Four decades is enough
Ernie Steffensmeier to retire as Lee County Engineer

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - He’s gone from a slide rule to a calculator to GPS...and now he’s going to retire.

Lee County Engineer Ernie Steffensmeier is stepping down from his post as the county’s top engineer after 42 years. Steffensmeier says he will miss the people the most and wanted to thank the current and past Lee County residents for taking the time to talk with him over the past four decades, and for allowing him to help them with issues and questions they may have had.

“I’d like to thank the people of Lee County because when they do call in with concerns they’ve been good at listening to what we had to say and what the crew was able to do to help them. Most people that stop in to see me are decent people and I’ve always appreciated that,” Steffensmeier said.

He said his retirement plans include some outdoor activities and awaiting his wife’s retirement.

“Shes about seven years younger than me, so I’ll be waiting on her retirement before we make any plans. But I love to be outdoors so Ill do some pond fishing and hunting and those kinds of things that I enjoy,” he said.

Currently the staff will be at three when the 65-year-old Steffensmeier leaves on Dec. 28th, but he said he thinks the county will replace those and get back to a staff of five. He said when he came on board in the late 70s they had a staff of seven.

“We needed extra people back then because it took two people to hold a steel tape when we were surveying and planning work,” he said. “Now you can do that work using GPS technology and it doesn’t take as many people.”

He said a couple years after he arrived, the staff was reduced to six and now they operate with a staff of five.

He’s also seen the budget for county engineering just about double since 1976 from $3 million to roughly $6 million. Steffensmeier said legislative changes have also resulted in more federal money being available for some of the work that the county and state used to pay for, especially for road safety and bridge work.

“When the legislature started collecting a gas tax, there was a portion that went to the state and some that went to the counties and a portion went to the cities, and there was a portion that went to roads between cities that were labeled Farm-to-Market roads that ran to rural areas and to elevators and barge terminals.”

In addition to minor staffing changes and budgetary changes, Steffensmeier said technology is something that has been consistently changing since he came back to Lee County.

After graduating from Fort Madison High School, Steffensmeier went where most students pursuing an engineering degree in Iowa went....

Iowa State University. After graduating in the spring of 1976, Steffensmeier went to work in Iowa County near the Amana Colonies and then, when a position opened up back in Lee County about five months later, he applied, was hired, and came back home. When he first started, he was the assistant engineer under Tom Nelson, before Dennis Osipowicz took over.

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With more than 40 years under his belt, Lee County Engineer Ernie Steffensmeier will be stepping away from his position on Dec. 28. A reception is being held.
Steffensmeier says county in good shape

Steffensmeier said the maturation of GIS technology has also been helpful, but costly. “We bought a total station GPS in Lee County about four or five years ago at a cost of $70,000 and they told me at the time, after seven years they wouldn’t be able to repair glitches in the system and a whole new system would have to be purchased,” he said.

Steffensmeier said the new GIS is in pretty good condition and the paved roads are in fairly good shape. He said the gravel roads are at the mercy of the weather and wet or so of heavy rain or melting snow can cause some problems with the surfaces.

“I think we’re in fairly decent shape. We have a few roads that might not be, but overall I believe we’re in pretty good shape.”

There will be a reception to honor Steffensmeier’s service to the county on Friday, Dec. 28, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the North Lee County office building.

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5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

TUE 18 Dec
Partly Cloudy
High– 40.1º F | Low – 32.0º F

WED 19 Dec
Overcast skies
High– 42.9º F | Low – 38.3º F

THU 20 Dec
Light Rain
High– 38.7º F | Low – 37.7º F

FRI 21 Dec
Light Snow
High– 36.9º F | Low – 31.3º F

SAT 22 Dec
Light Snow
High– 26.6º F | Low – 26.7º F

OpenWeatherMap

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FORT MADISON - The following is a list of events and happenings going on in Fort Madison as submitted to the Pen City Current.

Senior Community BINGO at The Kensington
Each month on the second Wednesday of the month, The Kensington hosts Senior Community BINGO at 2 p.m. in their dining room at 2210 Avenue H in Fort Madison. All seniors are welcome and cash prizes are awarded.

Caregivers Connection at The Kensington
The Kensington hosts this monthly gathering to help educate attendees about all dementia types. Held at noon the 4th Tuesday of every month in The Kensington’s private dining room, 2210 Avenue H in Fort Madison. Call 319-372-4233 to RSVP or for more information. The next luncheon will be held January 22, 2019.

Council of Churches offers “Singspiration”
The Mid-Lee County Council of Churches presents the program Good News Singspiration “What Happened in Bethlehem...DIDN’T STAY in Bethlehem” on December 16, 2018, beginning at 4 p.m. at St. Paul’s United Church of Christ 401 Maple in Donnellson. Fellowship and a light meal of maidries, cheese and crackers, raw vegetables with dip, and cookies will follow the program. A free-will offering will be taken to support the benevolent ministries of the council.

Veterans Assembly
The Fort Madison High School Student Government is inviting all area veterans to the school’s annual Veterans Assembly being “A Salute to Those Who Sacrifice” held on Dec. 21 beginning at 2 p.m.

SCC Baseball skills camp
The 2018 Southeastern Blackhawk Baseball Winter Break Skills and Evaluation Camp will be held Dec. 27-28 at Loren Walker Arena with 7-12 year olds from 9 a.m. to noon and 13-18 year olds from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Cost is $75 for pre-registration and $85 for registration on camp day. Call 319-208-5047 or email jschulte@scciowa.edu for more information. SCC Head Coach and former FMHS standout Chris Ramirez are hosting the camp.

Fort Madison Day at Carver-Hawkeye Arena
Tickets are now on sale for the Iowa vs. Bryant University on Dec. 29, 2018 at 7 p.m. Tickets are available at the Fort Madison Partners office at 614 9th Street through Dec. 13. Prices are $15 for adults, $10 for youth and $5 if you want to ride a Trailways Bus to the game.

Pen City Current will list your event in this highly visible CURRENT-LEE section in increments of 25 words for $15. Add a photo for $5. 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.

IOWA LOTTERY WINNING NUMBERS

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HTC Crusaders put up 34 fourth quarter points in loss to WACO

WAYLAND - HTC Head Coach John Hellige is hoping the fourth quarter of Friday's loss to WACO is sign of things to come.

HTC has struggled from the field for most of the year, but busted loose for 34 points in the 4th quarter Friday night in a 64-52 loss to WACO on the road. The Warriors held HTC in check for most of the game by not allowing the visitors to score in double figures in any of the first three quarters of play.

Quentin Schneider led the Crusaders from the field with 13 points on 4-of-9 shooting. Junior Matt Hellige was just 1-of-6 shooting from the field, but made seven of eight free throws to finish with nine points. Junior Reed Fehseke shot 3 of 13 from the field and was a chilly 2 of 11 from 3-point land to finish with eight points. Adam Rauenbuehler and Blake Crabtree both had seven points for HTC, while Kyle Bredemeyer had five points and Brant Holtkamp had three to round out the Crusader scoring.

Hellige pulled down nine rebounds and Bredemeyer had seven for Holy Trinity. Schneider had six steals and a blocked shot to lead the Crusaders on defense.

WACO was led by Drew Kissell with 22 points. Kissell was eight of 11 shooting, including a 3-of-4 night from 3-point range.

The Crusaders host West Burlington on Tuesday night in girls/boys doubleheader.

Holy Trinity girls win on the road

WAYLAND - The Holy Trinity Crusaders girls basketball team held off a wild last minute rally from WACO to hold off for a 42-37 win Friday night on the road.

The Lady Crusaders held an 11-point lead with just one minute left in the game and then Waco went on a 7-1 run in the final minute to make things close.

WACO outscored HTC 10-1 over the final three minutes and 14-7 in the final period.

Senior guard Taylor Boeding threw up 14 3-point attempts in the game, finishing 5-of-14 for 15 points to lead the Crusaders who never trailed in the game.

The closest the Lady Warriors would get would be within one point at 9-8 in the opening moments of the second period. With five minutes remaining in the fourth quarter, HTC held a 14-point lead.

Head Coach Tony Johnson said the team is still struggling with some injuries and foul trouble but are finding ways to win.

"The bright side is we are winning road games and not playing our best basketball yet," he said.

Ashlynn Haas had nine points for Holy Trinity, while Emily Box scored eight and Eryn Anderson had seven. Mya Lawlor scored three and Claire Pothitakis has two to round out the Crusader scoring.

Box and Anderson led HTC in rebounds with 10 and nine respectively. Haas had six steals.

Holy Trinity (5-3) plays host to West Burlington on Tuesday night in a girls/boys doubleheader at Shottenkirk Gym in Fort Madison.

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High School Spanish Teacher

Holy Trinity Catholic High School is seeking a Spanish Teacher for Spanish I-V. Applicants must be licensed in the state of Iowa and possess a strong knowledge of high school foreign language teaching methods, learning styles and education research.

Please send resumes and references to brenda.graham@holytrinity-schools.org

Talented and Gifted Teacher

Holy Trinity Catholic School is seeking a part-time Talented and Gifted Teacher (K-12). Applicants must be licensed in the state of Iowa and have knowledge of best practice in delivering talented and gifted services within the framework of a results-driven system.

Please send resumes and references to brenda.graham@holytrinity-schools.org

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