City won’t land Viking Cruise Lines port of call

Local officials had waning hopes of a deal

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - According to information from Fort Madison Mayor Brad Randolph, Viking Cruise lines has made a decision to halt discussions to build ships and offer tours in the United States. Randolph said he received information from Viking Cruise Lines on Tuesday, which he said was disappointing news for Fort Madison.

"While the news is unfortunate, moving forward, the City, Fort Madison Partners, and Fort Madison Economic Development will consider other options for a best use of the riverfront and focus the monies set aside for another project or possibility," Randolph wrote in a text Wednesday evening.

"The fact that Viking considered Fort Madison for a port of call, means that our community has a lot to offer, and we need to pursue all opportunities to take advantage of that fact." Randolph also included the following excerpt from the Viking communication.

"Viking has terminated current discussions to build vessels in a US shipyard for Mississippi River and U.S. Local officials had waning hopes of a deal RANDOLPH

These ‘Hounds move in P.A.C.K.s

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - This isn't your grandfather's junior high. This isn't even your mother's or your older brother's middle school.

An idea that started churning almost a decade ago, coupled with new innovative ways of reaching students has resulted in a 90-minute block at the Fort Madison Middle School called P.A.C.K.

It's an acronym that stands for Proud, Authentic, Courageous and Kind and if there were any confusion among the students at the school as to the meaning of the program, it's on display, big and proud on a 90-foot banner right in the cafeteria on the main floor of the building. Emblazoned in FMMS crimson and black, the banner shows the words, but also the traits of each word on the banner.

It hovers over the 4th-8th grade students every time they pass through the common area. But they aren't always just passing through for lunch or moving from one class to

See FMMS, page 3
Fort Madison students donated 441 jars of peanut butter to the Fort Madison Food Pantry on Monday. The donation will be used as part of the pantry’s annual Christmas basket giveaway that takes place on Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon at the Pavilion in Riverview Park.

Coastal cruising. As the details were being refined, it became apparent the economics did not meet Viking’s goals.

Fort Madison city and economic officials had reserved hope that Viking Cruise lines would consider Fort Madison for a stopping point and that venture could help spur development of the city’s riverfront property.

Councilman Rusty Andrews said he wasn’t surprised by the bad news.

“While it is unfortunate, not just for Fort Madison, but also for many Mississippi River communities to hear of their choice not to proceed with U.S. cruises, I am not surprised,” Andrews said.

“I hope to see Fort Madison capitalize on the asset they have and continue with riverfront improvements. For not only possible new endeavors, but also for those already using our riverfront.”

City will keep looking for ways to capitalize on riverfront asset
Dents and staff has been to say that the response to Brent Zirkel, said the pro-
oration of the FMMS staff. "Kids are coming to us now with very different backgrounds. When I grew up you came home from school, you go out and play, and parents say come home when the streetlights come on. Back then we were playing with 14 or 15 other kids and you learned your social skills that way. Now we find kids are going home and getting on devices and not interacting with the family, sometimes not even having dinner with the family."

With Zirkel building the cornerstones of Foun-
dations, the Ascent class framework, and collaborat-
ing with students to define those programs, Zirkel said the staff wanted to try to continue to expand upon those programs while incorpo-
rating the digital world. He said he woke up on a Saturday morning with an idea on how to incorpo-
rate all the different pieces at a starting point for a new program.

"Foundations is gen-
erally taught to 6th-8th graders but we're hoping to get him down to the 4th and 5th graders and possibly add someone else to work with the older kids. You couldn't ask for a better personality to work with these kids then Brian Mendez. I wish we had three of him."

He took the outline to Dirth and the two brought in Stephanie Dobson, the school's guidance counselor and Melissa Helt, the FMMS social worker and other staff to start working on what a possible schedule could look like.

"They started working on the P.A.C.K acronym with students close to three years ago," Dobson said. "They started with those kids and asking what does that student look like as a community member and how should that person defined. The pieces of the architecture had been being built by Mr. Dirth, students and staff, but not brought togeth-
er. It was probably the precursor - the beginning idea that a lot of kids walk in our doors where school is not the first thing on their minds. We wanted to make it a safe place because there is a lot of social and emotional growth that takes place at this age - so that was the drive. The FMMS team came up with the idea of pulling all these together."

Zirkel was quick to say that the idea came to him in a moment of clarity, but from there collaborating with the other staff and administration is what made it work.

"When we say we're building it, it's not just me or the staff, it's me, the staff and the students that are building this pro-
gram," he said.

At 10:50 students report to either the lunchroom for lunch or go out-
side for recess or got a P.A.C.K. room they are assigned to and work on projects. One such project on Wednesday was the media center, where Stan Schmidt was oversee-
ing groups of students collaborating to produce a learning activity.

Students in all the classes were fully en-
gaged in either forming Kahoots of five questions dealing with the P.A.C.K. plus a digital citizenship question. Other students in other classrooms were engaged in group social activities or games in what is called "PACK Play. Others were planning a macaroni and cheese din-
er with students leading the recipe discussion and volunteering to bring in menu items.

But in only one case was a teacher in front of the class and that was because items were being writ-
en on the whiteboard. Students were grouped together in each section and were fully engaged in the work in front of them. Zirkel asked several eighth graders in the rooms what was their fa-
vorite part of the P.A.C.K. period and several an-
wers included working with other kids who they don't usually get to inter-
act with. One student said he like the games associat-
ed the period and another said he like the digital and technological projects that are associated with P.A.C.K.

Michelle Bentler, who spearheads the school Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (S.T.E.M.) program cap-
tured some grant money this year for training and supplies helped create the mini golf STEM project as well as a cardboard pinball machine for the 4th and 5th graders and other projects that bring the S.T.E.M. piece into the PACK period.

"It's been pretty seam-
less for it being a new idea," Helt said. "In the middle of last year we started talking about it and meeting as an admin-
istration team to try to pull it off at the beginning of the year. There were a handful of glitches but it's been pretty successful," she said.

Helt said the social and emotional programming it focuses on that social/ emotional piece. There's a lot of hands on activities and that helps expand those relationships. But during that part of the day it takes away the academic process and the students are working with other students and teachers that they don't usually inter-
act with and they get to see teachers as someone other than the person at the front of the room," she said.

The staff surveyed the student body and got 358 surveys back. Of those surveys, more than 88% of the students said they were happy with the P.A.C.K. program, and 81% said they were able to meet other students they otherwise would have not been able to meet. And a impressive 91% of the students said they wanted the program to continue.

When pushed to identify what parts of the P.A.C.K. program they en-
joyed most, 71% said the S.T.E.M. challenges, and 62% said they enjoyed the team building model of the program.

Zirkel said peer men-
tors were incorporated as part of the program to give students exposure to leadership skills. Twen-
ty-four students were engaged in either forming

---

**IOWA LOTTERY WINNING NUMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11/29 MID-DAY</th>
<th>11/29 MID-DAY</th>
<th>11/29 EVENING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 20 50 55 62</td>
<td>0 6 0 4</td>
<td>2 6 9 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Pen City Current encourages you to play responsibly.
**Digital citizenship a piece of program**

initially selected to be peer mentors in the P.A.C.K. classes and of the 24, 22 said they wanted to continue on in the program when given the option to get out after the first quarter. Dobson said the other two have since expressed interest in staying in the program as well.

The PACK mentor program was such a hit that the school expanded it to 36 students and Zirkel said if it continues to be successful he’d like to build that to 100 different mentors by the end of the year. “Research is showing that 45% of the jobs these students are preparing for don’t even exist yet and human knowledge doubles every 18 months,” he said. “So we are training them for the future that isn’t here yet in a futuristic model that we ourselves are learning about as we go. It’s pretty remarkable.”

Another piece of the program is digital citizenship and Zirkel said that is an important facet that was integrated after the start.

“We don’t have a digital citizenship curriculum in the district and we’re in the process of developing it. We thought if we wait we’re going to lose several years of students that aren’t going to get that curriculum so we’re moving on it now, but once you build it, it becomes obsolete because things are always changing. A website [www.bloodhoundpack.com](http://www.bloodhoundpack.com), was set up for that part of the program and is broken down into two categories, one for 4th and 5th grades and the other for 6th-8th grades. Again Zirkel pointed to the student involvement in creating the website and scenarios that are on there for the students to discuss so they can be exposed to certain social media norms before they actually encounter them in real life. One of the fictional scenarios was a 13 year old who had posted pictures of her in a swimming suit and asked for reactions and likes and another student tried to tell her it’s not a good idea. The website allows the students to see and discuss that scenario before actually being confronted with it. “We sent out a survey and then scrubbed the names for confidentiality and we post those scenarios on a ‘Post or Don’t Post’ page and create those discussions with the kids before they actually encounter it on their devices,” Zirkel said. “It’s one of the other pieces. Kids at this age don’t have that frontal lobe development yet and this is one of the tools we use to help with that development.”

He said the other nice thing is that teachers are benefitting from the program as well. “Teachers are working together like they never have before and during P.A.C.K. they are actually modeling some of the collaboration pieces for the students.”

He summarized the program as a progress through struggle, a slogan the team has demonstrated this year. There is struggle because of adversity, but you need adversity to grow. I’ve been amazed by our teaching staff this year. P.A.C.K. is something we’ve never done before. People can get bogged down in change, but our staff has jumped in and embraced it and we’re having some really great experiences with it.”
HELP WANTED

General Labor / Production

MPC Enterprises Inc. is now hiring for:

General Labor/Production
Full-Time

Experience preferred, but not required.

Benefit package includes health insurance, vacation, paid holidays, flex spending account, 401k retirement. Weekly pay.

If interested, call (319)986-2226 or email resumes to hotline@mpcent.com

Don’t Pay
Utilities

Don’t pay utilities - Check out this newly remodeled one bedroom apartment in downtown Fort Madison. It’s move in ready with new floors, new appliances, and a brand new state-of-the-art HVAC system. Call or text today (319)371.7753.

Follow Us
@pencitycurrent

Selling classic cars in a modern way

Up to 200 words
1 photo • 14 days FREE

Place your ad online
24/7

www.pencitycurrent.com

Email your ad to
classifieds@pencitycurrent.com

Call
(319)371.4125

Place your ad online 24/7

Weekly pay.

account, 401k retirement.

Benefit package includes

required.

Experience preferred, but not

MPC Enterprises Inc. is now

was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

ments.

sion on data and assess-

It was moved by DiPrima

and seconded by Young to

President Wondra welcomed

members of the audience in

III. Approve the agenda. It was moved by DiPrima and seconded by Young to

II. Recognition of guests. President Wondra welcomed

the agenda as pre-

sentated. The motion passed on a 6-0 voice vote.

IV. Study on Curriculum. Kim Harmon, Di-

rector Hotop was absent.

I. The meeting was called to order by President Won-

1930 Avenue M

Minutes of the December 4, 2017

Work Session

I. The meeting was called to order by President Won-

dra at 6:00 p.m. Directors Young, DiPrima, Hope, Ross and Troxel were present. Also present were Superin-

tendent Slater and Director of Curriculum and Student Services Kim Harmon. Direc-

tor Hotop was absent.

II. Recognition of guests. President Wondra welcomed

members of the audience in

attendance.

III. Approve the agenda. It was moved by DiPrima and seconded by Young to

approve the agenda as pre-

sented. The motion passed on a 6-0 voice vote.

IV. Study on Curriculum. Kim Harmon led a discus-

sion on data and assess-

ments.

V. Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

President

date

Secretary

Work Session

I. The meeting was called

the agenda as pre-

presented. The motion passed

on a 6-0 voice vote.

IV. Study on Curriculum.

Kim Harmon led a discus-

sion on data and assess-

ments.

V. Adjourn. The meeting

was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

President

date

Secretary

HELP WANTED

General Labor / Production

MPC Enterprises Inc. is now hiring for:

General Labor/Production
Full-Time

Experience preferred, but not required.

Benefit package includes health insurance, vacation, paid holidays, flex spending account, 401k retirement. Weekly pay.

If interested, call (319)986-2226 or email resumes to hotline@mpcent.com

Don’t Pay
Utilities

Don’t pay utilities - Check out this newly remodeled one bedroom apartment in downtown Fort Madison. It’s move in ready with new floors, new appliances, and a brand new state-of-the-art HVAC system. Call or text today (319)371.7753.

Follow Us
@pencitycurrent

Selling classic cars in a modern way

Up to 200 words
1 photo • 14 days FREE

Place your ad online
24/7

www.pencitycurrent.com

Email your ad to
classifieds@pencitycurrent.com

Call
(319)371.4125

Place your ad online 24/7

Weekly pay.

account, 401k retirement.

Benefit package includes

required.

Experience preferred, but not

MPC Enterprises Inc. is now

was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

ments.

sion on data and assess-

It was moved by DiPrima

and seconded by Young to

President Wondra welcomed

members of the audience in

III. Approve the agenda. It was moved by DiPrima and seconded by Young to

approve the agenda as pre-

presented. The motion passed on a 6-0 voice vote.

IV. Study on Curriculum. Kim Harmon, Di-

rector Hotop was absent.

I. The meeting was called to order by President Won-

dra at 6:00 p.m. Directors Young, DiPrima, Hope, Ross and Troxel were present. Also present were Superin-

tendent Slater and Director of Curriculum and Student Services Kim Harmon. Direc-

tor Hotop was absent.

II. Recognition of guests. President Wondra welcomed

members of the audience in

attendance.

III. Approve the agenda. It was moved by DiPrima and seconded by Young to

approve the agenda as pre-

sented. The motion passed on a 6-0 voice vote.

IV. Study on Curriculum. Kim Harmon led a discus-

sion on data and assess-

ments.

V. Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

President

date

Secretary

HELP WANTED

General Labor / Production

MPC Enterprises Inc. is now hiring for:

General Labor/Production
Full-Time

Experience preferred, but not required.

Benefit package includes health insurance, vacation, paid holidays, flex spending account, 401k retirement. Weekly pay.

If interested, call (319)986-2226 or email resumes to hotline@mpcent.com

First. Fresh. Local.
Your Community | 24/7 | Your Information

Equality of Employment
Great River Regional Waste Authority would like to remind you not to recycle Christmas Wrapping Paper as some of the materials used in the making of it are not recyclable. Please dispose of any wrapping materials in your regular trash cans. Any curbside bins containing these materials can potentially compromise an entire load.

Please properly dispose of all Electronics!
- Computer Towers & Modems
- Radios, Cell Phones
- CD & DVD Players, and VCRs
- Printers, Drop Cords

Fees apply to the following:
- All TVs, Monitors
- Laptops, Tablets, Consoles
- Projectors

DON’T THROW AWAY YOUR ELECTRONICS!!!
Help us prevent fires in the landfill!

**GRRWA will be closed Christmas Day & New Year’s Day**

### Celebrations

**KINZE MEHL**

FORT MADISON - Pen City Current congratulates Kate-lyn and Daniel Mehl of Donnellson on the birth of their daughter Kinze Mehl. Kinze was born on Nov. 18, 2017 at 8 a.m. at Fort Madison Community Hospital. Kinze is welcomed home by 3-year old Brycen.

Grandparents are Lori & Dave (deceased) Mehl - West Point and Roger and Denise Church of Keokuk. Great-Grandparents are George and Gayle Austin of Donnellson and Kathy Church of Keokuk.

### Current-Lee

**The original Ivy Bake Shoppe now taking orders for holiday treats**

Remember the original Ivy for your holiday desserts, sweet trays, catering, & gift certificates. Order yours by Tuesday, December 21st. Call us at Burlington Uptown Ivy (319)754.5924 or visit us at 514 Jefferson Street, downtown Burlington. Visit us online at www.ivybakeshoppe.com.

### Alaska Discovery Land & Cruise

**JULY 3-15, 2018**

Come along with Trailways Travel and celebrate the 4th of July in 2018 in a unique way! Isn’t it time you scratch something off the old bucket list? Alaska awaits you with it’s awe-inspiring vistas and amazing once-in-a-lifetime experiences!

#### TOUR INCLUDES:
- 25 Meals: 11 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 8 dinners
- Round-trip airfare from Quad-Cities Airport
- Air taxes and fees/surcharges (subject to increase until paid in full)
- Hotel Accommodations
- Hotel transfers
- Port Charges
- 7 Day Cruise

#### OPTIONAL ADD-ONS:
- City Tour of Vancouver
- Misty Fjords Flightseeing
- Skagway Tour & Summit Overlook
- Dog Sled & Helicopter Flight
- Jet Boat Whale Watching

#### PRICING (PER PERSON):
- Balcony Cabin Single: $11,174.00 pp
- Outside Cabin Single: $10,574.00 pp
- Inside Cabin Single: $8,574.00 pp
- Balcony Cabin Double: $6,874.00 pp
- Outside Cabin Double: $6,574.00 pp
- Inside Cabin Double: $5,574.00 pp

#### SPECIAL OFFER!
Limited time only! Book an outside cabin and receive a free upgrade to a balcony! Offer based on availability.

To view a full day-by-day detailed itinerary, please visit us online at www.TrailwaysTravel.com.