Monday blaze destroys Hawkins Auto Service

Rick Hawkins said he wasn’t ready to retire; future unknown

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A late Monday evening fire that lasted well into Tuesday morning, has left 65-year-old Rick Hawkins contemplating his future. Hawkins is the owner of Hawkins Auto Service at 1602 Avenue E. The service center was destroyed by fire overnight Monday.

Fire officials said the fire started in the upper ceilings of the structure, but took a while to show itself in cold, crisp air with a wind blowing from the southeast.

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Fire Chief Joey Herren said that helped protect property directly behind the building.

“We didn’t even have any blustering on the home behind the property,” he said.

The weather conditions and materials being burned made fighting the fire difficult.

Captain Eric Kerns, who had command at the scene said the smoke from the fire was so heavy it bogged down the department’s chainsaws so accessing the roof was difficult.

“The smoke was so heavy the chainsaws wouldn’t run. There was a double layer ceiling and we couldn’t find where the seed of the fire was. The whole time it was building up above.”

Kerns said firefighters went looking around for about the first hour putting out flare ups that kept cropping up around the roof of the building.

“We went in kinda looking around and there was a seam over the garage part and we could see an orange glow running front to back and from that point we went into defensive mode. It wasn’t even two minutes later when it all went through.”

Hawkins is the owner of Hawkins Auto Service at 16th and Avenue E in Fort Madison. The building was destroyed by fire overnight Monday.

He said at that point, all the firefighters were out of the building and they began fighting the fire from the exterior and above.

“We don’t have a cause yet,” he said. “We’ll be here for a while investigating it.”

Herren said the attic was several layers thick and the flames took some time getting through to the roof.

Inmates ransack juvenile detention center Monday

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

MONTROSE – Staff at the Southeast Iowa Juvenile Detention Center in Montrose had to deal with a second incident in less than six weeks involving criminal activity at the center.

Lee County Sheriff’s deputies had to respond to an incident Monday at around 9 p.m. LeeComm dispatch sent sheriff’s deputies to the scene, including a K9 officer, and paged out Des Moines Township Fire & Rescue and Montrose Fire & Rescue to the scene to help clear out the air in the center after several fire extinguishers were released as part of the melee.

Iowa State patrol officers also responded to the scene.

According to chatter over LeeComm radio channels from local law enforcement, one deputy called for fire assistance saying everything was “Ok, but it’s destroyed in here.”

Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber said a window was broken out and the offender area suffered heavy destruction including the fire extinguishers that were sprayed all over the center.

According to the sheriff’s reports, two of the juveniles were 16- and 14-year old females, one from Burlington and the other from Davenport. The other two involved were 14-year-old males, also from Davenport.

Officials with the Southern Iowa Crime Commission

See RIOT, page 4

Supervisors continue to look for more budget cuts

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

MONTROSE – As Lee County supervisors grapple with the next fiscal year budget, several departments including secondary roads, the sheriff’s department, and county employee hours were on the table on Tuesday.

At a workshop following Tuesday’s regular meeting of the Lee County Board of Supervisors, County Engineer Ben Hull tried to find ways to cut into $1.2 million of deficit spending.

Hull pointed out to the supervisors, that the second...
SHARRAN A. FREEMAN

Sharran A. Freeman, 79 years, of Fort Madison, Iowa died peacefully with her family by her side at 9:22 p.m. Monday, January 21, 2019 at the Fort Madison Community Hospital, Fort Madison. She was born March 7, 1939 in Powers Lake, North Dakota, a daughter of Ernesto Otto "August" and Hazel Gladys (Ramsdal) Quitt. Sharran grew up and attended school in the Powers Lake area. She later moved to Iowa with her family. She earned her GED and furthered her education as an older adult. She married Lyle Christianson, and they had four children: Sharran, Earl, Annette, and Christ. They later divorced. She married William "Bill" Freeman, and they had two children, Shannan and Shellee. They later divorced.

Sharran was a homemaker who also worked outside her home. She worked at several factories and businesses in the area, retiring from Metromail. In early years, Sharran enjoyed bowling, dancing, playing pool, spending time with her family and friends. In later years, she liked puzzles, playing cards, math, old western movies, and older country music.

She is survived by two sons: Earl (Rita) Freeman of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa; Christ (Marilyn) Freeman of Hillsboro, Iowa; four daughters: Sharran (Frank) Hermes of Revere, Missouri, Annette (Ernie) Steffensmeier, Shannan Freeman, and Shellee Piles (Joey Russell) all of Fort Madison, Iowa; grandchildren: Billie-Joe Husted, Bobby Husted, Ernest Steffensmeier, Andrea Steffensmeier, Stephanie Genck, Resa Newton, Jarred Freeman, Payden Jones, Amanda Jones, Trevor Piles, Tyler Piles, and Trinity Piles; great grandchildren: Colton Stepp, Briley Husted, Callie Thompson, Gunner Husted, Anson Husted, Jasmine Setz, Sebastian Newton, and Aubrey Piles; and one sister, Evelyn Issaacson of Rainier Oregon. She was preceded in death by her parents, siblings: Myrtle Nichols, Edith Quitt, Earl Cannon, Aubrey Piles; and one sister, Evelyn Issaacson of Rainier Oregon. She was predeceased in death by her parents, siblings: Myrtle Nichols, Edith Quitt, Earl Cannon, Aubrey Piles; and one sister, Evelyn Issaacson of Rainier Oregon. She was predeceased in death by her parents, siblings: Myrtle Nichols, Edith Quitt, Earl Cannon, Aubrey Piles; and one sister, Evelyn Issaacson of Rainier Oregon. She was predeceased in death by her parents, siblings: Myrtle Nichols, Edith Quitt, Earl Cannon, Aubrey Piles; and one sister, Evelyn Issaacson of Rainier Oregon.

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The day before moving to the east side on 16th Street just before the fire broke out, Hawkins had gas originally, but that was all gone when I bought it. Hawkins said the only thing he wanted out of the building was the safe. "I probably wouldn't even have been here yesterday, but I changed insurance companies and the new agent wanted to meet here to sign the paperwork and pick up a check," he said.

It's tough to get at early morning, fire officials were back at the firehouse at about 3 a.m.. The call came into LeeComm dispatch just before 10 p.m. with a report of flames being seen by a passerby through the window. Hawkins, who lives near Argyle, got a call at about 10:30 from a buddy who informed him of the fire. Hawkins said he closed up the office at about 4:30 on Monday and said he wouldn't have even opened considering it was the holiday, but we also had to feel around for pits where someone could fall in," Kerns said.

Kerns said there were vehicles and several flammable materials in the building, but there were no explosions or other potentially dangerous situations, aside from the fire itself. "These are some of the worst kinds of fires because you don't know what's inside. Not only were we wary of explosives in a garage, but also we had to feel around for pits where someone could fall in," Kerns said.

Firefighters used a water/foam mixture from the ground and then called the ladder truck to the scene where they worked on the roof from the north side of the building before moving to the east side on 16th Street just before the fire broke through the ceiling and roof. "We were going through so many air tanks that we called in Denmark because they have a mobile cascade system to fill air tanks for some manpower," Kerns said.

On Tuesday morning, fire officials were back on the scene investigating the fire and helping Hawkins recover paperwork, and other items, that were well protected in a safe that was almost 100 years old.

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report
01/21/19 – 5:34 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 5400 block of Avenue O. 01/21/19 – 12:44 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1700 block of Avenue G.

Lee County Sheriff’s Report
01/21/19 – 8:40 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Chelsea Nacole Smith, 20 of Donnellson, at the sheriff’s office on charges of 2nd-degree criminal mischief and participating in a riot. 01/21/19 – no time given – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested a 14-year-old female juvenile from Burlington, at the sheriff’s office on charges of 2nd-degree criminal mischief and participating in a riot.

For the Record

Lee County Sheriff's Report
01/21/19 – no time given – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested a 14-year-old female juvenile from Davenport, at the sheriff’s office on charges of 2nd-degree criminal mischief and participating in a riot.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report
01/19/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to one vehicle accident at the intersection of 310th Street and 260th Avenue.

Lee County Sheriff's Report
01/21/19 – no time given – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested a 14-year-old male juvenile from Davenport, at the sheriff’s office on charges of 2nd-degree criminal mischief and participating in a riot.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report
01/18/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to one medical call.

Lee County Sheriff's Report
01/20/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to two medical calls.

Lee County Sheriff's Report
01/20/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to one report of gas odor. 01/21/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to four medical calls, three fire alarms, and one structure fire, and one porch fire.

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For the Record/From the Front
**Gov. says state has nation’s best jobless mark**

*IWD says 2,300 Iowans went to work in December*

DES MOINES – Gov. Kim Reynolds released the following statement today in response to the news that Iowa has the lowest unemployment rate in the country according to this month’s unemployment rate released by Iowa Workforce Development: “Iowa’s economy continues to show significant strength in the New Year,” said Gov. Kim Reynolds. “More Iowans than ever are working, which reflects the opportunities that exist in our state. Having the lowest unemployment rate in the U.S. reaffirms that what we’re doing to grow our economy and bolster our workforce through efforts like Future Ready Iowa, Home Base Iowa and Registered Apprenticeship are paying off.”

On Friday, Iowa Workforce Development announced that in December an additional 2,300 Iowans entered the workforce, creating the total number of employed Iowans to 1,651,300, the most in history. Manufacturing ended 2018 as the top sector for creating jobs, ending the year 7,600 jobs higher than December of 2017. Iowa’s unemployment rate for December remained at 2.4 percent, while Hawaii increased to 2.5 percent, allowing the Hawkeye State to take over the number one ranking. The number of Iowans who have claimed unemployment benefits dropped below 100,000 for the year, the lowest since 1998.

**Incident was second in 2019 involving Scott County youth**

*RIOT - Continued from Page 1*

that oversee the operations at the detention center, declined to comment on the incident this morning.

A spokesperson at the commission’s office in Fairfield indicated a press release would be issued later in the day but as of 5 p.m. no release had been issued.

On Jan. 7 of this year, an argument between two correctional officers and a juvenile began before 9 a.m. and the inmates were ordered to their cells as part of lock-down procedures, but two other juveniles disobeyed the order and came back to the day room and a fight broke out between the two officers and the three juveniles.

One of the officers on hand suffered an injury to the head in that incident and had to be taken to the hospital for treatment.

**5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST**

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WED 23 Jan</td>
<td>Light Snow</td>
<td>22.7F</td>
<td>5.1F</td>
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<tr>
<td>THU 24 Jan</td>
<td>Light Snow</td>
<td>12.9F</td>
<td>-6.6F</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRI 25 Jan</td>
<td>Snow</td>
<td>12.5F</td>
<td>0.5F</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAT 26 Jan</td>
<td>Light Snow</td>
<td>10.5F</td>
<td>-12.0F</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUN 27 Jan</td>
<td>Snow</td>
<td>23.3F</td>
<td>11.9F</td>
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*OPENWEATHERMAP*

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- Rinse & clean all food jars & cans before recycling
- Flatten empty boxes for better storage & volume reduction
- Place all recyclables loose in bins
- Don’t recycle wrapping paper
- Properly dispose of all electronics and household hazardous waste

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ary roads department
One of the items under scrutiny is a new main-
tenance building for the secondary roads depart-
ment that was cut from the budget last year.
Hull had included $280,000 in the new
building, but said he could possibly cut $100,000 out
of that project and then spread the remaining cost of
the building over the two years to help ease the strain.
He said Secondary Roads budgets for long
winters and $4/gallon diesel which helps them
come in under budget and we have
derived hundreds
of thousands of dollars in savings.
"For the past several years we’ve been hundreds
of thousands of dollars under budget and we have
our own budget balance at the start of the
$2.33 million in its fund
and is projected to have
spending of $1.26 million
budget numbers, Sec-
to stay under budget."

"I think we should do that.
Continued from Page 1

Finding that coming in under budget
is a strong fund balance
under budget and we have
of thousands of dollars in savings.

Weber said he did see
light at the end of the tunnel as far as equipment
because things are getting replaced, but last year he
cut out two replacement vehicles.

"You either pay for these on the front end, or on the
back end with repairs. It was not unusual when I
was a deputy to drive a car with more than 250,000
miles on it. But as sheriff, I’m not going to do that.
Not going to put people behind a vehicle that old and
I’d hope you wouldn’t want me to.”

Supervisors also re-
viewed their own budget and discussed pulling
$50,000 from contri-
butions to Lee County Economic Development
Group.

Folluo said the LCEDG was at some point supposed
to be self-sustaining. He also noted that the group
recently parted ways with former executive director
Joe Steil.

"I’d like to know more about why he’s no longer
with the group,” Pflug
said. If they cut $130,000 in
salary, maybe we should cut our contribu-
tion that much.”

Supervisor Rick Larkin
said he thought the elimi-
nation was a budget issue
and a cost savings. He said
the contribution should
remain the same because
the LCEDG is doing good
work.

"Why that’s not fair. It’s just not fair.
We have the work to do and my staff will
work 40 hours. If you’re not going to do that, then
everyone should go back to 35 hours across the board,” Larkin
said.

Another budget strategy session was set for Mon-
day, Jan. 28 at 2 p.m. The budget has to go through
a public hearing and certi-

flation by mid March.

To me, I saw this coming
10 years ago.” Weber said he didn’t
see light at the end of the tunnel as far as equipment
because things are getting replaced, but last year he
cut out two replacement vehicles.

"You either pay for these on
the front end, or on the
back end with repairs. It
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car with more than
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But as sheriff, I’m not
going to do that.
With the three of the
five thinking it should stay the same,
Pflug and Folluo agreed to
leave it in the preliminary
budget."

"That funding comes in over
five years and, quite
frankly, some people don’t always pay. And I think

"I think we should leave it
the same. This organiza-
tion is working well and if
you do it this year and
then again next year, pret-
to soon you’ve got it down
to nothing.”

Supervisors Rich Har-
row and Ron Fedler both
agreed that the current
contributions should be
left in the budget.

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budget, they didn’t cut
anything,” Larkin
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continuously the Mental Health, County Attorney and
Secondary Roads depart-
ments’ staffs all work 40
hours, but the rest of the
staffs work 35 hours.

Booten said the employ-
ee classifications between those
departments and hers are the exact same,
but the employees in the other departments
make more money.

"That’s not fair. It’s just not fair.
We have the work to
do and my staff will
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