back length of the house, master bedroom that opens up to the back deck, jack and jill master bath and second bedroom. The property also includes an oversized 2 car garage with a heated workshop attached.

3098 County Road 103
Listing #20164991 • $129,900

4BR • 2BA • 2 car garage
1,404 sq. ft. • 1.42 acres
Upgrades, improvements, updates...call it what you like, this home has had MANY in the last 2 plus years. This seller has completely refurbished the hill to the north of the home with new landscaping finishes. This is a must see property!!! It has enough room for your family and then some!!!

3098 County Road 103
Listing #20164991 • $129,900

3BR • 1BA • 2 car garage
1,488 sq. ft. • 16,247 sq. ft. lot
Has been owned by this seller since 1960!!! Large eat-in kitchen with newly tiled floor includes stove, microwave, washer and dryer, main floor laundry (in bedroom), formal dining room with built-in hutch, and spacious living room. The house sits on a HUGE lot and has a nice 2 car garage in back. Home has Gas Heat and central air with maintenance-free siding on house and garage.

1703 Avenue L
Listing #20165151 • $55,900

4911 Bluff Road
Listing #20164861 • $157,500

3BR • 1.75BA • 2 car garage
1,772 sq. ft. • 0.57 acres
Great family home with LOTS OF NEW! New kitchen, bathroom, windows, most flooring, wrap around deck, ceiling fans, light fixtures, furnace and central air! Beautiful neutral decor and window treatments make this a must see! All this and a 2 car heated garage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listing #20164148 • $72,500</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3BR • 2BA • 1 car garage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>928 sq. ft. • 1,087 sq. ft. lot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very nice maintenancefree 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 including laundry area. Also find extra parking, garage and carport area on the paved alley.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Listing #20162159 • $164,000</th>
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<tr>
<td>5BR • 1.75BA • 1 car garage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,904 sq. ft. • 1,903 sq. ft. lot</td>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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<th>Listing #20164622 • $88,000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 BR • 2 BA • 2 car garage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,168 sq. ft. • 0.54 acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality and beauty! Many updates and upgrades including a new concrete patio/carport with surround sound and mood lighting, new kitchen, bath and lighting throughout. This is an AMAZING house that you MUST see to appreciate!!!</td>
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<tr>
<th>Listing #20162346 • $86,950</th>
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<tr>
<td>5BR • 3BA</td>
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<tr>
<td>3,119 sq. ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14,500 sq. ft. lot</td>
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<tr>
<td>From the period wrought iron fencing to the amazing stained oak staircase...from the impresive 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!!!</td>
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<td>3 BR • 2 BA • 1 car garage</td>
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<tr>
<td>2,260 sq. ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6,784 sq. ft. lot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lots of new! Semi open floor plan, new flooring, great open basement family space, and many updates including heat/air units, kitchen back splash, counters and more! Fenced in back yard with stamped concrete patio and awning. Call today to see this great home in a quiet neighborhood.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Listing #20164544 • $139,900</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 BR • 3 BA</td>
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<tr>
<td>2,754 sq. ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3,550 sq. ft. lot</td>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2BR • 1BA • 2 car garage</td>
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<tr>
<td>930 sq. ft. • 7,280 sq. ft. lot</td>
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<td>This 2 bedroom home in Montrose has been a rental property and sells as is. Priced way below assessed value to sell quickly!</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,168 sq. ft. • 0.54 acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>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 mechanicals and a newer roof, 2 fireplaces and lots of storage!! Don’t miss out on this beauty.</td>
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<td>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!!</td>
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<th>Listing #20162543 • $53,000</th>
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<td>2BR • 1BA • 1 car garage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,224 sq. ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7,250 sq. ft. lot</td>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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2BR • 1BA
1,144 sq. ft.
3,625 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

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

2BR • 1.75BA • 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 • 1 BA • 1 car garage
528 sq. ft. • 5,600 sq. ft. lot
Super deal on this cream puff home, offering 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, new roof, newer windows, siding and REALLY nice garage!
Listing #20164597 • $29,900

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 redecorated 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

Let Hope help you find your next home!

3 BR • 2.50 BA
2 car garage • 1,194 sq. ft.
10,400 sq. ft. lot
Great family home is move-in ready. Nice-sized kitchen with all appliances, dining area, and nice living room all on the upper level. Completely re-modeled family room with a wood burning fireplace on lower level. Many updates include newer flooring, roof and HVAC system.
Listing #20164531 $114,900

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

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

SOLD

REDUCED

PENDING

SOLD

REduced

Send Hope an Email: hope@seia.rapmls.com
(319) 372-4040 • 903 Avenue G • Fort Madison • www.seia.rapmls.com
Sand man
Above, FMHS senior Bill Young blasts out of the sand on Hole #3 Tuesday afternoon as area boys golfers competed in the Lee County Invitational at Sheaffer Memorial Golf Course. At right, HTC’s Collin Thornton lines up a putt on the same hole.

Lady Hounds take racquet to Keokuk
BY PCC STAFF
KEOKUK - The Fort Madison girls tennis team took seven of nine games from host Keokuk Tuesday night.
The Lady Hounds won No. 2 through No. 6 in singles matches highlighted by three 8-1 wins at Nos. 3, 5, and 6.
At No. 3 Hope Gray downed Abby Vaughn. At No. 5 Charissa Smith downed the Chief’s Riley James, and Lanie Kuntz downed Lydia Davidson at No. 6 all by 8-1 scores.

Kearstyn Johnson downed Kali Redd 8-4 at No. 2 and Larissa Ferrill downed Hailey Swan 8-4 to round out the Hounds wins in singles competition.
Katie Larson fell to Jordon Thompson 4-8 at No. 1 singles.
"Thompson is tough competition, but Katie hung right there with her and played very competitively," said Head Coach Amy Doherty.
In doubles competition, Larson and Gray fell 5-8 to Thompson and Rudd.
But Johnson and Ferrill won 8-3 over Vaughn and Swan. Smith and Kuntz also won 8-3 over James and Davidson.
"It was a great job by the girls tonight," said head coach Amy Doherty. The match score of No. 2 doubles doesn’t do justice for how close those games were."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LCHD board member outlines need for new building
Dear Editor:
As a member of the Lee County Board of Health, I am writing about the need for a new Lee County Health Department building and location. For 20+ years the health department has demonstrated a need to move from its current location to a more practical and accessible building for the public and its employees.
The current LCHD location at 2218 Ave H is a rented property. Although the owner of the property has been a great landlord and community partner to LCHD, the need for a county-owned building for LCHD is realistic and greatly needed. This is due to two primary reasons:
1. The projected costs of renting and completing building repairs and maintenance for an old building in the long term outweighs the costs of a new county-owned building on county owned property. The heating and cooling system needs updated, the electrical system is outdated and at its maximum capacity, and the elevator has been dismantled and is beyond repair. For those interested, LCHD’s finance administrator has available financial data to support the comparable cost projections of remaining at the current location vs. a new building for the next 20-25-year period.
2. The second reason is the size and available space of the current location. This space is no longer compatible with the number of services/programs LCHD offers and the number of employees it houses. In 1989 when LCHD moved into the current location, there were just 6 programs with 22 employees. Today there are 19 programs with 36 employees, 4 contracted staff, and office volunteers, all working in just 7,500 square feet. Some staff/volunteers are working in hallways and many program materials/supplies are stacked in boxes and/or stored in any space available. Available storage space is completely full at ground level and the overflow storage room on the 4th floor of the rented building requires four flights of steps to store and retrieve needed supplies by program staff.
As stated before, LCHD has been looking for a new location for several years. Over 20 sites have been looked at for possibilities by the building committee. Most of the buildings looked at were in similar size or condition which would cost as much as a new building between purchasing property, making needed renovations, and land acquisition.

The building committee and Board of Health have determined that the best scenario involves building a new health department on county owned property next to the Sheriff’s Office. This would be centrally located and handicapped accessible.
On behalf of the Board of Health, I am hoping the public understands the need for this new building and votes YES on May 2, 2017. If you would like to tour the new Lee County Health Department building and location. For 20+ years the health department has demonstrated a need to move from its current location to a more practical and accessible building for the public and its employees.

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Paula Spiekermeier