FM Rotary starts $100K in 100 days campaign

Campaign is part of club's 100th Anniversary in 2020

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Local Rotarians are celebrating their 100th birthday in 2020 and to ramp up the celebration they’re launching a campaign to give a big facelift to Central Park.

The club’s annual citywide Picnic in the Park is scheduled for June 23, so club members decided to make the fundraising campaign a $100,000 in 100 days to celebrate their 100th birthday.

The idea was spawned from a recent inspection of the park’s bandstand by city officials. Public Works Director Larry Driscoll told a Rotary committee formed to look at the possibility of rehabilitating the 10-year-old structure, that termites have gotten a good hold on the substructure of the ornate bandstand.

“They probably should have used a ‘green’ wood that was treated to repel the termites, but they went with a different wood and there is a lot of damage in there,” he said.

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Their dog ‘nose’ what’s up at trials

Sixty-three come to FM to test K9’s narcotics detection

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – The John Bennett Center at the old Iowa State Penitentiary converted from outdated prison space to testing grounds on Monday and Tuesday.

Handlers and K9 officers from around the state descended on Fort Madison for a two-day training at the former prison site.

The two-day training was part of the United States Police Canine Association’s Region 21 annual Detection Dog Certification Trials. Melinda Ruopp, a 31-year veteran of the Marshalltown Police Department, was the Region 21 national certifying official and judge. The event was for narcotics dogs only.

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Ruopp was a K9 handler in Marshalltown and, for more than 20 years, worked with three dogs before shifting to training and certifying.

A judge monitors Lee County Deputy Jordan Maag’s handling of “Kion” at the former ISP Tuesday morning. “Kion” was giving Maag a passive alert to sensing narcotics in the desk by sitting. Handlers worked their K9 through vehicle inspections on Monday and then a three-room test Tuesday looking for marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroine.

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West Point property tax levy jumps 4%

Budget also includes $1.7 million lagoon upgrade

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

WEST POINT – The 2019-20 fiscal year budget for West Point may put an additional $70,000 in city coffers, according to a budget approved Monday night.

The West Point City Council unanimously approved the budget prepared by first-year City Administrator Dennis McGregor and City Clerk Diane Smith. The budget includes a residential property tax levy rate of $7.31 per $1,000 of taxable value, creating $241,311 in revenues from property taxes.

Currently homes in Lee County are assessed property taxes on approximately 55% of their county assessed valuation due to a 2013 state-mandated rollback, plus homestead credits.

The levy for the current fiscal year was set in 2018 at $7.02 per $1,000 and generated roughly $225,000.

Total revenues for the upcoming budget year that runs from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 are projected at $4.7 million, up from $3,036,547 last year. The jump in revenues will be debt service bonds to help pay for lagoon improvements for the city’s waste water treatment.

The cost of the lagoon is also included in the budget expenditures at $1.73 million, which pushes total expenditures for the year to $4.63 million, or a $1.81 million increase due to the lagoon.

The current levy structure doesn’t include any debt

See ROTARY, page 2

See K9s, page 8

See BUDGET, page 6

See page 5
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DES MOINES – Today at her weekly press conference, Gov. Kim Reynolds announced a new application for felons to have their voting rights restored. The governor also reiterated her support for a constitutional amendment to permanently restore the voting rights of felons who have completed their sentence.

The new application can be viewed online here. Iowans looking to restore their voting rights can go to governor.iowa.gov/services/voting-rights-restoration.

“Iowans believe in second chances and we should help those individuals who want to re-enter society by restoring their voting rights, offering in-demand training, or encouraging additional education,” said Gov. Reynolds. “But we also must remember the victims and their families. Their voices continue to be heard as we balance felon rights with forgiveness and another chance at life.”

The new application unveiled today is simplified and easier to understand. It requests only the information necessary to appropriately consider whether an Iowan is eligible to have their voting rights restored. It removes the requirement to submit a criminal background check and the related $15 fee. And it no longer requires the collection of redundant financial documentation that can instead be verified online.

Additionally, the governor announced a goal to grant or deny applications within one month from receipt. The Iowa Department of Corrections and local Community Based Corrections districts will also be distributing the new application to Iowans as they discharge from prison, parole, or probation.

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The committee is still looking at how the fundraising will take place, but options could include submitting a check or donating through an online donation site. However, the group is working to make the deductions tax deductible.

Rotary President-elect Heather Huebner said details supporting the event will be available soon.

The Picnic in the Park will be the final day of the 100-day campaign, which will kick off today and run through June 23.

Reynolds opens path for felon voting rights

Campbell to help fund other rehab efforts

ROTARY - Continued from Page 1

said.

When the committee started looking at the cost to drill out the timbers and reinforce them with metal, a repair that Driscoll said would be cheaper than replacing the whole substructure, they started looking at other repairs needed.

Additional funding needs for the park include $6,000 to $8,000 for repainting the structure, $30,000 for new lights in the park, and at least $12,000 to refurbish the Statue of Liberty, as well as other upkeep, the committee decided to look at all the repairs together.

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Le Lee County Health Department "Hotel volunteer training

April 2 - April 23, 2019
4 Tuesday Evenings
6:00pm-9:00pm
at LCHD office

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This support beam shows some of the damage termites have done underneath the bandstand in Central Park. The Fort Madison Rotary Club wants to raise money to repair the gazebo and other parts of the park.

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OBITUARIES

EILEEN ROSE CLEMONS

Eileen Rose Clemons, 97, of Donnellson, Iowa, passed away at 2:15 a.m. Monday, March 11, 2019, at The Kensington in Fort Madison, Iowa.

Born September 3, 1921, in Fort Madison, Iowa, the daughter of William Lewis and Julia Georgiana (Conlee) Kudebeh. On February 23, 1947, she married Jack Raymond Clemons at the Union Presbyterian Church in Fort Madison, Iowa. He preceded her in death on January 15, 2013.

Survivors include his two daughters: Laurie (Dennis) Dilley of Waukee, Iowa and Julie (Timothy) Rider of Lomax, Illinois; two sons: John (Kim) Clemons of Springfield, Utah and Matthew Clemons of Cedar Rapids, Iowa; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren and one brother-in-law: William Phillips.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband: Jack; one great granddaughter; one brother and two sisters-in-law.

Eileen was a 1938 graduate of Fort Madison High School. She worked for Sheaffer Pen Company in Fort Madison, Iowa, Midwest Radio Television out in Omaha, Nebraska, United Airlines in Reno, Nevada during World War II, the Lee County Engineers Office and the late K.S. Kaboli, MD office. She was a member of St. Paul’s United Church of Christ, in Donnellson, the Donnellson American Legion Auxiliary #474. She was a past member of Chapter CK – TTT, past board member and her love of reading lead her to many years of volunteering and serving on the board of the Donnellson Public Library. Eileen also volunteered for the American Red Cross Bloodmobile, Meals on Wheels and Apple Daze. She enjoyed golfing at Green Acres and most of all enjoyed spending time with family and friends. Eileen was devoted to the community of Donnellson.

A Graveside Service will be held at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, April 13, 2019, at the Evangelical Cemetery in Donnellson, Iowa, with Reverend Bob Molsberry officiating. There will be a gathering for family and friends following the service at St. Paul’s United Church of Christ. In lieu of flowers memorials have been established in her memory for the Donnellson Public Library or St. Paul United Church of Christ.

Schmitz Funeral Home of Donnellson is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences to the family may be made at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com.

DENNIS PAUL FEIKERT

Dennis Paul Feikert, 66 of Montrose, IA died Friday, March 8, 2019 at the Great River Medical Center in West Burlington, IA.

He was born February 7, 1953 in Carthage, IL the son of Dale and Lucy Ridge Feikert.

Dennis graduated from Hamilton High School with the Class of 1972. He later attended college for two years in Clinton, IA.

Dennis had been employed at the Iowa State Penitentiary in Ft. Madison, IA for twenty-five years.

He enjoyed tinkering with all kinds of electronics, computers, drones and VCRs. He liked going to casinos and trying his luck. Dennis loved spending time drinking coffee and visiting with friends at Gardiners in Montrose. He loved his pet birds and cats that he had through the years. Dennis is survived by two sisters, Marie Crabtree (Jim) of Keokuk and Cathy Searsen of Keokuk and one brother, Leo Feikert (Peggy) of Blandinsville, IL.

He is preceded in death by his parents, two brothers, Gary Feikert and John Feikert and one brother-in-law, Bill Searsen.

A memorial service will be held at 2:00 p.m., Thursday at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk, IA with Reverend Robert Tillman officiating. Burial will be at a later date in the Oakwood Cemetery in Hamilton, IL.

There will be no visitation.

Memorials may be made to the Keokuk Animal Shelter.

Online condolences may be left for the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.
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Freshman, newcomers will add to seasoned core of runners

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG

The Bloodhound boys track squad has some of the best numbers they’ve seen in quite a few years and co-head coaches Mike Schneider and Chad Hannum think the Hounds will be able to score more points throughout the season.

The two are splitting duties this year, with both being career firefighters on the Fort Madison Fire Department working on different shifts. Both coaches also have sons competing this year.

“We’ve thought about doing this for some time,” Schneider said. “We just looked this year and said it might be the right time to do it. We’re excited for the opportunity and we’re hoping to be able to score some points this year.”

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One of the biggest shifts. Both coaches’ attention included cross-country, too, where they were running up against. Those are big events this year. ”

The Hounds won’t have a lot of leadership, but could make up for it with some quick underclassmen. Three freshman sprinters have caught the coaches’ attention including Gavin Wiseman, Jake McGowan, and Tate Johnson in sprints and Hayden Wolfe could help get points in the distance events. Freshman Garrett Hannum will provide some depth in sprints and middle events.

“If that freshman class sticks together we could see some great things out of them as they learn to run varsity track,” Hannum said.

Seniors Trey Kuntz and Dom Frantz will be bringing some new leadership to the squad in sprinting. Junior Quinton Ross, Brock Califf, and Gage Fullenkamp will also anchor some sprint events.

Justin Cain, another Fort Madison firefighter, has also joined the coaching squad to help with jumping.

Cain said McGowan and possibly Mikey Di-Primula could try to steal some points in the long jump, triple jump, and possibly a high jumper for the first time in a while for Fort Madison. Cain was a pole vaulter for his high school in the Quad Cities.

The Hounds got their first taste of competitive running this past Saturday at the A.D. Dickinson Relays at UNI in Cedar Falls. With the Hounds having just two weeks of practice following basketball and wrestling season, Hannum said the event went well.

“I was happy with the way they ran at the UNI meet considering who they were running up against. Those are big schools and athletes can specialize there so those kids run track all year.”

Schneider said he thinks the Hounds will be competitive in the sprints and dashes, but he said they’re a little light in the 800 runs and relays. He said Wolfe could step into that role as the year goes on.

The boys travel to Central College for the Pekin Indoor Invitational on Thursday before heading to Monmouth College on Saturday for another indoor meet before starting the outdoor season on March 21 at Washington’s Case field.

-30-

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Classes meet every Sunday from 6 pm to 8 pm
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Heifers, Hogs & Hens set for April 13

BUDGET - Continued from Page 1

service or emergency tax levies because the city isn’t currently carrying any bonds to pay off, nor is it at the state maximum $8.10 levy.

In an unrelated issue, the council approved a proposal from Dena Merschbrock for the annual Heifers, Hogs & Hens cookout in the city park for April 13, 2019. Merschbrock said the event has typically been held in the fall, but last year cold temperatures hurt attendance.

“It was just above freezing last year, and we’ve held it in the past and most BBQ people are getting burned out at that point, so we decided to schedule it for the spring this year and see what happens,” Merschbrock said.

The council also:
- approved a liquor license for Brad’s Pad and Sonny’s Supermarket.
- approved a right of way application for Iowa Communications Network.

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.

Community Blood Drives
Lincoln Elementary will be the site of a blood drive on Thursday, March 21, from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the gymnasium. Call the blood center at 800-747-5401 ext. 1281 to donate.

YMCA Little Tykes Spring Soccer
Registration is currently underway for the 2019 season, which runs March 26 – May 2. Registration deadline is March 10 for regular fees of $20 for members, $40 for non-members. From March 11-17th participants can register but fees are $10 higher. Volunteer coaches are needed. Call the YMCA at 319-372-2403 for more information.

St. Patrick’s Day celebration
The Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce will be holding a St. Patrick’s Day celebration on March 16 including a parade, games, music and fun. Parade entry forms are available by contacting the Chamber at 319-372-5471.

Murder Mystery Dinner Theater
The Fort Madison High School Music Department will be presenting it’s annual Dinner Theater on March 22-23. Doors open at 6 p.m. with the show beginning at 7 p.m. Tickets available at Dana Bushong’s at 805 Avenue G.

Fort Madison YMCA’s Shamrocked 2019
The 2nd annual Shamrocked will be held on March 16 starting at 8 a.m. with a free-will donation pancake breakfast, followed by a Bike & Brew after the St. Patrick’s Holiday Parade. For more information, contact the YMCA at 372-2403.

ISU Extension Estate Planning
Iowa State University Outreach and Extension will hold an estate planning session on March 19th at 6 p.m. at the extension office in Donnellson. The session is $20 per person and registration can be done by contacting Whitney Weisinger at 319-835-5116.

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Part-Time Laborer
Parks and Cemetery
Will perform manual work in the grounds and building maintenance within the park and cemetery department, under direct supervision.

DESIRED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS
• Some experience in building and ground maintenance.
• Must have a current Iowa driver’s license.
• Skill in operating some of the listed tools and equipment.

Applications can be picked up and submitted at Fort Madison City Hall 811 Ave. E Fort Madison, Iowa
Lee County Attorney’s Office has an immediate opening for the collections clerk position (40 hours per week).

The position’s successful applicant is preferred (but not required) to have the following:

1. Completion of some college level administrative support courses or any equivalent combination of training and experience.
2. Knowledge of legal terminology, legal format, and legal forms.
3. Knowledge of modern office practices, procedures, and equipment.
6. Knowledge of Iowa Courts Online.
7. Knowledge of Iowa Department of Transportation transcripts.
8. Ability to prepare accurate and timely documents, correspondence, and reports.
9. Ability to learn and operate the county Attorney’s Office computer programs.
10. Ability to understand and follow written and oral instructions.
11. Ability to use Microsoft Outlook, Word, and Excel.
12. Ability to work in a fast-paced environment.
13. Ability to multi-task.
14. Ability to communicate with others using tact and diplomacy.
15. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with supervisory personnel, co-workers, the public, as well as law enforcement personnel, Clerk of Court, Treasurer and Iowa Department of Transportation.
16. Ability to maintain a large filing system of current and closed files.
17. Must be able to travel to Fort Madison, Keokuk, and other locations on occasion.

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e-mail nbraden@leeccounty.org

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Household Hazardous Waste Unit is open Monday through Friday 8am - 4pm
800-216-2370
Call for an appointment

Great County Benefits.

The position is represented by the Public Professional & Maintenance Employees Local No. 2003, IUPAT. The starting wage is $16.02 per hour. Great County Benefits.

The deadline for submitting a resume is March 11, 2019.

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Certification trials establish standards for dogs, handlers

K9s - Continued from Page 1

There were 63 dogs and handlers at the competition and all 63 went through the same search scenarios. The judging is done by certified law enforcement handlers. “This is cops judging cops,” Ruopp said. “You have five people that take a look at your dog so it’s nice to be able to say, “Hey, I had five certified handlers that judged my dog and all five said my dog could do the work.”

She said the dogs are being tested on three factors: recognizing narcotics, responding to the odor, and the handler interpreting what the dog is telling them and locating the narcotics. The odors being detected were marijuana, cocaine, heroine, and methamphetamine.

On the first day the handlers and canines searched five cars in an old ISP garage with methamphetamine and cocaine hidden inside the framework of the vehicle. On the second day, the teams worked three different former correctional officer rooms on the third floor of the

Lee County deputy Uriah Wheatley works with “Gunner” in a narcotics search room trial Tuesday morning at the former ISP John Bennett Center.

Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

two alerts, a passive alert where the animal will sit or stare in a stopped motion, or “Freeze.” The other dogs take an aggressive approach and will scratch at the site and/or bark to alert the handler.

Ruopp said K9 utilization grew rapidly after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S. “After 9/11 we saw a big uptick in the use of the canine’s and that wasn’t just for use in detecting explosives, but for detecting in general,” she said. “Dogs have such instinctive abilities. You can’t take a machine and get the same results. They try, and keep trying, to get machines to detect like a dog, but ultimately you cannot replace a dog’s nose for scent. The detection ability of a well-trained dog is off the charts.”

She said the events were more trials than competitions, where the purpose wasn’t to bring home a trophy, but to show a minimum standard of operation between the search, the dog, and the handler. “This is not meant to be challenging. It’s not meant to be the toughest thing you will ever do with your dog. It’s meant to show that the dog knows the standard and the handler knows what the dog knows. Then you do training to improve the skill level from there,” Ruopp said.

All the trials had 10 minute time parameters to find two ‘hides’, but when the handlers were confident the animals had detected everything in the cars or rooms, they stopped the search. The handlers then had to show the judges where the hides were located on both days.

The judges, who have years of experience, would talk with some of the handlers after the trials and give them advice to help with leash leads and lengths, and on several occasions told the handlers to trust their animals. German Shepherds

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We’re looking forward to helping you continue your efforts and to educating our communities on more ways to help this year.

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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