Reynolds cheerleads Future Ready Iowa

Lee County contingent talks about the need for public/private partnerships

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

BURLINGTON - A vast group of players trying to tackle the troublesome state of Iowa’s skilled workforce gathered Tuesday for one of the state’s first summits to address the issue.

At the Comfort Inn in Burlington, officials from Iowa Works hosted a group of about 200 people from the arenas of economic development, industry, education, and politics to hear and share best practices in trying to address the 400 lb. gorilla in the room - how to fill intermediate skilled workforce shortfalls in southeast Iowa.

Gov. Kim Reynolds made a stop at the summit to give a pep talk to the crowd and said it was time to go to work.

Reynolds’ initiative Future Ready Iowa is a program aimed at getting 130,000 additional Iowa residents either to a college degree or post-secondary certificate by the year 2025. The program sets a goal of 70% of Iowa adults meeting the criteria.

“This is a perfect place to hold one of 18 summits across the state. We were gonna start with six, but the fact that we had community after community call and want to be a part of this, it speaks to, first of all, the need, the momentum, people are aware of it, and they want to figure out what they can do to make their communities vibrant as well.”

She said she was most proud of the fact that the entire legislation signed off on the Future Ready Iowa initiative during the last legislative session.

“This also relies on strong regional private/public relationships building on the legislation so we can meet the local challenges, but northwest Iowa might be different than what you need here in southeast Iowa.”

“Gov. Reynolds says state’s fiscal 2018 will end with surplus

DES MOINES — Gov. Kim Reynolds announced Tuesday the State of Iowa will end Fiscal Year 2018 with an estimated balance of $127.3 million in its general fund. That’s $95.6 million more than what the Revenue Estimating Conference predicted in March.

“We are striving to be fiscally responsible with your tax dollars, and I am proud to announce Iowa will end the fiscal year with a $127 million surplus,” Gov. Reynolds said. "Our economy is growing, incomes are rising and our state’s budget is a reflection of that. But I’m never satisfied. I’m going to continue to push for policies that grow our economy, invest in education and affordable health care and maintain Iowa’s status as the #1 state in the country.”

Holtkamps roll up 30 years in furnishings

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Dave and Sandy Holtkamp on some days think their 30 years in business has been a long journey. But in the next sentence looking at their son Bobby and his wife Jessica, they think, “Where has the time gone.”

Either way, it’s been 30 years... already.

On October 4, the family will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of Floors, Decor and More, now doing business under the leadership of Bobby and Jessica as Holtkamp’s Floors Decor & Furniture. The original company name was held for 28 years, until Bobby and Jessica brought furniture in the fold for three years and
Sure, it’s hot now. But the days are already getting shorter. Are you ready for the shoveling, the shivering and the social limitations of winter?… so now’s the time to plan ahead! For more information about this hot deal please call Victoria at (319) 372 4233, or send an email to: editor@pencitycurrent.com.

Pen City Current obituary policy

The Current runs obituaries at no charge to funeral homes and they run the day they are submitted in most cases. They are also available online at www.kinglynk.com.

OBITUARIES

ARTHUR JOHN MUERHOFF

Arthur John Muerhoff, 86, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away peacefully in his sleep at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, September 24, 2018 at his home. He was born on January 16, 1932 in Keokuk, IA to Frederick & Anna Menke Muerhoff.

He married Arletta Ruth Knipe on December 30, 1954 at St. Mary’s Church in Fort Madison, IA. He retired from the Sheaffer Pen Company and Brockman Ready Mix. He was a member of Sts. Mary & Joseph Church and enjoyed fishing, visiting with his buddies at his morning coffee club, his uncle’s horses when he was younger and watching sports, especially the Chicago Bulls, Chicago White Sox, Chicago Cubs and the Green Bay Packers. He and Ruth watched Michael Jordan play twice, once at The Mark in the Quad Cities and once at the United Center in Chicago. He was always the first one there to help his friends and family.


Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A celebration of life will be held from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 13, 2018 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory in Fort Madison. A memorial has been established for the Wounded Warrior Project. Online condolences to Art’s family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

WED 26 Sep

Clear Skies

High– 61.4º F | Low – 43.9º F

THU 27 Sep

Clear Skies

High– 67.2º F | Low – 54.3º F

FRI 28 Sep

Clear Skies

High– 72.4º F | Low – 63.1º F

SAT 29 Sep

Light Rain

High– 74.9º F | Low – 60.8º F

SUN 30 Sep

Moderate Rain

High– 59.9º F | Low – 56.3º F

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“Then 20 years ago from Ohio and wanted to work in the family business, Dave told his son he wouldn’t be allowed to come back to the top of the company. "You’re not going to come back as the boss, you’re going to go out and install. I think that was very good for Bobby because the installers now respect him because he knows what that work is.” Sandy said the business took off and has survived because people knew the Holtkamps and the Kempers to have strong business acumen and stood behind their work.

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“What were we thinking?" Sandy said.

Dave said the most difficult part of getting open was finding inventory. "The hardest part was figuring out how I was going to get people to supply us. If there was another store in town, it was difficult for them to say, "We’re going to go against the guy that’s buying from us already and sell to you. We actually started with just one carpet company, Mohawk, and then Armstrong strong vinyl and that was all we had."

He said they looked at going into a bigger market, but they didn’t have the money for it. "And I’m a momma’s girl," Sandy said, and the two decided to settle in Fort Madison. The two made appointments with just about every bank in town and most weren’t interested. "We pretty much went to every bank before we finally got one to go with us, and once they got behind us it was, ‘whatever you need because they didn’t want us to fail.’"

-Dave Holtkamp,
co-founder

Celebration kicks off with reception on Oct. 4

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Olive Branch Jiu Jitsu has moved downtown to 802 Avenue G. At right, founder Joe Lestina works with a couple of boys in the youth class on Friday evening. Below, the Fort Madison Chamber Ambassador Club paid a visit to the new studio that opened several weeks ago after several years at the Fort Madison YMCA.

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report
09/24/18 - 1:37 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of personal injury accident in the Fort Madison area. 09/24/18 - 5:48 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1700 block of Avenue H. 09/24/18 - 9:01 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a shoplifter in the 2600 block of Avenue L. 09/24/18 - 8:37 p.m. - Fort Madison Police cited Shata Ray Danielle Brewster, 39, of Fort Madison in the 4500 block of Avenue O, on a charge of driving under suspension. She was released upon citation. 09/25/18 - 1:24 a.m. - Fort Madison Police cited Brett Allen Michael Montgomery, 25, of Fort Madison in the 1100 block of Avenue G, on a warrant for contempt of court.

Lee County Sheriff’s Report
09/24/18 - 4:00 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Michael Adam Farnett, 59, of St. Paul, in the 2500 block of Hwy. 61 in Fort Madison, on charges of operation a vehicle while intoxicated, failure to maintain control and violating a one-way traffic design. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held. 09/24/18 - 4:11 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Leann Rosalyn Briscoe, 38, of Keokuk, at the sheriff’s office on a warrant for violation of probation. 09/24/18 - 8:22 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident on 150th Avenue south of Hwy.

16. A vehicle driven by Kim Than Duh, 38, of Des Moines lost control headed southbound and entered the west bound ditch and rolled. No injuries or citations were reported the scene. Those listed above are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report
09/21/18 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to one burn complaint and one false alarm 09/22/18 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to one medical call, and one unauthorized burn. 09/23/18 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to one burn complaint. 09/24/18 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to burn complaint, gas leak and medical call.

#HyperLocalSuperFresh
SUMMIT - Continued from Page 1

come together and align,” Reynolds said after her presentation. Future Idea really addresses all that with additional money to help people get two-year degrees tied to high demand jobs.

“We’re at 58.4% right now and when I talked to other governors across the nation, they are not anywhere close to that,” she said. “We’re starting at a pretty good point, but I think it’s about getting in front of them and that’s what the summits are about so that they’re aware of the opportunities that exist and that what pathway is like and that people are aware of the opportunities that she said. “We’re starting to get it and know the number of people that aren’t going to four year schools. So we got involved in the schools and helped develop curricula and those are the things we’ve been involved in.”

Huffman said the experience at Huffman has been a long, drawn out process, but he said when you get a leader involved in the right program, turn around can be quick.

“What we do is all custom. Our jobs are highly skilled, we don’t hire a lot of basic welders, but one of our biggest boundaries to growth is finding those additional people. We put on an additional last year, but we’re still in the process of finding that specialized skilled employee.”

Huffman said he sees it on a personal level where people with the four-year degrees are struggling to find a supervisory position and bringing two-year certificate programs with specialized skills is important to helping provide other career tracks for Iowans.

Reynolds said there needs to be more awareness of the programs being put together locally, regionally, and statewide. We just need to make people aware of it and talk about it more. That’s part of what Future Ready Iowa summits are about. Bringing awareness to these types of jobs and getting into high schools and we’re seeing some tremendous momentum there.”

She said there is a lot of momentum with welding, but there is also nursing, accounting, and other opportunities that she said were limitless in today’s economy.

She said she believes the goal of 2025 is attainable, not maybe a little ambitious.

“You set an ambitious goal. You shoot high and work your tail off to get it done. They thought we should get to 68 and we said 70.”

Kim Reynolds, Iowa Governor
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and we stood behind our products,” Sandy said. Dave said customer service has always been their top priority and that’s helped build the business, as well.

“Dave and Sandy and one salesperson, the company has grown to four full-time installers and three paid sales staff in addition to Dave and Sandy who still work at the business, and Bobby and Jessica running the show. The Holtkamps will be holding a Business After Hours from 4:30 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 4 with hot dogs and hamburgers and beverages. There will be some specials to kick off the 30th anniversary that will run from Oct. 4- Oct. 20.

Sandy said there will be some flooring specials up to 30% off and customers will be able to take advantage of a Buy-One, Get-One of equal or lesser value 50% off of furniture.

Bobby said a lot of the credit for the business goes to the sales and installation staff that have kept the company name solid. “We owe a lot of credit to the staff,” Bobby said. “We’ve been very fortunate with employees from installers to sales staff.”

Community is still a big part of the Holtkamp business model. “When we first started out, we had to pick and choose what we gave to. But we made it a point to be at all the events so people could see our face,” Sandy said.

Bobby said his grandparent would always give to community events and groups. “That’s been instilled in me forever - to give back to the community,” he said. “My grandparents, it may have been a $5 gift certificate or $100 certificate, but they tried to give whenever they could. I try to carry that with me,” he said.

Sandy said she and Dave were excited when Bobby and Jessica wanted to buy the business two years ago. “We were very excited when the two of them came to us and asked to buy us out. They are doing a great job and we couldn’t be more proud of what’s going on,” Bobby said he still relies on his parents for guidance. “I still ask questions. I think I might know the answer, but I still ask the question.”

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