District Board collecting signatures for next bond effort

FORT MADISON - Volunteers are currently seeking signatures to have a referendum put on an April ballot to construct a new preK-3rd elementary school in Fort Madison.

The effort to pass the bond referendum has been voted down two times, most recently in June of 2017. The new referendum will be to authorize spending up to $30 million on the construction of the facility. That represents an increase over the last referendum to increase in construction costs on the project.

The district needs 166 signatures and according to Superintendent Erin Slater, more than 40 have already been collected. She said the question on the ballot will not change other than the price, and the scope of the project is remaining the same.

The Fort Madison Community School District Board of Directors hasn’t formally voted to put the issue back on the ballot, but that vote could be coming shortly.

Slater said she hopes to have enough signatures collected to present to the board at the Jan. 22 meeting, when the board would then be able to vote to have the referendum put on the ballot on April 3.

In June, district residents voted 56% in favor of building the new school, however state law requires a supermajority of 60% plus one vote for the measure to be approved.

Central Lee school district unveiled plans last week to ask voters for close to $10 million for construction jobs were created at $16/hour or more,” he said. “A few were under that, but the majority are more than $16. These are actual numbers from industry. When I reach out to our industry on these types of things I go in asking for full time employment numbers and then categorize them as, $15-$18/hour, $18-$19/hour, and then $19 and over. Those are numbers I can use for incentives and grants I can apply for through the state incentive programs.”

Gobble said because Lee County is categorized as a stressed county, therefore providing the area smaller wage thresholds to overcome for state incentive money, these figures help show the growth and potential of the area. But he’s

2017 Recaps

FM Partners tracked $68M in local investments

FORT MADISON - When looking solely at building and equipment investment in Fort Madison for 2017, city economic officials saw more than $68 million in investments for the year.

Fort Madison Partners Executive Director Tim Gobble said that figure is comparable from industries reporting in 2016. In addition to the capital investment, Gobble said 2017 also saw over 140 new jobs created in the city at $16/hour or higher.

“From 2017, over 140 new jobs were created at $16/hour or more,” he said. “A few were under that, but the majority are more than $16. These are actual numbers from industry. When I reach out to our industry on these types of things I go in asking for full time employment numbers and then categorize them as, $15-$18/hour, $18-$19/hour, and then $19 and over. Those are numbers I can use for incentives and grants I can apply for through the state incentive programs.”

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Task force makes FM felony meth bust

FORT MADISON - The Lee County Narcotics Task Force reports the arrest of a Keokuk, Iowa man on a felony drug charge.

Michael Melvin Sholl, 59, of 814 ½ Ave F, Fort Madison, Iowa was arrested on January 9th, 2018 at the Fort Madison Police Department on a felony drug charge. Sholl is charged with delivery of less than five grams of methamphetamine within 1000 feet of a park, a class C felony. If convicted, Sholl faces up to 15 years in a state correctional facility.

The arrest of Sholl stems from an investigation by the Lee County Narcotics Task Force into allegations that he was involved in the distribution of illegal drugs in the Lee County area.

The Lee County Attorney’s Office, Fort Madison Police Department and the Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement assisted the Lee County Narcotics Task Force in this investigation.

The defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

The Lee County Narcotics Task Force is funded in part by the U.S. Department of Justice and the funds administered by the Iowa Governor’s Office of Drug Control Policy.

Great River Regional Waste Authority is looking forward to continuing our efforts to manage our environmental footprint and help educate our communities on ways to help in 2018!

Things to remember in 2018 when recycling:

- Please do not place plastic bags in recycling bins.
- Rinse & Clean all food jars and cans before placing in recycling bins.
- Flatten boxes for better storage and volume reduction. *Empty all boxes before recycling.
- Place all recyclable products loose in bins.
- Do not recycle wrapping paper.

Properly dispose of all electronics and household hazardous waste. Click Here for more guidance!

For your convenience:
- Convenient Drop-Off Locations in 10 cities
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Lee County Health Department has a number of programs to help you in every stage of your life. To learn more about the following programs visit us online by clicking this ad.

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- Wellness
- Senior Health
- Environmental Health
- Child / Adolescent Health
- 1st Five
- HOPES
- 1-Smile Silver
- Immunizations
- Emergency Preparedness

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Keokuk Transfer Station: 111 Carbide Lane
Keokuk, IA
1-319-524-6175

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MARY MARIE COMPNELL

Mary Marie Compnell, 104 years, of West Point, Iowa died at 12:30 pm Friday, December 8, 2017 at the West Point Care Center, West Point. She was born March 2, 1913 at Parkersburg, West Virginia, a daughter of John and Lula (Phillips) Seaman and stepdaughter of Angele (Carapezza) Seaman. On August 7, 1931, she married Andrew Compnell at Oakland, Maryland.

Mary was a homemaker. She lived in West Virginia until moving to West Point in 1997. She enjoyed gardening, cooking and sewing. She was of the Protestant Faith.

She is survived by her daughter Mary Louise Arie, of West Point, Iowa; one brother: Woodrow Seameone, of Lewes, Delaware; one sister, Pauline Poffenberger, of Hagerstown, Maryland; four grandchildren: Diane (Jack) Powers, of Fort Madison, Iowa, Joyce (Mark) Whitcomb of West Des Moines, Iowa, Dale Arie of West Point, Iowa, and Denise (Jeff) Thomas of West Des Moines, Iowa; 10 great grandchildren: Deborah (Jonathan) Sands of Urbandale, Iowa, Meghan (Hailey) Powers-Ridal of Des Moines, Iowa, Brian Powers of Fort Madison, Iowa, Andrew (Shannon) Powers of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Iowa, Angeline Powers of Ames, Iowa, Eion Powers of Des Moines, Iowa, Samantha Whitcomb of Iowa City, Iowa, Alex Whitcomb of West Des Moines, Iowa, Jordan Thomas of West Des Moines, Iowa, and Dylan Thomas of Cedar Falls, Iowa; one great great grandson, Jackson Evans of Urbandale, Iowa. She was preceded in death by her parents, stepmother, husband, three brothers: Douglas, Richard, and John Seameone, three sisters: Sylvia Hershman, Virginia Sands of Urbandale, Iowa, and Dale Arie of West Point, Iowa, and Denise (Jeff) Thomas of West Des Moines, Iowa, Jordan Thomas of West Des Moines, Iowa, and Dylan Thomas of Cedar Falls, Iowa; one great great grandson, Jackson Evans of Urbandale, Iowa. She was preceded in death by her parents, stepmother, husband, three brothers: Douglas, Richard, and John Seameone, three sisters: Sylvia Hershman, Virginia Sands of Urbandale, Iowa, and Dale Arie of West Point, Iowa, and Denise (Jeff) Thomas of West Des Moines, Iowa, Jordan Thomas of West Des Moines, Iowa, and Dylan Thomas of Cedar Falls, Iowa; one great great grandson, Jackson Evans of Urbandale, Iowa. She was preceded in death by her parents, stepmother, husband, three brothers: Douglas, Richard, and John Seameone, three sisters: Sylvia Hershman, Virginia Sands of Urbandale, Iowa, and Dale Arie of West Point, Iowa, and Denise (Jeff) Thomas of West Des Moines, Iowa, Jordan Thomas of West Des Moines, Iowa, and Dylan Thomas of Cedar Falls, Iowa; one great great grandson, Jackson Evans of Urbandale, Iowa.

Her family will greet friends from 10:30 - 11:30 am Saturday, January 20, 2018 at the Barr-Holtkamp Funeral Home, West Point. Online condolences to the Compnell Family may be made at www.barrholtkampfuneralhome.com.
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Nikki Sugars, the Lee County deputy auditor and election's administrator, said it cost the district $6,088 to put on the election in June. But she said with satellite polling the cost would increase.

She said the district could petition the county to do satellite, but it’s at the County Auditor Denise Fraise’s discretion to allow the early polling.

“Before the election takes place, we can have voting at satellite locations,” Sugars said. “Everybody in the district would be allowed to vote there. We did a satellite at the the high school MPR during the previous school referendums.”

Slater said nothing has been finalized out of the committee yet, but they have discussed the idea of using satellite polling to make voting more convenient for district residents and to try and garner the other 4% needed to approve the measure.

“We have not finalized any plans. Our first job is to get signatures to present to the board and then we’ll talk about the specifics of plans,” she said. “But we have talked about using satellite polling for the convenience of voters.”

She said getting approval from the district on the third attempt will require re-engaging the community that came out and voted last time.

“We need to look at the turnout as far as demographics and those that didn’t vote and keep reaching out to them. We want to give them ample time and information and let them know where and when they can vote.”

The proposed new school would be located just east of the current Fort Madison Middle School just south of Bluff Road.
2017 - Continued from Page 1
quick to lay credit at the feet of those private companies and their leadership. “A lot of people can take ownership of these num-
ber towards job growth at a particular industry or the amount of money they invest, But we talk about it as a strength of our economy,” he said.
He said the numbers he’s reporting do not include all the industry and businesses in town so the numbers are probably higher than what he’s collected.
The other accomplishments of the year include work-
groups with like Lost Bear Coffee to get a branch opened up in Fort Madison and continuing to work with the Baxter Sports Complex on its programming.

SPORTS COMPLEX
“We’re looking at different ways to streamline their processes,” Gobble said. “We have a new director that is very eager to change some things around like work-
ing closely with the YMCA and identify opportunities to get more youth involved, or maybe help buy down some costs for youth sports and other different ways to enhance some of the programs that are already in place.”
Jeff Woodside took over operations of the sports complex this year after Wes Holtkamp left to pursue other professional goals. The complex is in its third year of operation on the city’s west side.

DOWNTOWN BUILDING RENOVATIONS
Gobble said he’s been staying in close contact with Kyle Galloway at Barker Financial, the owners of two buildings currently under renovation - the Lee County Bank building and the Cattermole Library. The group also owns the Sears building, but plans were put on hold with that building pending completion of the other two.
The Fort Madison Partners group are looking at possibly relocating to the first floor of the Cattermole when it is completed, Gobble said a snag with windows in the Lee County Bank building is holding up work temporarily.

“The windows in the Lee County Building are a hold up. The federal historical groups (SHPO) haven’t signed off on the design. And until that is signed off on and the upper residential areas are complete, their hands are tied on renovating the commercial space,” he said.

STRATEGIC PLAN
The Partners recently completed a three-year strate-
gic plan for the umbrella group including Fort Madison Economic Development Corporation, The Fort Mad-
ison Chamber of Commerce, and Fort Madison Main Street.
“What came out of our strategic plan is our relation-
ship with the city. We need to make sure that is stron-
ger and keep open lines of communication.”

BEAUTIFICATION
Gobble said he would like to see increased beautifica-
tion efforts in 2018. One way to help with this initiative is Partners is spear-heading a paint-a-thon in conjunc-
tion with Kemper’s True Value Rental and Commu-
nity Action of SE Iowa. The idea is to identify 3 or 4 homes our first year in the spring to paint. There will be guidelines and an application process with information coming out in February- it will be a city-wide program. He also said held like to open a line of communication with the city to look at the current code system on abandoned and dilapidated properties and see if there is an opportunity to enhance what is already in place.
“I would like to look at what other communities are doing and see if there is an opportunity out there to push some of these owners to get the projects complet-
ed.”

MARINA
Gobble said the most recent plan he has in the office dates back to 2008 and the marina is still a top priority with Partners along with looking at ways the feasibility study of improving the deck approaches of the swing-
span bridge may affect the marina. The feasibility study for the approaches (both Iowa and Illinois) would help identify how to reestablish truck traffic on the bridge to allow heavier truck traffic- but that's an entirely different animal and a costly one at that.
“Although those plans for the marina we have in the office are nice, they may be a bit aggressive. We could do some pieces of the plan, but there are some sections that we could possibly wait on. Let's fill up what we have empty and then grow from there and focus on get-
ting it to a point where it's something that people want to come to first,” Gobble said.
He said there have been individuals interested in development of the marina. “We need to make sure what we come to us is a viable approach- but the City will need to take the lead on it as it is owned by the City currently. One area we need to look at is the desig-
nation of the marina as being labeled a “safe harbor”, which causes other hurdles with that designation getting major improvements done with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.
“To jump back to the bridge study, this will be a City and State- both Iowa and Illinois- project but I know we’re going to try and take an active role, especially on the FMEDC side, we want to at least get the bridge study going and then see where it goes from there.”

CHAMBER
2018 is shaping up to be an identification and return on investment year for first year Chamber Director Savanna Collier.
“We just want to focus on the members themselves. Find out what they want - what they need and then take that information and see how we can improve on return of their investments,” Collier said.
She said the recent strategic planing showed there was an identity crisis and that people were showing confusion about what role the Chamber played aside from Partners as a whole.
“I want to, at some point, ask our members what they need from us and go from there. I don’t want to pull from thin air and hope it has some benefit for them. Because I'm new, it gives me a leg up and when I go into talk to them I can say, 'What kinds of things are you looking for from us. What hasn't happened in the past that you'd like to see.' I think the big thing is return on investment for our members. I think that's the biggest thing for us for the next year or so.”
She said she also wants to improve marketing for the Chamber’s networking groups such as Young Professionals and Business Women Connect.
“The programs we do have for those you can grow and get more involvement. Those types of networking programs will help with our identity crisis. The Cham-
berger has lost because people think we only do things with Main Street, but the Chamber encompasses every-
ting, industry, retail, finance, service etc. There are so many things that come out of this office itself, I see how it's hard to understand who does what,” Collier said.
Gobble said the group needs a simpler definition.
“We need to get to the point where people see us as Partners is just the house we live in. I'm economic development, she's Chamber, and she's Main Street. Not sure we'll ever get there, but that’s simplest way to look at it,” he said.

MAIN STREET
Main Street Director Cassie Gilbert said 2017 had been a great year for the downtown and listed several bullet points that point to the progress and success of the Fort Madison Main Street program. She said 18 businesses have either opened or com-
pleted a successful succession transition, the downtown upper story apartment work is coming along. She said that important is that there are very few apartments that come available each year and they are very popular.
“Our downtown building owners are also reinvesting in themselves. For exam-
ple, Score Properties, owned by Rebecca Bowker, recently installed solar panels to increase efficiency and lower electric bills for their commercial enterprise and their residen-
tial tenants,” Gilbert said.
Fort Madison Main Street received a grant from Mid-
WestOne bank for trimming downtown trees and the purchase of downtown items such as trash cans.
“Main Street also worked with the historic com-
mission to create vinyl banners to be put up in empty storefronts to help enhance the image of downtown and our connection to the past,” she said. “And our Pro-
motions Committee created a Self-Guided Tin Ceiling Tour, helping us to promote our historic building and the preservation that our downtown building owners are dedicated to.”

Patient sends thanks to hospital employee of the month

FMCH - Continued from Page 1
the hospital, but I want everyone to know that the real miracles began after I reached the hospital. The kindest act was the lady, who saw me walking in and went back inside to get a wheelchair to help me inside. Beyond that point I was just 20. They taught me the ropes and showed me how to be a good team player. I love how my day is never the same. We get to see all walks of life and rarely do we have a dull moment!"
Hall enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband and two young children when not working. She is also an avid photographer.