Bigger.. Faster... Better

Allan Luers, at right, from Axalta Coatings in Fort Madison works on creating a large funnel out of poster board as part of an activity to create more ideas for a bigger, faster, better campaign at the Lee County Economic Development Group’s breakfast Thursday morning in Fort Madison. With Luers, left to right is Darrell Allman, Managing Director at Iowa Fertilizer Co., LCEDG CEO Dennis Fraise, and Don Weiss, of Southeastern Community College.

LCEDG group pumps panels for ideas, goals

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Neither rain, nor sleet, nor freezing rain, nor sleet and slush stopped about 40 people from attending the Lee County Economic Development Group’s breakfast Thursday morning at Quality Inn and Suites.

Dennis Fraise, the senior economic development director and CEO of the group, said LCEDG is making strides in cutting into the workforce issues facing Lee County, but said it’s time to go bigger, faster and better.

"Now we’re at the point where we can put our foot on the gas and get some things done. We’ve have gotten some things done, but we have to be better," he said.

He said the reality is that Lee County doesn’t have the workforce it needs to take us through the next decade. Allan Luers, at right, from Axalta Coatings in Fort Madison works on creating a large funnel out of poster board as part of an activity to create more ideas for a bigger, faster, better campaign at the Lee County Economic Development Group’s breakfast Thursday morning in Fort Madison. With Luers, left to right is Darrell Allman, Managing Director at Iowa Fertilizer Co., LCEDG CEO Dennis Fraise, and Don Weiss, of Southeastern Community College.

"I don’t think that’s a surprise to any of you that are trying to hire people. So Bigger, Faster... Better," Fraise said.

Fraise said the Governor’s Future Ready Iowa program talks about a goal to have 70% of Iowans having some form of formal training after high school to put ourselves in that situation where we face some of the toughest wrestlers in the state," Smith said.

“We’re gonna see seven different schools on Saturday and I feel good about our kids and where they’re at.”

The Hounds’ Class 3A district includes Iowa City High, West and Liberty, as well as Prairie, Mt. Pleasant, Clear-Creek Amana, and Burlington.

Each weight division, with the exception of 126 lbs, will have a wrestler currently ranked in the top 10 in the state. The brackets at 160 lbs, 170 lbs, and 195 lbs will have a wrestler currently ranked in the top 10 in each weight class for the right to go to the state meet.

The state meet this year is Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, Feb. 14-16 at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines.

Smith said the season-ending loss at North Scott won’t have an impact on the wrestling team.

“That was a tough one up there, but at the same time, we’re happy we can put ourselves in that situation where we face some of the toughest wrestlers in the state,” Smith said.

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OBITUARIES

CAROLYN JEAN MERSCHBROCK

Carolyn Jean Merschbrock, 74, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 4:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 7, 2019 at Great River Hospice House in West Burlington, IA.

She was born on August 23, 1944 in Fort Madison, IA to Bruce L. & Mildred Hoffeditz Coffman. She married Louis H. Merschbrock on September 2, 1961 in Fort Madison, IA. She was a homemaker most of her life and was a member of Holy Family Parish. She enjoyed crossword puzzles, bowling, bird watching and in her younger years, going to flea markets. Most of all, she loved spending time with her grandchildren & great grandchildren.

Carolyn is survived by: her husband: Louis Merschbrock of Fort Madison, IA; 1-daughter: Darla (John) Wacker of Fort Madison, IA; 1-son: Bruce (Jennifer) Merschbrock of Des Moines, IA; 6-grandchildren: Duane (Leslie) Coffman, Kirstie (Anthony) Paquin, Austin Wacker, Chance Merschbrock, Shane Merschbrock & Anna Merschbrock; 3-great grandchildren: Reece, Collin, Wyatt, Cole & Kate and 1 on the way. She was preceded in death by her parents & 1-brother: Duane Coffman.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. Friends may call after 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 12, 2019 with the family to receive friends from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday evening at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. The funeral mass will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at Ss. Mary & Joseph Church with Rev. Mark P. Spring officiating.

A memorial has been established for the American Lung Association. Online condolences can be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

United Way offering free nutrition classes

FORT MADISON - RSVP/United Way of the Great River Region is offering a FREE healthy nutrition class on:

Wednesday, February 13th, from 9am-10am, at the United Way Resource Center, 3421 Avenue L, Fort Madison, Iowa. Please call 319-372-8043 to sign-up. Free to the public.

United Way of the Great River Region supports non-profit organizations and agencies that provide programs addressing needs in health, education and financial stability to residents in Clark, Hancock, and Lee Counties. United Way of the Great River Region serves all of Lee, Hancock, and Clark Counties. All donations are tax-deductible.

JOSEPH MICHAEL VAUGHAN

Joseph Michael Vaughan, 54, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 7:17 p.m. on Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at his home. He was born on January 29, 1965 in Keokuk, IA to Arthur Vaughan Marsha Lawson.

He married Patty Sue Huebner Wolgemuth on December 21, 2011 in Fort Madison, IA. He was a forklift & crane operator, lastly for Siemens in Fort Madison. He served in the National Guard & Army Reserve. He was a Green Bay Packer fan, loved talking to people and music. He especially enjoyed spending time with his granddaughter.

Joe is survived by: his wife: Patty Huebner Vaughan of Fort Madison, IA; 1-daughter: Maggie (Andrew) Grate of Peoria, IL; 1-granddaughter: Rebekah Grate of Peoria, IL; 2-step grandchildren: Maizy & Ozzy Huebner; his father: Arthur Vaughan of Keokuk, IA; his mother: Marsha Lawson of Fort Madison, IA; his paternal grandfather: Arthur Vaughan of Keokuk, IA; 1-brother: Robert Vaughan of Fort Madison, IA; 1-half brother: Scott (Rachael) Vaughan of Quincy, IL; 1-half sister: Jane Eicher of Burlington, IA & his good friend: Jeanette Guzman of Fort Madison, IA.

He was preceded in death by his step mother, Deborah Vaughan.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory and no services are planned at this time. Online condolences to Joe’s family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

Senior Community BINGO

2nd Wednesday of every month at 2pm in our dining room

All Seniors Welcome
Cash Prizes

Pen City Current and www.pencitycurrent.com are products of Market Street Publishing, LLC. Pen City Current is published Sunday through Friday mornings.
Fort Madison Police Report
02/05/19 – no report
02/05/19 – 8:36 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 200 block of Avenue B.
02/06/19 – 10:24 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2000 block of Avenue B.
02/06/19 – 5:07 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2700 block of Avenue C.

Lee County Sheriff’s deputies
02/06/19 – 4:30 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies responded to a report of a shoplifter in the 4800 block of Avenue O. 02/06/19 – 6:32 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a shoplifter in the 4100 block of 16th Street.
02/07/19 – 1:34 a.m. – Fort Madison Police cited Sara Ann Pauly, 35, of Fort Madison in the 3100 block of Avenue O, on a charge of possession of drug paraphernalia. She was cited and released.

Lee County Sheriff’s Report
02/04/19 – 8:36 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies responded to a report of a one-vehicle accident in the 2300 block of 240th Avenue where, according to the report, the vehicle driven by Amanda Thompson, 32, of Kahoka, swerved to avoid an oncoming vehicle, lost control and struck a tree in the ditch. Thompson and two passengers were transported to Fort Madison Community Hospital for injuries. No citations were issued and deputies couldn’t locate the other vehicle.
02/04/19 – 4:30 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Bobbi Nicole Sackman, 39, of Keokuk was arrested in the 800 block of Concert St. in Keokuk, on charges of being a fugitive from justice and possession of drug paraphernalia. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
02/04/19 – 4:38 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Ryan Kenneth Hormer, 42, of Keokuk, at the sheriff’s office on a warrant for a judgment hold. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
02/04/19 – 5:30 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Nathan Patrick Boone, 27, of Fort Madison at the intersection of Hwy 218 and 240th Street, on Donnellson, on a charge of driving while barred. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and released on a promise to appear.
02/04/19 – 5:07 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Shannon Lynn Watts, 26, of Keokuk, at N. 6th and Concert in Keokuk, on a charge of possession of controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
02/04/19 – 5:29 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Johnnie LaVail Bragg, 42, of Keokuk, at the sheriff’s office on a warrant for judgment entry. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
02/04/19 – 11:21 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Kyle Wayne Johnson, 25, of Donnellson, in the 1600 block 160th Street on a charge of domestic assault. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held. 02/05/19 – 5:37 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Joseph Daniel Cass, no arrest location provided, on a warrant for voluntary absence from custody and a judgment hold. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held. 02/05/19 – 1:27 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident in the 2700 block of Hwy. 61. A vehicle driven by Margaret Elaine Ickes, 63, of Fort Madison, was heading northbound on Hwy. 61 and lost control on the overpass sliding striking the side. Ickes was transported to an area hospital by Lee County Emergency Services.
02/05/19 – 5:37 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Natalie Ann Adam, 20, of Bonaparte in the 1600 block 160th Street on a charge of domestic assault. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held. 02/05/19 – 2:25 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident on Hwy. 61 near milemarker 17. A vehicle driven by John Adrian Risinger, 60, of Fort Madison lost control on slick driving surfaces and entered the ditch where it overturned. No injuries or citations were reported at the scene.
02/05/19 – 5:44 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Kristoffer Charles Johnson, 20, of Cedar Rapids, at the sheriff’s office on a warrant for violation of probation. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
02/06/19 – 6:25 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Daphne Kay Akers, 39, of Fort Madison at the sheriff’s office on warrants for violation of probation and contempt of court. She was taken to the Lee County Jail.
02/05/19 – 10:29 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident. According to the report, a vehicle driven by Adam Golden McCain was headed westbound and struck an unidentified vehicle that was legally parked. The report indicated McCain drove the vehicle about four miles on the rim. No citations or injuries were reported at the scene.
02/06/19 – 1:00 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Adam Golden McCain, 24, of Keokuk, no arrest location given, on charges of no insurance, driving an unsafe vehicle and failure to maintain control. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
02/06/19 – 6:30 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Harley Davidson Clark, 24, of Argyle, at the sheriff’s office on a warrant for violation of a no contact order. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
02/09/19 – 1:15 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Kevin Eugene Wilson, 60, of Burlington, at the sheriff’s office on warrants for voluntary absence from custody and a judgment hold. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

For the Record
02/04/19 – 4:38 p.m. – Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report
02/05/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to one medical call.
02/06/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to two medical calls, two assists and one motor vehicle accident.

New Year. Fresh Start.

Thank you to all our customers who worked to reduce their environmental footprint last year.
We’re looking forward to helping you continue your efforts and to educating our communities on more ways to help this year.

Here are just a few ways you can help:
- Don’t put plastic bags in recycling bins
- 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
STEMFest returns to SCC Feb. 23

WEST BURLINGTON – The sixth annual Southeast Iowa Regional Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Festival (STEMFest) will take place at SCC’s West Burlington campus on Saturday, February 23 from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. The event is a joint effort between SCC, the Southeast Iowa STEM Hub, local businesses, manufacturers, and educators.

STEMFest introduces kids and adults to careers and opportunities in STEM-related fields through hands-on activities, exhibits, and demonstrations. Participants explore STEM careers through robotics and health-care simulations, as well as electronics and renewable energy exhibits.

With the growing demand for jobs requiring digital and technical skills, a background in STEM is essential for many careers. SCC Work-Based Learning Specialist Leanne Krogmeier, says STEMFest is also great way for students to explore careers in Southeast Iowa's industries.

"STEM jobs continue to dominate the list of hot careers," says Krogmeier. "That's why it's so important we get kids interested while they're young. STEMFest is a fun and creative way to show kids ideas and career paths they may not have seen or considered before."

This year's event will feature animals from Niabi Zoo, kid-friendly demonstrations by Absolute Science, and Iowa Public Television will lead families in the creation of small motorized contraptions called Wiggle Bot. People may also tour the SCC’s Health Professions Center.

The popular event attracts hundreds of people every year.

"Our goal is to continue to show students and parents how fun STEM can be," says Krogmeier. "We've got an-other great lineup of exhibitors from across the region and plenty of cool activities."

STEMFest is free and open to the public.

For questions about STEMFest at SCC, contact Leanne Krogmeier at (319) 208-5053, or lkrogmeier@scciowa.edu.

Birth Announcements

JOHNSON-CLARK

GALESBURG – Amber Johnson and Terry Clark, Jr., of Galesburg, Ill., are proud to announce the birth of their son Dakota James Johnson-Clark on Jan. 30, 2019 at Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Pen City Current congratulates the family on this wonderful news.

EVANS

FORT MADISON – Kyra Murphy and Andrew Evans are proud to announce the birth of their son Malcolm Evans, on Dec. 23, 2018 at Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Malcolm is joined at home by Ayden Evans, 3, and Presley Evans, 2.

Grandparents are Ralph and Tiffanie Bennett of Keokuk; and Kevin and Jenny Murphy of Hawarden, Iowa.

Pen City Current congratulates the family on this wonderful news.

FMMS 7th grade girls move to 4-0

KEOKUK – The Fort Madison 7th grade girls basketball team moved to 4-0 on the season with a 27-13 road win over Keokuk.

Aija Jenkins led all scorers with 10 points, followed closely by Taylor Johnson with seven points. DeLanee Seay added six points while Lauryn Helmic and Madyln Gobble finished out the scoring with two each.

Johnson led in rebounds with five and added three steals while Jenkins and Gobble each grabbed another three rebounds. Fort Madison's A team plays at home on Thursday against Aldo Leopold.

The Fort Madison B team won by a score of 16-2. Isheka Coleman led in scoring with 14 points with Haley Lampe also chipping in two points. With the win, Fort Madison's B team moves to 4-0 and plays at home Thursday against Aldo Leopold.

Williams scores 12 in win over Keokuk

FORT MADISON – Jamiah Williams scored 12 points and hauled in six rebounds as the Little Hounds rolled Keokuk 37-18 in the "A" game on Feb. 1.

Jordan Simpson and Nick Fallencamp both added six points and a rebound each in the win. Kane Williams had five points, while Xander Wellman had four, Aiden Boyer added two and Dane Bulter converted a free throw to round out the FMMS scoring.

In the "B" game FMMS won 10-4 with Drew Davis scoring four points, and Calvin Tucker, George Hantzeas and Dylan Gilmian all adding two points. The boys next play on Monday at Fairfield.

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Hand on a Mediapolis wrestler earlier this year. Hayes will be wrestling Saturday for a chance to go to the state tournament next week. Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

"Yeah, I don't like to look ahead in these things, but if the bracket works out, that could be a pretty interesting match," Smith said. "Sam beat him last year...but that was last year."

Hayes was ranked last year before suffering an injury that sidelined him for districts and a shot at the state meet.

Fort Madison could be peaking at the right time in several weight classes. Diego Lozano at 182 lbs has been wrestling well, having won four of his last six matches, but was pinned in the other two. Will Hoeft, a junior out of Iowa City West, should be the top seed in the bracket and is ranked 7th in the state.

"If he brings his A game, I'm confident he'll take care of business," Smith said of Lozano. "If he doesn't, it's a coin flip whether he goes (to state) or not. When he comes with his energy and focus and determination, he's hard to stop. When he's tenacious, he gets the job done pretty quick, but if he's tentative, it can be over quick."

Another interesting bracket will be at 126 lbs. where freshman Gavin Wiseman (24-16) doesn't have a ranked wrestler in his bracket and has wins over Burlington and Mt. Pleasant in the weight class in regular season.

"Gavin could be there. He's doing very well, works hard, and has a determined mindset," Smith said. "I won't count anybody out, especially when they have the work and mindset he has."

Fort Madison senior Sam Hayes gets the upper hand on a Mediapolis wrestler earlier this year. Hayes will be wrestling Saturday for a chance to go to the state tournament next week.

Elton and Owen Kruse, at 113 and 106, both have had solid years and have come on late in the season. Elton, the older brother and senior, has district experience and that should help him in that bracket. But Prairie's Austin Kegley should be the favorite, currently ranked 3rd in the state.

At districts, the champion and runner-up both advance to the state tournament. A third-place finisher can advance if either of the other two are unable to compete in Des Moines on championship weekend.

"From my perspective, all I care about is that the kids bring good effort and good attitude. That's what I look for as a coach, wins and losses will take care of themselves," Smith said.
Jumpstart the workforce in the next 10 years.

He said Lee County is 88th of 99 counties in that category with a percentage in the lower 20s, and the county also has the third highest generational poverty rate in the state. He said Bridges out of Poverty has raised the money to hire a part-time coordinator for the county and that program should up and running shortly.

“That’s taken a lot of work for those of us who’ve raised the money, but we’re there and that program will launch. We’ve had tons of volunteers, but couldn’t do anything until we had the money,” he said.

He said a recent survey showed that 40% of students in Lee County don’t have a plan for after high school. Fraise said that’s a problem, but also an opportunity.

Fraise said the county shouldn’t get bogged down in doing “stuff”, and not be afraid of pivoting from things that aren’t working.

Dana Millard, economic development project director at LCEDG, talked about the efforts aimed at students in the area and filling skills gaps needed by local employers now…not 10 years in the future.

She said 92% of Lee County schools have participated in the STEM scale up programs in the last four years. She that flows into how the county can go bigger, faster and better.

“When we started this program we were one of the lowest participating counties in the state and now we’re one of the highest,” Millard said.

She said more than 400 students in Lee County joined in exploring career paths through Career Exploration Day for high school and 8th grade students.

Fraise said that’s a problem, but also an opportunity. Fraise then asked the groups to come up with stretch goals for the county that address some of those issues.

Fraise challenged those in attendance in a group setting to come up with hurdles that get in the way of a bigger, faster, better mentality.

Issues that surfaced included poor retention of graduates in the area, underserved areas of financial literacy, entertainment and quality of life issues, poor rental and housing inventory, awareness of paths from minimum wage to higher paying jobs, and roadblocks to career and technical education teacher certifications, regional collaboration, and preconceived notions of available companies and those jobs.

Fraise said LCEDG would compile all the information from the session and forward to those in attendance to see what’s on the minds of the people that are going to help bigger, faster, better become a reality.
**FULL-TIME DENTAL ASSISTANT**

Mark C. Pothitakis Family Dentistry currently has a position available for a Full-Time Dental Assistant. Complete an application or mail your resume to 1223 S. Gear Avenue, Eastman Plaza, Suite 302, West Burlington, IA 52655 or email burlden -tal@gmail.com. EOE.

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CURRENT-LEE

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

Free Movie sponsored by Kiwanis
The Fort Madison Kiwanis are sponsoring a FREE MOVIE on Sat. Feb. 9
beginning at 2 p.m. Everyone in attendance will receive a free ticket, a drink and popcorn. They were also be a Lego kit raffled off at the event.

Winning the Game
The Iowa State Extension and Iowa Farm Bureau are sponsoring a workshop on launching a 2019 Pre-Harvest Marketing plan at the Learning Center on the Lee County Fairgrounds in Donnellson on Feb. 11th at 6 p.m. Preregistering is encouraged at www.iowafarmbureau.com.

Local artist on display at SCC
Lori Illner Greene will have her art work on display at the Southeastern Community College Art Gallery, 1500 W. Agency Road in West Burlington from Jan. 28-Feb. 15. The gallery showing will feature her “Raptors and Other Birds of Prey” series.

FMCH Community Health Education Series
Dr. Josh Sirucek, Family Practice and Sports Medicine will host a seminar on Exploring Lower Back Pain Tuesday, Feb. 12, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the FMCH Conference rooms. Call 376-2244 to RSVP and for more information.

Evening with Chuck Long
Former Iowa standout and NFL quarterback Chuck Long will be at Sheaffer Memorial Golf Course on Tuesday, Feb. 12 for presentation, including a social hour and dinner with doors opening at 4:30. The social hour and dinner will be from 5 to 6 and Long will speak at 6 p.m. with a question and answer to follow. For more information, contact Ryan at 319-528-6214 or by email at mcmillan@sheaffergolf.com.

Legislative Luncheon
Fort Madison Partners is sponsoring a legislative luncheon on Feb. 15 at The Palms in Fort Madison. The lunches begin at noon and last for one hour.

State Farm – Thomas Klann Agency announces February “Quotes for Good”
State Farm – Thomas Klann Agency is excited to help out another Non-Profit Organization in our community. In February 2019 we will be giving back to Lee County K-9 Association by donating $5 for every new Auto Insurance Quote in the month of February 2019. So tell all your non-State Farm family/friends/coworkers to reach out to us for a quote and share this event to spread the word! If you are a current State Farm auto insurance customer, reach out to us for a Life Insurance or Disability Income conversation and we will donate $5 for that also. Contact Jess or Sam at 319-372-5982, 2623 Ave I, Fort Madison, or email: jess@fortmadisoninsurance.com or samantha@fortmadisoninsurance.com.

Fish & Shrimp Fry this Friday
The FM Eagles Club is hosting a Fish & Shrimp fry this Friday to benefit the Fort Madison Food Pantry. Dinner is served 5-7:30pm. Music by The Hillsiders starts at 5pm. 50/50 Drawing. Live Auction starts at 6:30pm. Auction items include 4- 2019 Cardinals’ box seats tickets; Sheaffer Golf Course Greens Fees & Cart, 25 Punch Card, and 10 Punch Card; and more! Desserts provided by The Kensington, Kim’s in West Point, & others! 4821 Avenue O (Behind Burger King), Fort Madison.