ISP holding more historic prison tours in April

BY PCC STAFF
FORT MADISON - Tickets are once again on sale for the public to tour the historic Iowa State Penitentiary. The next set of tours will take place on April 14th and 15th from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on each day. Tickets are only available on www.iowastatepen.com and are $15 per person. Children under 12 will be admitted with a donation of a non-perishable item for the Fort Madison Food Pantry in lieu of a ticket. Originally built in 1839, the "Fort", as it is referred to, became a cornerstone in Southeast Iowa. The prison is steeped in history and has a million stories to tell of lives who lived or worked behind its rich limestone walls.

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See PRISON, page 3

School district mulling $15.39 tax levy

Preliminary rate has to include .97 school bond increase

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR
FORT MADISON - Fort Madison school officials are close to setting the levy rate for the upcoming year, but the rate will include the cost of the new elementary building in the event that the referendum passes on April 3.

School district Sandy Elmore told Fort Madison School Board members Monday night she was pretty much finished with the property tax portion of the budget, but was still waiting for a bill that was in front of Gov. Kim Reynolds to be signed giving Iowa schools a 1% allowable growth which pushes state funding from the current year's figure of $6,664 per pupil up to $6,731.

That bill was signed into law Wednesday. Elmore told the board the new rate she will submit for the board to certify will be $15.39. That rate is the amount of tax per $1,000 of assessed valuation minus any rollbacks or exemptions on the property. That rate compares to the $14.45 levy set for 2017-2018. The increase in the rate is to account for the passage of the school bond referendum. The district has to have that amount included because the budget has to be voted on and certified prior to the April 3 referendum vote.

When passed, the referendum would trigger a $0.97 levy, again, per $1,000 assessed valuation for the next 20 years. According to district literature, that would equate to $2.98 per month for a homeowner with a property assessed at $75,000.

If the referendum fails, the levy can be lowered because the vote to spend the money would have been defeated by district residents.

According to Elmore, if the referendum were to fail, the district can adjust the bond portion of the levy off.

“You can always lower your levy after it's been certified and approved, but you cannot increase it.” Elmore said.

The district is facing a $305,000 shortfall in 2018 due to fluctuations in district enrollment and state guidelines on what is called a "budget guarantee". Due to calculations based on 2016-17 student enrollment, which was about 70 down from 2015-16, the district was able to capitalize last year on a budget guarantee that helped them recoup losses based on the state's per pupil funding.

See BUDGET, page 2

Don’t forget Social Media! Check us out on the following sites @penCityCurrent:

INSIDE:
Mayhem on Mississippi registration is now open.

See page 3

Scan the code to Subscribe today

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District had to make up $300,000 in budget

BUDGET - Continued from Page 1

pupil funding formula. The state has to use the previous year’s enrollment on budgeting because there is no formula to predict enrollment for the upcoming fiscal year.

To simplify that concept, when a district loses 70 students, they lose the $6,600 per student in aid from the state. In those scenarios, the state gives the district a budget guarantee to offset those losses. That budget guarantee is based on the previous year’s enrollment and this year the district went up two students, so they don’t qualify for the budget guarantee.

Last year the district received $14.7 million, but the calculation this year is based on 2,143 students at the new rate of $6,731 for a total of $14.42 million with no budget guarantee, resulting in a net loss of roughly $305,000.

“That’s a concept that’s hard for the public to recognize,” said board member Dianne Hope. “Even with the media trying, it’s always been hard to explain.”

Elmore also hinted that health care rates or premiums could be on the rise, but said those talks are very preliminary and nothing has been finalized with regards to premiums or deductibles. The district does have a cash option for employees who join their spouse’s health insurance plan.

The next regular school board meeting is set for March 19 at 6 p.m.

Mayhem registration now open

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON - Fort Madison Main Street hosts Mayhem on the Mississippi, a 5K obstacle course run on May 5th! The run will take place in Rodeo Park in Fort Madison. This run is far from typical! Runners will conquer an inflatable obstacle course, jump though tires, and slide to a finish among other great obstacles! Don’t worry these obstacles are meant to be fun rather than challenging, all are optional. All ages are welcome we have registrants ranging from 7 to 64 years old. The race begins at 10 a.m.

The first 25 registered runners will receive a ticket into Faeth’s Main Street BBQ, which will be held on May 12th in downtown Fort Madison. This great event allows patrons to try different barbeque from a variety of vendors! Thank you to our Jogger Sponsors, Connection Bank, Casebine Credit Union, Group Benefit Partners, Pilot Grove Savings Bank, and Edward Jones: Larry Kelch.

Registration before April 20th for the race is $20 and includes a t-shirt and refreshments. After April 20th, the registration fee increases to $25 and does not guarantee a t-shirt. Participants can also register the day of the race. To register for the race online visit getmeregistered.com and search for Mayhem on the Mississippi.

Paper forms can also be picked up at Fort Madison YMCA, Anytime Fitness, Rev Fitness, Running Wild in Burlington, and The Fort Madison Partners Office, 614 9th Street in Fort Madison. Same day registration will be from 8:30 – 9:30 AM, Saturday, May 5th at the Old Lions Shelter House at Rodeo Park.

For questions, please contact Fort Madison Main Street at 319-372-5471 or by email at cgilbert@fortmadison.com.

Information can also be found on Facebook at “Fort Madison Main Street” or on the Fort Madison Partners’ website, www.fortmadison.com.

OFP rolls out comedian Saturday

THEATER - Continued from Page 1

request to come back to this type of production.”

The Old Fort Players are in their 37th year of providing live theater to the North Lee County area. We are drawing on that past history to bring a couple of old favorites to the stage this year according to director Michelle Slater.

Tickets for Saturday’s comedy presentation featuring Chicago comedian Jeremy Nunes, who will perform at 7:30 at the OFP. Nunes brings a Midwest “Front porch” comedy that is suitable for most ages.

Anyone desiring more information should contact the theater at 372-9559 or at oldfortplayers@hotmail.com.
For the Record/Lottery Numbers

Fort Madison Police Report
03/06/18 - 11:16 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 3000 block of Avenue P.
03/06/18 - 9:53 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the Fort Madison area.
03/06/18 - 10:41 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 5600 block of Avenue O.
03/06/18 - 12:12 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 1900 block of Avenue H.
03/16/18 - 3:25 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft on Storms Court.

Lee County Sheriff’s Report
03/06/18 - 9:05 a.m. - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Tyler Keith Jennings, 30, of Montrose at the sheriff’s office on a warrant for failure to appear. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
03/16/18 - 3:41 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Andrew Walter Heins, 25, of Donnellson in the 5900 block of Bluff Road in Fort Madison on a charge of OWI-2nd offense, carrying a weapon while intoxicated. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
03/07/18 - 8:06 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a person-al injury accident in the 2400 block of Avenue L.
03/07/18 - 8:06 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2500 block of Avenue L.
03/07/18 - 8:18 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a shoplifting in the 400 block of Avenue H.

IOWA LOTTERY WINNING NUMBERS

Game | Draw Days | Sales Cutoff Time | Approx. Drawing Time
--- | --- | --- | ---
Lucky for Life® | Mon & Thu | 8:30 pm | 9:35 pm
Mega Millions® | Tues & Fri | 8:59 pm | 10:00 pm
Powerball® | Wed & Sat | 8:59 pm | 9:50 pm
Lotto America® | Wed & Sat | 8:59 pm | 10:00 pm
Pick 3 - Midday | Daily | Noon | 12:20 pm
Pick 3 - Evening | Daily | Noon | 12:20 pm
Pick 4 - Midday | Daily | 9:40 pm | 10:00 pm
Pick 4 - Evening | Daily | Noon | 12:20 pm

PRISON - Continued from Page 1

Proceeds going to state report for facility’s future use

The public is invited to walk the grounds at your own pace and visit with retired staff who will be located at various areas throughout the facility. Or if you choose, you can request a tour guide and be escorted through the facility. Each guest will get a detailed map that will provide you with history and assist you with identifying key areas. You must be 18 years or older or be accompanied by a parent or guardian to attend.

Tickets are only available online at www.iowastatepen.com. Souvenirs are available online and the weekend of the event. Proceeds from the tours and souvenirs go towards the funding of the Historic Structures Report necessary for any future planned use.

Got a news tip? Call Chuck (319)371.1670

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Fort Madison man nabbed on felony marijuana charge

BY PCC STAFF

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

Rion William Donlan, 35, of 1725 Avenue H, Fort Madison, Iowa was arrested on March 6th, 2018. Donlan is charged with possession with intent to deliver marijuana, a class D felony. If convicted, Donlan faces up to 5 years and in a state correctional facility.

The arrest of Donlan stems from an incident in which he was found to be in possession of items that support the charge.

The Lee County Attorney’s Office and the Fort Madison Police Department 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.

Partners support building new elementary school

KIDS Committee/Letter to the Editor:

Fort Madison Partner Affiliates: Fort Madison Area Chamber of Commerce; Main Street, Fort Madison Economic Development; and Fort Madison-South-east Iowa Regional Riverboat Commission, recognize the value that quality educational opportunities bring to our community and offer our support for the passing of the Fort Madison Community School District Bond Referendum.

Primarily, it is important to be able to offer our youth a strong educational foundation to compete in our global economy. We have a unique opportunity in Fort Madison to be able to offer choices when it comes to quality education and we use it as a selling point for the community every chance we get. This selling point will become even stronger with a new state of the art public elementary school to boast about as well as improvements happening with Holy Trinity elementary.

The proposed elementary school will have an everlasting impact on our children and future generations. It will take all of us, whether you are a parent, grandparent or just care about the future of our community, showing your support for a safe, accessible, 21st Century learning environment to make the new school become a reality. The proposed development not only offers our children the opportunity to attend a new facility but also provides new space for high school athletics. These new fields will offer improved access to someone that may not have been able to watch the programs before due to a physical disability. Then the freed up space, where the current fields are, gains us access to the consideration of development for a performing arts space/community center. That project would qualify us to apply for SAVE Funds (Secure an Advanced Vision for Education), state sales tax funds generated from the entire state, used for school infrastructure projects.

Technology, while only a portion of what makes a quality education, has the most focus. The ways of learning are changing and we have an opportunity to create a learning environment that incorporates technology and individualized teaching methods that set all of our children up for success. It is imperative we integrate students with disabilities properly into all classrooms, creating a sense of belonging while eliminating limitations that currently exist.

Safety is also a key factor in these building initiatives. As times change, what was adequate for one generation is no longer adequate now. It is our responsibility to ensure everyone at school feels safe-teachers, students and administrative staff. While basic security measures are in place, these older facilities present challenges when it comes to safety.

In summation, our support for the Fort Madison Community School District Bond Referendum addresses these key points: economic development and recruitment of professionals and businesses; investing in the future success of our youth; the recruitment of quality educators; and the safety of our children.

We hope citizens will vote in favor of the Fort Madison Community School District Bond Referendum, because when we all come together, we can do great things! Sincerely,

Tim Gobble
Executive Director, Fort Madison Partners
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Mayor Randolph opened the public hearing at 5:36 P.M. concerning the Fiscal Year 2018-19 Budget. There were no oral or written comments. On motion, Council closed the public hearing. On motion, Council approved Resolution No. 2018-20, adopting the Fiscal Year 2018-19 Budget and directing the appropriate filings be made as required by law.


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Available for St. Patty’s Day Dave’s Famous Corned Beef Brisket or Round!

FORT MADISON - Spring Vendor Show, Saturday, March 10th, 9am–1pm, Roling Hall, 2217 Ave I, Ft. Madison. Featuring 16 Vendors. Bake sale items will be available for sale from the Holy Family Parish BFF group. The event is being put on by Fort Madison service clubs including Fort Madison Kiwanis, Lions and Rotary clubs as well as the Fort Madison High School key club. Registration can be done at www.penccurrent.com/goto/crazy/

WEST POINT - HTC Bunny Hop Event – March 31st, 2018

Proceeds from the event will go to the West Point Library. Registration begins at 8:00a.m. The race begins at 9 a.m. Pre-registration before March 23rd is $20 & includes t-shirt. Registration on or after March 23rd is $25. Drinks and light snacks will be provided for participants. Medals will be awarded to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place finishers in each age group. Registration forms can be found here or www.holytrinityschools.org. Click here to download & print your registration form.

Pen City Current will list your event in this highly visible CURRENT-LEE section in increments of 25 words for $15. Non-profit organizations are eligible for the reduced rate of $10 per 25 words and $3 per photo. To place your listing, click here or call Lee at (319)371.4125.

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