



Wilton-Durant Advocate News



#InThisTogether continues, p. 20

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Battling COVID-19 one mask at a time



Durant graduate Julia Smith (left) and her mother, former Durant Mayor and current Cedar County Supervisor Dawn Smith have been making face masks and donating them to workers and volunteers on the front-line of the COVID-19 pandemic. Contributed photo

By Derek Sawvell
Managing Editor, Advocate News

She wears many hats, including former Durant city council member and mayor and is currently a member of the Cedar County Board of Supervisors. She is also director of the Durant Community Center, past president of the Iowa State Association of County Supervisors and is currently on the Iowa State Association of Counties board of directors along with other boards and committees that still meet remotely as of now amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yet starting a couple weeks ago, Durant's Dawn Smith dug out her sewing machine and began making homemade masks for those on the front lines dealing with the novel coronavirus COVID-19. And helping her along the way is her daughter Julia Smith, a Durant High School grad who works for Sen. Joni Ernst's congressional office as a constituent services representative.

With the spread of COVID-19 continuing and the United States having more confirmed cases and deaths than any country in the world, Dawn and Julia wanted to act. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now recommending people wear masks when in high traffic areas where social distancing is difficult.

According to information at cdc.gov, CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission...

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise

unable to remove the mask without assistance.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Julia said her mother began making the masks when thinking about family.

"My mom and I came to the idea of making masks when the first reported cases of COVID-19 surfaced in Iowa. We heard about how healthcare workers were running out of PPE (personal protective equipment) and knew we had to do something to help. My sister-in-law, Haylee, is a registered nurse at UnityPoint hospital in Muscatine, and my brother, Blaine, is a State Trooper at Post 12. They're both working on the frontlines of this pandemic and we wanted to make sure they have the protective gear they need," Julia said.

The duo began making homemade masks March 21 and has made more than 150. "We try our best to work on the masks in-between conference calls, business hours, and meetings — as my mom and I are both working from home in order to practice social distancing," Julia said. "We've given them to healthcare workers, law enforcement officers, grocery store workers, first responders, a nursing home in Rock Island, high-risk individuals and elderly members of our community, just to name a few. Believe it or not, this is Dawn Smith's first time in front of a sewing machine in more than 30-plus years! We made a deal that I would cut/pin and she would do all the sewing."

Since the beginning, Dawn and Julia have branched

HOMEMADE MASKS
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Wilton school board resorts to virtual meeting

By Derek Sawvell
Managing Editor, Advocate News

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and Iowa schools being closed through April 30, the Wilton school board took part in its first virtual meeting April 8, with board members attending via computer screen at home and Wilton administrators doing the same from their offices within district buildings.

The bulk of the two-hour meeting revolved around the administrative report portion, where Elementary School Principal Denise Austin and Jr./Sr. High Principal Marc Snavelly updated the board on measures taken to help get students to the new April 30 deadline set forth by Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds. The previous four-week cancellation is being forgiven, but districts must submit plans to the state for time missed from April 13 through April 30.

Superintendent Joe Burnett said the district submitted a plan to the state and it was approved in less than 24 hours. "Either it was great or they're approving everything that's put in front of them," he said, noting that if school closures go beyond April 30, it's unknown whether an updated plan would have to be submitted.

Wilton school board



Wilton Jr./Sr. High Principal Marc Snavelly is shown partaking in the Wilton school board meeting April 8 from his office. Some of the other participants in the meeting are shown to the right.

WILTON SCHOOL BOARD
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Sicilian offering free spaghetti dinners during pandemic

By Ashley Darnold
of the Advocate News

Many Wilton businesses are standing up to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and help lower the number of cases in our communities. One business, The Sicilian Pizzeria in Wilton, started helping residents in the beginning of the outbreak — and will continue to help as long as this virus continues, according to owner Gary Brown.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began affecting members of the community and surrounding areas, Brown decided to help by making fresh loaves of bread. Because of the unknown panic, many stores immediately began selling out of daily household essentials, including bread. Many members of the community, who were not able to buy bread in stores due to the shortage, were able to pick up loaves from The Sicilian Pizzeria — helping their families through a tough time.

Brown is at it again, helping the community through his restaurant by making free spaghetti dinners for anyone 60 years and older. Brown came up with the idea a couple weeks ago because, “elderly people shouldn’t be out during these times.”

On March 26, Brown offered free spaghetti dinners to anyone in the surrounding commu-

nities over 60 — traveling as far as Walcott to hand-deliver meals to the elderly. The spaghetti dinner includes a generous portion of noodles with homemade meat and marinara sauce. More than 100 meals were served the first night to elderly men and women throughout the community and surrounding area.

Preparing the meals takes about two days. A meat pasta sauce is made the night before, with noodles being prepared the day of pickups and deliveries. Brown and his staff work the night before and the whole day of, preparing these meals for order and delivery.

“This is a time where we all need to stand together,” said Brown. Free spaghetti dinners were offered again to the elderly on April 9. Customers called in to reserve their meals and either chose to pick up the dinner at the Sicilian or have one of the staff hand-deliver to their doorsteps.

Brown has received a lot of positive response from the community. Delivering meals to the elderly, “they are always thanking me with a huge smile,” Brown said. “The smiles on their faces are priceless, no money can buy that.”

During The Sicilian Pizzeria’s second night of offering free meals to the elderly, Brown and his staff gave away more than 100 meals. Brown stated that he is going to continue of-

fering these meals as long as the COVID-19 virus is impacting the area.

During the initial virus outbreak and ordering of restaurants to close dine-in options per Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds’ proclamation, Brown said his business slowed down a bit. After a couple weeks, business went back to normal because customers primarily order for take out or delivery.

Because of Brown’s generosity during these uncertain times, many community members have donated money to be put toward the free spaghetti dinner program. Brown said he was not expecting to receive money for his free meals. He plans on donating the money to the school food program to help ensure no child goes hungry.

The Sicilian Pizzeria has begun offering free spaghetti dinners to elderly folks 60 years or older on special nights during the week. Over 100 dinners were given to community members March 26, and an additional 100 on April 9. Shown at right is the manager of The Sicilian Pizzeria, James Thomas, preparing free spaghetti dinners on April 9. Photo by Ashley Darnold



Durant’s industrial park looks to grow this spring

By Layce DeLong
for the Advocate News

Officials were asked to rezone the south industrial park from light industrial to heavy industrial at the April 13 Durant city council meeting. The request to change four lots was approved and will be sent to the planning and zoning commission.

This is a step forward for Quad River, LLC, which has been working with MSA Professional Services and the Durant Development Corporation. Kevin Bailey, team leader for MSA, said there were three key concerns that were researched before bringing the idea to council.

The first was whether or not heavy industrial waste would empty into the sewers. Research

**Durant
City
Council**

found that there would not be industrial strength waste emitted by this company.

Secondly, there was a concern for a capacity of water supply. Bailey said there would be ample supply and capacity. The last issue dealt with water pressure. Analysis showed that there would not be enough water pressure during peak usage.

Bailey recommended the company install a storage tank on-site to use during peak times. He said the company already does this at other locations. “Our recommendation is to approve the Quad River, LLC development,” Bailey told council, under the assumption they would install the tank.

Council unanimously approved. City Clerk Deana Cavin said construction for the new facility could begin as early as June.

Durant police asks for code changes
Police Chief Orville Randolph told officials

that currently traffic tickets are written on state code. He would like to instead write them on the city’s code. He said recently all of the city’s codes were integrated with the department’s software, making the change possible and asked if it could be possible to begin in July.

“With these extraordinary times we have right now, we haven’t had a high volume of traffic,” he said.

Writing the ticket on the city code allows more of the funds to get diverted back to the city. However, if a case were to be disputed and taken to court, the city would be responsible for providing a legal defense instead of the county.

Randolph said the officers can go between writing on the city and state codes; writing on state if they think it could go to court. He added that the city attorney was already assisting with nuisance and other issues for the city.

Officials discussed what happens when ordinances change, speed zones, stop signs and more. The attorney recommended the city wait until July 1 in order to budget for attorney fees. Council members and the mayor also wanted more information on what neighboring towns do and how many tickets go to court over a given period of time. The topic was tabled for research.

Randolph also advised that the types of calls the department has seen due to the COVID-19

pandemic have been a little different. “It’s just been a unique time,” he said. He reminded officials social distancing and the number of people meeting together was being monitored. “Everybody’s been pretty cooperative,” he added.

Joey Gehrls estate gift finalized

Upon his passing, local philanthropist Joey Gehrls made donations to several local organizations, including a sizeable gift to the city of Durant. City Attorney Julie Sprague asked that council approve the mayor to authorize the signing of receipt and waiver for the memorial money.

The receipt, consent and waiver states the city will or has received the funds, consents to closing the estate and the final report of executors, and the city waives its right to request a court hearing on the executor’s final report.

Gehrls had gifted the city 115 acres of farmland to sell. The appraised value and sale price was \$1.319 million. Closing cost and attorney fees were paid, with total distribution to the city coming in at \$1,281,882.38. Sprague anticipates a check will be delivered to the city by the end of the month.

DURANT COUNCIL
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Making masks a family affair

HOMEMADE MASKS
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the “business” out to involve the help of Julia’s grandmothers Mary Ann Smith of Ringgold County and Judy Greenfield of Hamilton County. “They’re both lifelong sewers and have their own machines. They sew some of the masks at their homes and mail them to us for my mom to sew elastic bands on them,” added Julia. “With my mom falling in the ‘high risk’ category, I just want to stress how critical it is for everyone to heed the CDC’s warnings and to practice social distancing. Partying right now is not ‘cool.’ It’s reckless and selfish. If you have access to a sewing machine and materials, please consider joining the thousands of individuals across the country in making masks for those who need them the most right now.”

When asked to describe the masks, Julia had no problem sharing the Smith secrets:

You will need a cotton fabric, any print for all men, women and children.

Cotton flannel for the backing.

1/8” flat braided elastic.

Cut the elastic 7 inches long for adult or children.

You can make two sizes: Adult (9-by-6 inches) or Child (7.5-by-5 inches).

1. Put right sides of cotton and flannel fabric together.

2. Starting at the center of the bottom edge, sew to the first corner; stop. Sew the end of elastic to the corner. A few stitches forward and back will hold this.

3. Sew to the next corner, stop and bring the other end of that same elastic to the corner and sew a few stitches forward and back.



It’s been more than 30 years, but Dawn Smith of Durant is back to sewing, helping to make face masks for area healthcare, law enforcement and other first responders in response to PPE needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Contributed photo

4. Now sew across the top of the mask to the next corner. And repeat step 2 to the corner.

5. Sew to next corner and sew in the other end of the same elastic.

6. Sew across the bottom leaving about 1.5 to 2 inches open. Stop, cut the thread. Turn inside out.

7. Pin 3 tucks on each side of the mask. Make sure the tucks are the same direction.

8. Sew around the edge of the mask twice.

Wilton - Durant Advocate News

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Ball: Local protests protected under First Amendment rights

By Ashley Darnold
of the Advocate News

Protesters have been gathering at times downtown by Jeff's Market on the corner of Maurer and Fourth streets during the past couple weeks. Wilton city council members opened up the April 13 meeting with discussion on possible action toward the protests.

City Administrator Chris Ball said that as long as the protesters are not impeding traffic or citizens, they can continue to protest. Their speech is protected by freedom of speech and freedom of religion under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, even though their words are controversial,

Wilton City Council

according to Ball.

Mayor Bob Barrett stated his efforts to go talk with other cities to see what "we can and cannot do" in regard to protesters in Wilton. Ball has already begun talking with other cities, such as Iowa City, to see what their procedures are when it comes to protesting.

In other discussion, City Clerk Lori Brown was set to retire in mid April, but she has adjusted her plans to help during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following statement was included in council member packets:

Due to the conflixtions with the virus and office staffing, Lori will not be leaving her position as previously stated. She will keep working through the months of April and May of this year. As of now, her predicted last day at the City Hall will be May 29, 2020.

Ball updated the council on city essential workers, stating that all staff is doing split shifts at City Hall and Wilton Public Works. As of now, the city has continued paying their city employees even though some are working from home.

Steve Owens said he would suggest con-

tinue paying the employees because they didn't ask to stay home, "I am sure they want to continue working," he said.

It was suggested that the city pay these essential workers for another month, and then revisit the situation and reassess. The council approved their continued pay.

Administrative Items

* Ball told council that recycling is still being picked up, but it is being thrown in the trash due to the COVID-19 virus. The only recycling item being kept and recycled is cardboard because it "offers the least amount of risk."

Ball urged the city to continue recycling their items, and they will continue to be picked up throughout the pandemic.

* Ball also discussed late payments for city services. The city will not be shutting down services for residents who cannot afford their utility payments during the pandemic — however, if a resident cannot pay, he urged them to call City Hall (563-732-2115) to set up a payment plan.

Miscellany

In other action, council:

* Member Ted Marolf informed the council that the landscaping for the Muscatine County Freedom Rock area will be started next week. A total of 170 pavers have been placed and the organization is looking for more.

* Member Wayne Budding gave a shout out to the community for all the good that has come out of the COVID-19 virus. "As bad as this whole thing has been, some good has come out of it," Budding said.

* Council approved a pay increase for Matt Wagaman, a city employee working with the water and wastewater department. His pay went from \$18 to \$19.07.

Council members Keith Stanley, Marolf, Budding, Sheryl Lenker and Owens were present. All action taken was unanimous unless otherwise noted. The next regular meeting is April 27 at 7 p.m.

Don't flush flushable wipes

The Iowa DNR is reminding Iowans of the importance of flushing ONLY toilet paper and human waste down toilets to avoid disruption of sewer systems.

The Department recognizes the temporary shortage of toilet paper products during the COVID-19 outbreak, but warns items such as flushable wipes, disinfecting wipes, surface cleaning wipes, baby wipes, even though advertised as flushable, are not recommended for disposal by flushing down a toilet. Diapers, paper towels, tissues and feminine hygiene products should also not be flushed down toilets.

Even though these products may not clog your sewer system at your residence, when deposited together, in an entire community, can pose a serious risk of overwhelming a community's sewer system. If a sewer system is clogged, it can lead to backups of sewage into residences and overflows into the environment. Additionally, it can cause pump failures and lead to several hours of repairs and expenses to city wastewater systems.

Residents are encouraged to dispose of the items in bags and dispose in the trash.

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Second COVID-19 death confirmed in Muscatine County

The Muscatine County Department of Public Health announced April 13 the second death associated with novel coronavirus COVID-19 in the county. The individual's age range was 61-80 years old.

"We wish to extend our sympathy to this individual's family," said Muscatine County Public Health Director Christy Roby Williams. "Muscatine County Public Health Department and all of our key partners throughout the county and state continue to work endless hours to reduce the spread and impact of this virus in our communities."

COVID-19, all residents should:

- Stay home as much as possible.
- Leave only for essential employment and obtaining necessities such as groceries or medication (check your local communities for delivery options).
- When you must run errands for household/health supplies, send only one person from the home, if possible. If they can wear a homemade mask it may serve as an additional barrier to prevent the spread.
- Upon returning home for any essential necessities, remove shoes at the door and wash hand thoroughly for at least 20 seconds.

- Stay home when even mildly ill (the kind of illness that normally wouldn't prevent you from your everyday activities).
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow/upper arm.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Thoroughly clean commonly touched

surfaces in your home.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19, visit the IDPH webpage at <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus> and follow the department on Facebook at @IowaDepartmentOfPublicHealth and on Twitter at @IAPublicHealth.

Cedar/Jones ECI accepting funding proposals

The Cedar/Jones Early Childhood Iowa Board is now accepting proposals for funds from organizations that provide comprehensive services for children prenatal through 5 years of age in Cedar and Jones counties for state Fiscal Year 2021 beginning July 1st, 2020.

Programs need to address the priorities of: 1) increasing access to quality early care and education opportunities for young children and their families; 2) promoting the development of

a local mental health system that identifies and addresses the needs of young children and their families; and 3) supporting the dental health needs of young children and their families.

For an application, please contact Sherri Hunt, Cedar/Jones Early Childhood Iowa Director, at sherri.hunt@co.jones.ia.us. Proposals must be post marked by April 10.



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 <p>502 Ayres Progress, Wilton Absolutely like new commercial/industrial facility on 2.5 acres in Wilton's industrial park. All steel framed and sided building with 18' sidewalls in warehouse. Has loading dock and 10X14 overhead door also. 400 amp 3 phase in warehouse and 250 amp single phase in office. Radiant heat in warehouse and GFA with C/A in offices. This Property Is Ideal for Any Business With This Location! 10 Minutes South Of Interstate 80 Exit 271</p>	 <p>1181 Timber Ln, Tipton Exquisite 'house on the hill' in Timber Run, just south of Tipton on a 1 acre lot. Amazing all brick home features 2x6 construction, 3 bdrms, 2 bthrms, open floor plan w/ custom kitchen & tons of pull out storage, granite counters in the kitchen and bthrms, hard wood & ceramic tile throughout the home. This home is perfect for 'age in place' w/ADA Toilets, high counters, main level laundry, low step showers & 2 step entry into the home. Rear deck gives you a great view of the valley off the rear of the property & underneath storage area. front porch is a perfect place to watch the rural sunset. Walk out lower level is ready for your finishing touches w/patio door, egress windows & gardening shed under the home w/ separate roll up door. 25 minute commute to Iowa City, The Quad Cities or Muscatine, THIS IS IT</p>	 <p>1401 Cedar St., Tipton HORSES, ACREAGE & TOYS ALL IN ONE PLACE CLOSE TO TOWN! If you are looking to spread out and be just outside Tipton; yet you want to be close to town for work, school, shopping, etc. this is the property for you!! This gorgeous 1.94 acre property includes a wonderful large home, an extra large detached garage, a horse barn / large shed. Relax on your expansive front porch, and enjoy the scenery. This 3,640 sq ft home has 4 beds/2 baths and an extra large bonus room in the attic ready to be converted into your choice space, game room, large closet, you name it! The possibilities are endless!</p>	 <p>600 15th Ave., Durant Well kept 4 bedroom, 4 bathroom 2 story home located on the East end of Durant. It is located on a large lot with nice sized trees and mature landscaping on a dead end street. The outside is maintenance free and has a 2 year old roof. The inside features 4 bedrooms, master bathroom with whirlpool tub, 4 seasons room and a finished basement with 4th bedroom. This home is ready to move into with a complete appliance package, come check it out.</p>	 <p>706 9th St., Durant Located just a few blocks from the school in an established neighborhood on the north side of Durant awaits this 3 bedroom 2 bathroom ranch. No need to worry about updates on the exterior of this home; new roof, Anderson Casement Windows, vinyl siding, exterior doors and concrete driveway are all new in 2018. The interior features 3 bedrooms on the main floor and a 4th non conforming bedroom in the basement. The partially finished basement also includes a rec room, bathroom and even another kitchen. And HOW could I forget an attached 4 stall garage that is completely dry walled, insulated and heated! All appliances stay as well. You have got to check this out!</p>	 <p>1101 6th St., Durant Wow, this is a flip house by Paper's Construction Co that you must check out! This is a 3 bdrm, 2 story house located on a corner lot across from the city park in Durant. The existing house was torn down to the studs. From there it has been totally remodeled to include all new plumbing, heating, electrical, roof, soffit, siding, windows, drywall, doors and trim, cabinets and flooring. Sounds like a new house doesn't it! Wait til you see the striking exterior, 10' tall great room walls, and the impressive staircase. Make this house a must see! Listing agent is the owner. This property qualifies for Durant's 7 year tax abatement program.</p>
 <p>215 W. 6th St., Wilton Come take a look at this 3 bedroom 2 bathroom home on half a block in Wilton. Very spacious 70' x 234' lot with screened front porch, storage shed and a large barn with heat that has been converted into a 2 stall garage. Quality craftsmanship from 1878 the home still has most of the original doors and trim. New carpet throughout most of the home and fresh interior paint with modern colors will also give you the feel of a new home. Very large main level with an island kitchen, sitting room, dining room, living room, 1/2 bathroom and formal living room. The second level has 3 bedrooms, full bathroom and a walk up partially finished attic that is great for storage.</p>	 <p>612 W. Wate St., Wilton Great north end location just across the street from The Meadows Sub Division in Wilton sits this 3 bedroom 3 bathroom home with partially finished walk out lower level home with fenced yard and 12' x 15' patio. Main level has a large living room, dining room, oak kitchen, 3 bedrooms with master bathroom and main bathroom all with new interior doors. The finished lower level has newer carpeting in the spacious family room and the other half of the basement is currently unfinished, but is large enough for a game room, wet bar, etc. Fresh clean interior paint with modern color choices. Come take a look.</p>	 <p>PRICE REDUCED 610 W. 6th St., Wilton Move right in with fresh paint and spotless floor coverings. This 4 bedroom 2 bathroom home has a partially finished basement, large deck, attached 2 stall garage, private backyard and complete appliance package. This one will not last in this market.</p>	 <p>108 W 5th St., Wilton Large 2 Story 4 bedroom home located in Wilton. Recently updated bathrooms on each floor, fresh interior paint and updated vinyl windows. 2 decks off the back of the house to relax on and a 2 stall detached garage. All cleaned up and ready for a new owner.</p>	 <p>118 E. 5th St., Wilton Very large 4 bedroom 2 bathroom home with single stall garage and alley access on a corner lot in Wilton. The second level of the home was completely remodeled from the studs out, vinyl windows, newer steel roof, new front porch and vinyl siding. New Tankless water heater and softener in 2017, new kitchen flooring in 2018, spacious pantry, formal dining room, whirlpool tub and complete appliance package seal the deal. Call today, homes are not lasting long in this market.</p>	 <p>626 Lombard St., Clarence Fresh exterior paint, corner lot and plenty of storage. This property consists of 2 buildings 30' x 64' and 40' x 100' connected by 10' x 21' walkway. Currently used as storage, but has endless possibilities.</p>
 <p>730 Lombard St., Clarence Large Auto Repair/Sales Facility that could be home to a number of uses! Currently the property has 5/6 service bays, parts department, break room, show room and 3 offices. Originally built as a Chrysler Dealership in 1973. This property could be the start of your new business or a great place for the Auto/Motorcycle/Steel or Wood Working Enthusiast. (Trade Fixtures do not stay)</p>	 <p>615 Crestview, Tipton A corner lot and walk out lower level in Tipton! 3 bedroom 2 bathroom home with partially finished lower level. Recent updates include New Steel Roof, rear entry door and vinyl windows in 2017. Well maintained yard with small back deck and storage shed as well. Nice quiet location.</p>	 <p>119 Cherry St., Atalissa Great Turn Key Business! Property comes complete with 2 parcels of land, bar equipment, 2 storage buildings, outdoor beer garden & serving area. 3 Bdrm apartment has long term tenant that helps cut overhead, separate utilities except water. 1 Storage building could be turned into 3 storage units to increase passive income. Commercial space can also be leased for \$1,000 per month with an option to purchase. This could be an owner operator business or an investor could purchase and rent out the apartment, commercial space and storage. BUILDING MAY ALSO BE CONVERTED TO A 3 PLEX APARTMENT BUILDING.</p>	 <p>58 Walnut St., Tipton Check out this cozy 2 bedroom home on a quiet street in Tipton offering a large kitchen with lovely custom counter tops, fresh flooring and paint throughout, full basement, and a detached 2 car garage. Ready for you to move in today.</p>	 <p>Commercial Space for Lease 210 5th St., Durant 1400 Sq. Ft. of commercial space currently available for lease for \$700 per month plus utilities. This space was last used for a chiropractic office and previously retail space. Currently inside has 3 private offices or exam rooms, storage room, 1 restroom and large waiting room. Parking lot will hold 9 to 10 cars. Lawn maintenance included with the lease, snow removal is tenant responsibility. Owner is a licensed real estate broker in the State of Iowa.</p>	<p>LOTS! Available</p> <p>WILTON 1st Street \$19,500 Jackson Street \$19,500</p>



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Iowa Democratic Party announces updated county convention process

DES MOINES — On April 8, the Iowa Democratic Party announced an updated county convention process to be conducted remotely over the month of April. The updated, non-present county convention process gives county party leaders options on how to conduct their convention, including online or by mail.

From April 13-17, Iowans who were elected precinct delegates and alternates will register to participate in their remote county convention, and will indicate their preferred ballot method: online, over the phone, or via mail.

Elections for District/State Delegates and County Affirmative Chairs will be conducted remotely from April 22-30. County chairs will have the option to use a template plan or develop their own within the rules outlined in the updated DSP and convention process.

“Consistent with our values, the health and public safety of all Iowans is the No. 1 priority of the Iowa Democratic Party. Our state and country are facing a period of uncertainty due to the spread of the coronavirus, and as such, we are adapting our county conventions to

move forward without risking our public health during this time,” said IDP Chair Mark Smith. “I want to thank all of our county chairs for their hard work and dedication to maintaining the integrity of the process while keeping Iowans safe. We will get through this crisis together, and our focus remains steadfast on electing Democrats up and down the ticket in November.”

The updated process is based on conversations with county chairs, the State Central Committee, and party leaders. The state party

will work with county chairs to make sure they have the resources they need to be able to hold their convention within the parameters of this process and the overall goal of protecting public health.

Per the state party’s process, the changes to the Delegate Selection Plan were approved unanimously by the State Central Committee, and the final plan incorporates feedback from county chairs who are in charge of implementing the next convention.

More information about the county convention process can be found at: theconventions.org.

Assessed value appeal dates extended to June 5

Iowa Assessors recently mailed assessment rolls to any property owner who had changes to their 2020 assessed valuations. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, an official state order gives property owners who disagree with property values additional time to petition their local board of review. Iowa State Association of Assessors President Dixie Saunders recently notified assessors that the deadline to file an assessment appeal has been extended until June 5. The regular appeal deadline is April 30.

The board of review is an independent board made up of appointed private citizens who meet for the purpose of hearing protests to assessed values. After reviewing the information provided by the property owner and

the assessor’s office, the board acts to either change the assessed value or leave it intact.

Saunders explained, “Current assessed values are effective Jan. 1, 2020. Conditions affecting assessed values after the first of this year will be reflected on the 2021 assessment rolls. Over the coming months, assessors will be monitoring sale prices of properties in their respective jurisdictions. If COVID-19 or other economic conditions affect overall market values, next year’s assessed value will change accordingly.”

Anyone who disagrees with their assessed value has two options available at this time. The first option involves calling the local assessor’s office to request an “Informal Review.” This year, the deadline is April 27. The second

option is to file a formal appeal with the board of review by June 5. Contact information for assessors and the form titled “Disaster Counties Petition to Local Board of Review” can be accessed at www.Iowa-Assessors.org.

Saunders noted, “While many county offices are closed to the public, most are still effectively conducting business via phone, mail and email. I would encourage people to shelter at home and contact your local assessor with any concerns.”



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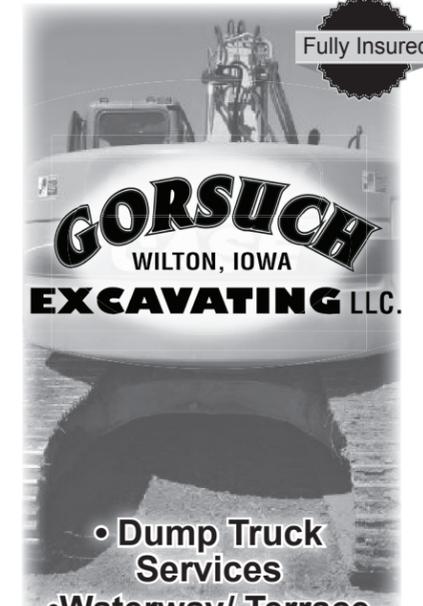
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Durant & Wilton Graduating Seniors

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Look for graduation sections in our May editions!

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Wilton district using voluntary learning initiatives during pandemic

WILTON SCHOOL BOARD

continued from page 1

ted. Snavelly told the board the district is going with voluntary learning initiatives to help provide students with educational enrichment. He said having the 1:1 computer initiative has helped immensely through the shutdown. He said 7-12 grade teachers are planning three days per week then presenting to students on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The voluntary interactions with classes are being attended by 50-60 percent of students, according to Snavelly.

When planning for the end of the year, Snavelly said it depended on whether or not students would come back to school. At this point, he said teachers are working closely with students to ensure all missed assignments are being turned in and if they are, students could receive full credit. If students can come back, Snavelly said there would be around a 5-week fourth quarter that may be done on a pass/fail basis.

He also noted that through a recent grant program, WTC Communications worked with the school to help get students in need Internet access while school is out. A portion of the \$5,000 grant was also split between the Wilton

Café, Jeff's Market and the Durant-Wilton Food Pantry for helping to feed students during this time.

Prom has been postponed and the annual commencement ceremony "is up in the air right now," said Snavelly.

Board member Rob Metzger asked what would happen to seniors if the rest of the year were canceled. Burnett said it would be a local board decision but an idea would be to look at grades through the third quarter and make the fourth a pass or fail option. "We're really working with students to get all their work in for full credit," he added.

Burnett added that by law, the school year must be done by June 30 and that a graduation ceremony would have to be held by then, but hopefully closer to the May 17 date originally scheduled. Yet social distancing rules would come into play on any options.

"Prom could be held at a later date sometime in June. We'd lose our luster if we had graduation far after the (scheduled) date," Burnett said.

Elementary Principal Austin said teachers were working to help move kids forward during the difficult time of missing so much school. She said feedback and the social aspect was big for younger students. Teachers in grades 3-6 are interacting with students through Google

classroom.

She said she's also been in close contact with teachers, grade-by-grade, since each grade is different. She said most teachers are holding class once per week with all students then holding separate small-group sessions.

Miscellany

In other action, the board:

- * Approved business and financial reports.
- * Held a FY21 budget hearing prior to the regular meeting before later approving the FY21 budget.
- * Approved the job description for the school's at-risk coordinator.
- * Reviewed policies 800; 801.1; 801.2; 801.3; 801.4; 801.5; 801.6; 801.7; and 801.8.
- * Approved 2020-2021 sharing agreements with Durant for the following positions: transportation director, elementary band teacher, half-time Spanish teacher, vocational ag, business education, art education, family and consumer science education and computer science.
- * Held the second reading of policies 711.10; 711.2R2 and 711.9.
- * Approved the 2020-2021 home school assistance program agreement with Mississippi Bend AEA.
- * Approved the 2020-2021 medical, dental

and vision insurance rates, which will increase around 3.8 percent.

* Approved an order of 7-12 grade ELA curriculum with a total of \$6,798.35.

* Approved the lowest of three bids for replacement of teacher laptops, done every four years. ITSavvy submitted the low bid of \$46,575 for the purchase of 69 Acer Chromebooks.

* Approved the 2020-2021 Latchkey handbook.

* Approved two resolutions with regard to the recent COVID-19 pandemic. One included a response and emergency suspension of policy; and the other included pandemic temporary supplemental policy provisions. Burnett noted that both help explain and secure that district employees continue getting paid through closure due to pandemics.

* Approved the hiring of Erica Schultz, 7-12 grade math, at a salary to be determined.

The next work session will be April 22 at 5 p.m., where Burnett said updated budget numbers would be presented to the board with regard to the upcoming gym commons project. The next regular meeting is May 13 at 5:30 p.m. Board members Jeremy Lies, Linda Duncan, Rob Metzger and Tim Barrett were present. Tara Oien was absent. All action taken was unanimous.

Wilton-Durant AN POLICE REPORTS



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Wilton

The following information was received from the office of the Wilton Police Department:

April 5—Police were dispatched to a civil dispute in the 500 block of Walnut Street. Options were given for a civil suit.

April 6—Police assisted the Wilton First Responders and the Durant Ambulance with a medical call in the 100 block of East Second Street.

April 7—Police completed a special assignment with the Wilton Fire Department and EMS.

April 8—Police received a report of a juvenile male runaway. Police are working with parents in an attempt to locate.

April 8—Police were called to the 2500 block of 112th Street for a disturbance.

April 8—Police responded to the 100 block of West Sixth Street for a report of harassment.

April 8—Police responded to the 500 block of Maple Street for a reported disturbance. The subjects were gone upon arrival.

April 8—Police issued a golf cart registration at the Wilton Police Department.

April 8—Police responded to the 500 block of West Sixth Street for a reported dog bite/vicious animal call. No contact with the owners was made. Police plan to follow up with the subject.

April 8—Police responded to a call referencing suspicious activity.

April 8—Police responded to an animal call in the 500 block of East Third Street.

April 8—Police responded to child abuse allegations. Abuse was unfounded.

April 9—Police responded to the 400 block of Cypress Street for a parking problem.

April 9—Police responded to an animal call in the 700 block of Maple Court. A small terrier-type dog was taken to the city pound.

April 9—Police responded to the 800 block of West Wate Street for suspicious activity.

April 9—Police responded to the 800 block of Maurer Street for a harassment/obscene call. A verbal warning was given.

April 9—Police responded to a follow-up in the 500 block of Sixth Street. The investigation is ongoing.

April 9—Police were dispatched to a civil problem in the 800 block of Maurer Street.

April 9—Police were dispatched to the 100 block of East Fourth Street for a civil dispute. Options were given.

April 9—Police responded to an animal

problem in the 300 block of West Sixth Street.

April 9—Police were dispatched to a domestic disturbance in the 400 block of Cedar Street. Both parties involved were given options.

April 9—Police followed up to an earlier reported disturbance.

April 10—Police assisted Muscatine County with a vehicle pursuit.

April 10—Police received a noise complaint in the 100 block of East Fourth Street.

April 10—Police were dispatched to a civil disturbance in the 900 block of Seminary Street. Options were given to pursue actions through the civil court system.

April 10—Police performed an area check covering the north side of Wilton in response to suspicious activity.

April 11—Police assisted the Muscatine County Sheriff's Office with a vehicle pursuit in the 1200 block of Taylor Avenue. An arrest was made.

April 11—Police responded to a call in the 700 block of East First Street of a vacated premises with a door open. No occupants were found.

April 11—Police responded to a disturbance in the 300 block of Cedar Street. Unable to locate.

Durant

The following information was received from the office of the Durant Police Department:

April 5—Police performed a business check in Durant.

April 5—Police gave extra patrol in the 100 block of Eighth Avenue.

April 6—Police responded to a traffic hazard/disabled vehicle report between 14th Avenue and Fifth Street.

April 6—Police were requested to speak with a subject in the 500 block of 14th Avenue.

April 6—Police were requested to speak with a subject in the 600 block of Eighth Street.

April 6—Police performed a vehicle inspection at the Durant Police Department for IDOT licensing requirements.

April 6—Police responded to reports of fraud/scam.

April 6—Police gave extra patrol at Jeff's Market.

April 6—Police gave extra patrol in the 100 block of Eighth Avenue.

April 7—Police responded to a subject trespassing at Feldhahn Park. A warning was given to the resident that the park was closed

due to the COVID-19 proclamation.

April 7—Police responded to a civil dispute in the 500 block of Fifth Street.

April 7—Police gave extra patrol at West Park. A warning to kids that the park was closed due to the COVID-19 proclamation was given.

April 7—Police gave a warning to a resident for mowing grass on the street in the 1000 block of Fifth Street.

April 7—Police gave extra patrol at Jaycee Park.

April 7—Police gave extra patrol at Feldhahn Park.

April 7—Police gave extra patrol at Hy-Vee Pharmacy.

April 7—Police performed a records check for federal employment at the Durant Police Station.

April 7—Police gave extra patrol at Jeff's Market.

April 7—Police received a traffic complaint between First Avenue and Sixth Street.

April 7—Police responded to reports of assault in the 1000 block of Fifth Street. The victim declined charges.

April 8—Police officers attended a meeting at the Durant Police Station.

April 8—Police controlled traffic at Bentley Funeral Home for a funeral escort.

April 8—Police received a medical call in the 500 block of 14th Avenue.

April 8—Police gave extra patrol at Jaycee Park.

April 8—Police gave extra patrol at Jeff's Market.

April 8—Police gave extra patrol at Feldhahn Park.

April 8—Police performed a vehicle inspection at the Durant Police Station for IDOT licensing requirements.

April 8—Police gave extra patrol at West Park.

April 8—Police performed a records check at the Durant Police Station.

April 8—Police assisted the Durant Public Works with traffic control for debris between First Avenue and Fifth Street.

April 8—Police were requested to speak with a subject at the Durant Police Department.

April 8—Police gave extra patrol at Jeff's Market.

April 8—Police gave extra patrol in the 100 block of Eighth Avenue.

April 8—Police performed extra patrol at Casey's.

April 9—Police gave extra patrol at Feldhahn

Park.

April 9—Police gave extra patrol at Jaycee Park.

April 9—Police gave a warning notice for a nuisance in the 700 block of 10th Avenue.

April 9—Police gave a warning notice for a nuisance in the 600 block of Eighth Street.

April 9—Police assisted the Wilton Police with a traffic stop in the 700 block of West Wate Street.

April 9—Police gave a warning notice for a nuisance in the 600 block of First Avenue.

April 9—Police were at Corteva with the Durant Ambulance.

April 9—Police performed a traffic stop between Fifth Street and Eighth Avenue. Michelle Lenning, of Durant, was cited for driving with license was revoked and under suspension.

April 9—Police gave extra patrol in the 100 block of Eighth Avenue.

April 10—Police assisted the Muscatine County Sheriff's Office with a pursuit in the 1300 block of Trail Avenue. The driver was in custody prior to arrival.

April 10—Police took a report of vandalism in the 600 block of Sixth Street.

April 10—Police gave a warning notice for a nuisance in the 600 block of Sixth Street.

April 10—Police responded to suspicious activity in the 800 block of Sixth Street.

April 10—Police gave extra patrol at Jaycee Park.

April 10—Police gave extra patrol at West Park.

April 10—Police gave extra patrol at Feldhahn Park.

April 10—Police gave a warning notice for a nuisance in the 200 block of Eighth Avenue.

April 10—Police gave extra patrol in the 100 block of Eighth Avenue.

April 11—Police responded to suspicious activity at Jaycee Park. It was referred to Durant Public Works.

April 11—Police performed a vehicle inspection for IDOT licensing requirements.

April 11—Police gave extra patrol at Jeff's Market.

April 11—Police gave extra patrol in the 100 block of Eighth Avenue.

April 11—Police gave a warning to a resident to turn down their music in the 200 block of Ninth Avenue.

April 11—Police gave a warning for intoxication in public between Third Avenue and Sixth Street.

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Leona Williams

Leona N. Williams, 78, of Davenport died Wednesday, April 8, 2020 at her home. No services or visitation will be held.

Memorial contributions may be made to King's Harvest Pet Ministry in her memory. Online condolences may be left at www.bentleyfuneralhome.com.

Leona was born in Quincy, Illinois on Nov. 17, 1941, the daughter of Frank and Charlotte (Sohn) Neuman. She graduated from High School in Quincy, Illinois.

She worked at General Foods in Davenport and the I-80 Truckstop in Walcott.

She enjoyed going to church.

Leona is survived by her daughters Karen (Jeff) Grunder of Wilton and Ruth Williams of Davenport; and her son Cecil "Beany" (Stacy)



Leona Williams

Williams of Davenport; 10 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents and five siblings.

Geoffrey Salyars

Geoffrey L. Salyars, 47, of Wilton died unexpectedly on Monday, April 6, 2020 at UnityPoint Health Care in Muscatine. A celebration of Geoff's life will be held at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be made to the family. Online condolences may be left at www.bentleyfuneralhome.com.

Geoffrey was born in Iowa City on Aug. 16, 1972 to Billy and Paulette (Barkalow) Salyars. He graduated from Wilton High School in 1990 and from Purdue University Global in 2010 with a degree in Information Technology.

He worked as an Information Technologist at Pearson in Iowa City.

He loved Star Wars, anything Harley Davidson and riding his motorcycle. He en-



Geoffrey Salyars

joyed being a deejay and his favorite movie was "A Christmas Story" and he could recite it word for word. He had the ability to repeat lines from almost any movie. Above all, he loved spending time with his nieces and nephews.

Geoff is survived by his mother Paulette of Wilton; sisters Paula Barkalow (Charles White) of Muscatine, Gerri Ratzlaff (Jay Burkett) of Davenport and Tricia Salyars of Wilton; aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and great and great-great nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father, his grandparents and several aunts and uncles.

Barbara Dinnen

Barbara Dinnen, 67, of Urbandale died April 3, 2020, after a 4-year struggle with pancreatic cancer. Memorial services will be held when pandemic restrictions have passed.

Memorials can be made to Trinity United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 41005, Des Moines, 50311.

Barbara was born Feb. 23, 1953, in Iowa City, to Waldo and Ruth (nee Derby) Elder. She graduated from Wilton High School in 1971 and studied at Drake University. She married Steve Dinnen in September 1975, in Wilton.

Barbara attended St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City. After graduation, she was appointed to Trinity United Methodist Church in Des Moines, where she served for more than a decade, also serving the Las Americas faith community based out of Trinity.

Barbara was an activist of immigrant and women's rights. She led faith-based health care missions to El Salvador, Guatemala and Cuba. She was a former board member of Habitat



Barbara Dinnen

for Humanity and Sixth Avenue Corridor. She enjoyed writing letters to family and friends and cutting her husband's hair for 46 years.

She is survived by her husband; daughters Audrey Walters of Indianapolis, and Elizabeth Dinnen of Colorado, son Patrick Dinnen of Chicago; sisters Christa Elder of Indianapolis, and Judy (Bill) Boorn of Perry; brother Jack (Becky) Elder of Benecia, California; four grandchildren and nieces and nephews.

Emergency management meeting canceled

The April meeting of the Cedar County chapter of the Region 6 Local Emergency Planning Committee has been canceled. The meeting, originally schedule for April 23, has been canceled in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The next meeting will be held on July 23 at 6 p.m. at the Cedar County Emergency Management Building, 1410 Cedar Street, Tipton.

Hoekstra scholarship deadline extended

The Mike Hoekstra Memorial Scholarship deadline has been extended to April 30. The application form is available through the Wilton High School guidance office, or online.

This \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to one Wilton High School senior to help defray costs of attending an accredited technical, trade or vocational program. Please call the WHS counselor's office (563-732-2629) for more details.

Sandy Marshall is turning **80** on **May 2, 2020!**

We are celebrating her birthday with a card shower.

Send cards to:
3231 140th St.,
Wilton, IA 52778

Please share a memory with her as you wish her a happy birthday!

Find family news forms at wdadvocatenews.com

WORSHIP DIRECTORY AREA

Calvary United Methodist, Walcott
Rev. Allen Coffin • www.walcottchurch.org
9 a.m. Sunday School
10 a.m. Praise and Worship Service with Coffee Fellowship to follow

Cedar Valley Church, West Liberty Area
Pastor Mary • 563-320-0501
1791 155th St. (South of West Liberty on F70)
5:30 p.m. Sundays - Free Dinner, Worship & Discussion at Living Faith Service
8:30-9:30 a.m. every other Saturday Adult Confirmation Class

Church of Christ, Atalissa
Pastor Karl Roberts • (563) 649-2220
8:30-9:15 a.m. Sunday School
9:30-10:45 a.m. Morning Worship Service
10:15-10:45 a.m. Junior Church

Moscow United Methodist Church
Jon Gimmy, Pastor • (319) 351-1877
1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays: 10 a.m. Worship

Peace Church of Christ United, UCC
www.peacechurchofchristunited.com
414 Maple St., Bennett
Pastor Scott Meyer • 563-893-2565
Office hours: 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Wed-Fri
9 a.m. Worship
10 a.m. Fellowship

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Bennett
260 E. 4th St. • 563-890-6619
Pastor Bill Traphagan
7:15 a.m. Bible Class
8:30 a.m. Church Service, followed by Sunday School

Trinity United Church of Christ, Rural Moscow • Pastor Jon M. Merritt
8 a.m. Sunday School 1st & 3rd Sundays
9 a.m. Worship every Sunday

Zion Lutheran, ELCA, Atalissa
(563) 649-3343
10:30 a.m. Worship

DURANT

Gloria Dei Lutheran, ELCA
John Grebner, Interim Pastor
606 4th Ave., Durant • 785-4936
9 a.m. Worship
Confirmation Wednesday 8 a.m.
Bible Study Monday 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Everyone Welcome

St. David's Anglican Church
Fr. Peter Vaughn, Pastor
peter Vaughn@gmail.com • 309-798-8376
801 5th St., Durant • 563-785-4916
www.stdavidsdurant.info
9:30 Sunday Worship, followed by refreshments
3rd Sunday outreach service at Courtyard Estates in Walcott at 11:30 a.m.
6 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study led by Pastor Greg Graybill gregory.graybill@gmail.com
509-301-1760 Pastor Greg Graybill
Youth interested in taking part in WyldLife or Young Life should call 563-785-4916.

St. Paul's Episcopal
Rev. Dr. Alice Haugen, Pastor
206 6th St.
www.stpaulsdurant.org
9 a.m. Sunday Worship w/Eucharist
Children's service, 2nd Sunday
Healing service, 3rd Sunday

WILTON

First Presbyterian Church
563-732-2258
213 W. 5th St., Wilton • fpcwilton.org
email: fpcpastor@netwtc.net or fpcsec@netwtc.net
9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship

Grace United Church of Christ
Pastor Patrick Slessor
www.graceuccwilton.org
No church activities until April 30
Friday: 7 p.m. AA and AI-Anon.

Heartland Fellowship Church
<http://www.myhfcwilton.org/>
9:30 a.m. Children's Ministries
10:30 a.m. Adult Worship/Children's Church
Wed. 6 p.m. The Summit Youth Group
Small Group Meetings throughout the week

Peace United Methodist
Jon Gimmy, Pastor
8:45 a.m. Sunday Worship.
9:45 a.m. Sunday School

Sugar Creek Presbyterian
563-732-3199
1900 Rose Ave., Wilton
9 a.m. Sunday Worship

St. Mary's Catholic
Rev. David Steinle, Pastor
701 E. 3rd, Wilton • 563-732-2271
email: Steinled@diodav.org
<https://www.stmarywilton.org>
8:30 a.m. Sunday Mass
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
Tues-Fri Mass: 8 a.m.

United Methodist
Pastor Steve Braudt • 563-732-2084
1401 Maurer St., PO Box 57, Wilton
www.umcofwilton.org
email: umcwilt@netwtc.net
Live Stream on Facebook Live
Worship Sunday 10:15 and 7 p.m.
Daily Devotional Mon-Sat 3 p.m.
Links can be found at www.UMCofWilton.org

Wilton Baptist Church
Pastor Bob Danielson • 563-732-2458
203 East Railroad St., Wilton
10 a.m. Worship

Zion Lutheran, Missouri Synod
Rev. Daniel Ognoskie • 563-732-3651
1000 Maurer St., Wilton
9 a.m. Divine Service
Church services are available on Youtube
10:15 a.m. Bible Study/Sunday School



God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

1 Corinthians 6:14

Sponsored By: Bentley Funeral Homes, Ervin's Incorporated, WTC Communications, Wilton-Durant Advocate News, CDS Global

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OPINION



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Millennial sounds like a bit of a bad word to me

I spend a lot of time on the Internet, I binge-watch TV and have food delivered. Oh God I'm becoming a millennial.

— HBO's Bill Maher

In watching HBO's "Real Time With Bill Maher" over the weekend, the quote above stuck with me. Maher, a longtime comedian, actor and host of the show, made the remark while filming the weekly political show from his backyard due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

This was the second straight week that the show has been done in his backyard. Typically, the show is taped live in front of a studio audience. He does about 5-10 minutes of comedy in stand-up fashion, then a 1-on-1 interview for about 10-15 minutes, then another 30-40 with a panel of 2-3 political guests from both sides of the aisle.

He's very liberal and doesn't hide it, and it usually shows in the final segment known as "New Rules." Yet in a 1-hour time slot nearly every week, even a layperson can walk away with some new knowledge. And as a comedian, of course there are some blatant stabs at nothing but humor along the way.

Watching comedians both live and on TV is one of my favorite things. When Maher made that comment during his monologue last week, it made me think of something I've pondered ever since this pandemic began.

There's no way to make virus, sickness, death, economy meltdown, pandemic, school closures and businesses either closing for now

(or forever) sound positive.

However, if there's any silver lining that I can see, it's that maybe our youth—especially those who are school age and stuck at home due to mandatory shutdowns—will better appreciate that there's still a big world out there when things do get back to normal. Whatever normal will look like.

With ever-evolving technology, children today are interacting much differently than I did with my friends when I was a little boy. Phones are simply handheld computers. And we have bigger versions, called iPads or tablets. Video games are far more sophisticated and now kids can play on headsets via the Internet in order to no longer be in the same room.

It all spells ease, yet it also spells isolation. It's become commonplace for our youth to get out of school, go home and plug into some sort of device. My hope is that through this pandemic, they've begun seeing that maybe being in school wasn't so bad. Perhaps the one 7-8 hour chunk of the day where there's forced social interaction is a very good thing.

Easy to take for granted but, perhaps, not anymore. We are all getting a little stir crazy being told to stay indoors and avoid crowds, including simple social gatherings. It's naïve to think we'll flush the phones and tablets completely. Yet wouldn't it be great, when

social distancing rules are lifted or relaxed, to see kids out playing again? Perhaps this is our moment. Should it have taken thousands of people dying to get there? Absolutely not.

But it adds more meaning to what I always tell a teenager I see at a ballgame or social event buried for a long amount of time in their phone — "Look up from that 4-inch screen. There's a big world out there."

Or take it from Bill Maher, who in the same show said, "Young people live on their screens. Works well but not when it's a directive."

The other thing I thought when I heard the original quote listed (at the beginning) was, am I a millennial? If so I'd like to think I'm caught somewhere in between needing my technology in my hands via the iPhone and still yearning for daily interaction with those around me. The truth I can't shake is that millennial just sounds like a bit of a bad word to me.

A simple Google search of "What are the age generations?" will result in different timelines. According to careerplanner.com, millennial, also sometimes known as generation Y or generation next, are those born from 1980 to 1994. The site says "Millennials were raised to think they were special and that they could become anything they dreamed of, and then after graduating they found that Boomers

(born 1946-1964) had let millions of jobs slip out of the country, 'iGen'ers have seen this, and are far more cautious and less optimistic and maybe less naïve."

The site identified an older group of millennials, known as Xennials, born between 1975 and 1985. Notice the overlap? My birth year of 1982 falls there.

Again, according to careerplanner.com, "The cohort known as 'Xennials' are composed of the oldest millennials. This is a crossover generation. Born roughly between 1975 and 1985 plus or minus a few years.

"The idea being that Xennials is more like the preceding Gen X than they are like millennials.

"According to Australian sociologist Dan Woodman, 'the theory goes that the Xennials dated, and often formed ongoing relationships, pre-social media. They usually weren't on Tinder or Grindr, for their first go at dating at least. They called up their friends and the person they wanted to ask out on a land line phone, hoping that it wasn't their intended date's parent who picked up.'"

I remember those days. Those who had their own teen lines were ahead of the curve.

Generation X is those born 1965-1979. So where am I? I suppose I'll take the Xennial label while admitting to harboring Gen X tendencies. To read more on the "generations," do a simple Google search. You certainly have time in this COVID-19 environment.

Case in Point

By Derek Sawvell



Follow @SawvellAN

Random monthly observances

I'm sure you are aware that there are bizarre daily observances each month. Well here are some for April.

April 18 is National Columnist Day and on this day we honor all newspaper columnists and their contributions to the truth in black and white. Columnists have the ability to inspire a range of emotions that often result in action which you may or may not realize is their intent. If the column does not move the reader, they have not done their job.

I consider myself a part-time columnist with my "Keeping you in 'Chek" editorial. My style of writing is to hopefully lighten the mood of the readers and maybe put a smile on their face. I prefer not to be a columnist that strictly provides a different perspective and hard facts. I want to be the one you look forward to reading every so often in your local newspaper.

Let's not forget a very important person in most businesses today. April 22 is Administrative Professionals (Secretary's) Day. Administrative Professionals — helping everyone else survive their workday, everyday. These professionals are a valuable asset to any company or business. In 1952 when this day was created, it primarily consisted of women

in this role. Today, it consists of both men and women. There is an old saying that goes "Behind every good boss is a great secretary." Being in an administrative role throughout my career, I believe this to be true. Be sure to tell your administrative professionals how much you appreciate their service. It will mean a great deal to them.

Then there is April 30, hairstyle appreciation day. I can tell you that with all the hair salons being closed, I am not appreciating my current hairstyle at all. These days my hairstyle is called "I tried." Most stylists are encouraging their clientele to not take measures into their own hands by cutting their own hair or using box colors.

If the closure goes past April 30, I may have to resort to doing just that.

Do you remember some of the most popular hairstyles from the past? Styles like the beehive for women and the crew cut or mullet for men. My son Jake brought back the mullet craze when he was in high school and still sports it today. Some hated it, but honestly I think he wears it well and I'm not biased at all.

Smile tomorrow is Friday.
Fight terminal seriousness with humor.
#InThisTogether #CommunityStrong

Keeping you in 'Chek

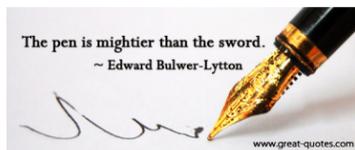


By Teresa Benischek

Advocate News letter to the editor policy

The Advocate News welcomes letters to the editor. Letters have a 400-word limit and will run at the editor's discretion. The author's name and address must be included, along with a phone number for verification. Writers are limited to one letter per month. Letters and/or questions may be directed to AN Editor Derek Sawvell, dsawvell@netwtc.net or 563-732-2029. Email is preferred. They may also be mailed to:

Letters to the editor
Advocate News
PO Box 40
Wilton, IA 52778



Recovery resources for Iowans

By State Sen. Zach Wahls

We've had a lot of information coming our way in recent weeks, so I'd like to highlight a few key updates and resources that most constituents will find useful.

Face masks: All are encouraged to stay home as much as possible to avoid spreading the coronavirus. If you must go out, the CDC now recommends wearing cloth face coverings in places where social distancing is difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies). You can find some simple instructions from the CDC on how to make a face covering with household supplies by visiting [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Unemployment benefits: Unemployment claims have skyrocketed in recent weeks. To help all whose livelihood has taken a hit, the federal CARES Act expands unemployment benefits to the self-employed, independent contractors, nonprofit employees, gig economy workers, those who have exhausted other unemployment insurance and those who may not have sufficient work history to qualify for a regular state claim. Iowa Workforce Development intends to pay qualified individuals their benefits as quickly as possible.

WAHLS
continued on page 10

What are you doing to pass the time?

If you're hunkered down at home waiting for the virus to pass, what are you doing with your time?

Maybe you're reading a good book, rewiring the lamp that hasn't worked for two years or cleaning the garage.

Perhaps you're sorting through clothes you no longer wear so they can be donated to Goodwill, or you're catching up with old friends with whom you haven't communicated in quite a while.

Maybe you are organizing and labeling boxes of family photographs.

As for me, I'm writing my memoirs. I'm doing it because there have been times I've mentioned some aspect of my life — like the time I scored a two-point basket against the Harlem Globetrotters in an exhibition basketball game — and one of my grown children has said he or she hadn't known that.

Here are some other ideas:
* Play a board game. My wife, Sherry,

bought a Jeopardy game, and we had great fun playing it with one of our sons, Brendan, who was visiting from St. Louis. We were reminded how much we don't know.

* Help keep a favorite restaurant in business by ordering meals to pick up or have delivered.

* Clean drawers, cupboards and closets to remind yourself what you have. Then you can dispose of items you no longer need or use.

* Check on elderly friends and relatives to see if they need anything (like that hard-to-come-by toilet paper).

* Come up with some questions and conduct a videotape interview with an elderly relative.

* Start or continue work on your genealogy.

* Make some cloth facemasks to donate to health care workers.

* Watch an old movie. Sherry and I recently streamed on Netflix a 1952 classic, "African Queen," starring Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn.

Everyday People



By Phil Roberts

#InThisTogether



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LEGAL NOTICES

Wilton Community School District Budget Hearing Minutes April 8, 2020

On April 8, 2020 at 5:15 P.M., the Wilton Community School Board of Directors met virtually for the presentation of the proposed FY21 budget for the Wilton Community School District. President Linda Duncan called the meeting to order. Board members present were: Tim Barrett, Linda Duncan, Jeremy Lies, and Rob Metzger. Absent: Tara Oien. School Business Official/Board Treasurer Staci Owens-Kirkman presented the FY21 budget for consideration.

At this time, President Duncan asked for communications from the public. No one from the public appeared or commented. There being no other business, President Duncan adjourned the hearing at 5:28 P.M.

President, Board of Directors

Secretary, Board of Directors

Wilton Community School District Regular Board Meeting Minutes April 8, 2020

On April 8, 2020 at 5:30 P.M., the Wilton Community School Board of Directors met virtually in regular session. President Linda Duncan called the meeting to order. Board members present were: Tim Barrett, Linda Duncan, Jeremy Lies, and Rob Metzger. Absent: Tara Oien.

Motion by Metzger, second by Barrett to approve the agenda as presented. All yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Barrett, second by Metzger to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2020 public hearing. All yes. Motion carried. Motion by Lies, second by Metzger to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2020 special meeting. All yes. Motion carried. Motion by Barrett, second by Lies to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2020 regular meeting. All yes. Motion carried. Motion by Metzger, second by Barrett to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2020 work session. All yes. Motion carried.

Public Forum: None

School Business Official/Board Treasurer reviewed the current budget and bills along with the Self-Insurance, Transportation, Child Nutrition, Latchkey and Activity reports included in the packet for review. Motion by Metzger, second by Lies to approve payment of bills. All yes. Motion carried.

Administrative Reports: Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, building principals did not have reports for review. Superintendent Burnett, instead, asked the building principals to share with the Board the programming and student enrichment plans that they have implemented till April 30, 2020 or beyond should school not resume for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Elementary Principal Denise Austin shared information concerning e-guidance voluntary plans and Google Meet for the teachers and their students as well as individual student home visits by teachers (while practicing responsible social distancing). Jr/Sr High School Principal Marc Snavely shared information concerning voluntary enrichment activities being made available to students. He told the Board that the teachers are now meeting virtually with their students on Tuesday (an A day consisting of the 4 block schedule along with seminar) and Thursday (a B day consisting of the 4 block schedule along with skinny class) each week for 30-60 minute sessions. Mr. Snavely stated that at the present time approximately 50%-60% of Wilton junior-senior high students are logging on to meet with teachers. A Q & A time with the administrators followed.

Considered under Consent Agenda #1:

Approval of the job description for at-risk coordinator/success coordinator.

Motion by Lies, second by Barrett to approve the above-mentioned item considered under consent agenda #1. All yes. Motion carried.

Considered under Consent Agenda #2:

Review of Policy Code No. 800 – Objectives of Buildings and Sites; Policy Code No. 801.1 – Buildings & Sites Long Range Planning; Policy Code No. 801.2 – Buildings & Sites Surveys; Policy Code No. 801.3 – Educational Specifications for Buildings & Sites; Policy Code No. 801.4 – Selection of an Architect; Policy Code No. 801.5 – Site Acquisition; Policy Code No. 801.6 – Bids and Awards for Construction Contracts; Policy Code No. 801.7 – Financing Sites and Construction; and Policy Code No. 801.8 – Supervision of Construction.

Motion by Barrett, second by Metzger to approve the review of above-mentioned policies considered under consent agenda #2. All yes. Motion carried.

Considered under Consent Agenda #3:

Approval of the FY21 budget as presented.

Approval of the 2020-2021 operational sharing agreement with Durant Community School District for transportation director.

Approval of the 2020-2021 Durant-Wilton sharing agreement for 1/2 time elementary band teacher.

Approval of the 2020-2021 Durant-Wilton sharing agreement for 1/2 time Spanish teacher.

Approval of the 2020-2021 28E agreement Wilton-Durant for vocational education.

Approval of the 2020-2021 28E agreement Wilton-Durant for business education.

Approval of the 2020-2021 28E agreement Durant-Wilton for art education.

Approval of the 2020-2021 28E agreement Durant-Wilton for family and consumer sciences education.

Approval of the 2020-2021 28E agreement Durant-Wilton for robotics/computer science education.

Approval of the 2nd reading for the deletion of Policy Code No. 711.10 – District Vehicle Idling.

Approval of the 2nd reading for Policy Code No. 711.2R2 – Use of Video Cameras on School Buses Regulation.

Approval of the 2nd reading for Policy Code No. 711.9 – Transportation in Inclement Weather.

Approval of the 2020-2021 Memorandum of Agreement with Mississippi Bend AEA for the home school assistance program.

Approval of the 2020-2021 recommended insurance (medical, dental, and vision) rates.

Approval of the FY21 grades 7-12 ELA curriculum order.

Approval of the bid from IT Savvy in the amount of \$46,575 for sixty-nine (69) Acer Chromebook Spin 13 units - replacement laptop computers for teaching staff.

Approval of the 2020-2021 Latchkey handbook.

Motion by Metzger, second by Lies to approve the above-mentioned items considered under consent agenda #3. All yes. Motion carried.

Considered for Individual Consent:

Motion by Metzger, second by Lies to approve the Reso-

lution - Pandemic Response and Emergency Suspension of Policy with one noted change to read – Be it further resolved that in light of this District-wide emergency closure, the Board authorizes the Superintendent to place hourly and classified non-exempt employees on paid administrative leave and to continue to pay them during the period of school closure. By roll call vote, voting yes – Barrett, Duncan, Lies, and Metzger; voting no – none. Motion carried.

Motion by Lies, second by Metzger to approve the resolution for Wilton Community School District COVID-19 Pandemic Temporary Supplemental Policy Provisions. By roll call vote, voting yes – Barrett, Duncan, Lies, and Metzger; voting no – none. Motion carried.

Employee contract issued to Erica Schultz, grades 7-12 math teacher, BA-3, salary to be determined at the conclusion of negotiations.

Superintendent Burnett shared with the Board that he will be meeting with Martin-Gardner Architects via conference call and hopes to have the high school lobby addition bids ready for presentation at the Board's next work session.

Motion by Lies, second by Metzger to adjourn the meeting.

There being no other business, President Duncan adjourned the meeting at 7:05 P.M.

President, Board of Directors

Secretary, Board of Directors

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given to all interested persons that the Durant Planning and Zoning Commission will meet on April 21, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. administered electronically at Durant City Hall, 402 6th Street, Durant, Iowa. This meeting will take place electronically. Anyone of the public that would like access to this meeting using your phone. +1-408-650-3123 and Access Code: 741-714-133; follow prompts and announce your name when you join. Per Iowa Code Section 21.8 (1) Statement of rationale due to pandemic conditions of COVID 19 and with recommendations from the Governor of the State of Iowa, it will be safer to conduct an electronic meeting to help mitigate spread of the COVID-19. Now, therefore, council meetings shall be conducted in this manner until further notice.

The Commission will review request from Durant Development Corporation to rezone existing land Durant Industrial Park South of the City of Durant from Light Industrial I-1 to Heavy Industrial I-2.

Legal Land description: Part of the Southeast Quarter of Section 35, Township 79 North, Range 1 West of the 5th P.M., Durant, Iowa, being more particularly described as follows: Commencing at the southeast corner of the Southeast Quarter of said Section 35, said point being the POINT OF BEGINNING of the tract of land hereinafter described; thence North 89 degrees-56ft-15" West of 1259.91 feet along the south line of the SOUTHEAST Quarter of said Section 35; thence North 00 degrees 9ft 30" East 1181.16 feet; thence North 89 degrees 55ft-45" West 265.84 feet; thence North 00 degrees 7ft-40" West 740.62 feet to a point on the south right of way line of the Iowa Interstate Railroad as now established; thence South 77 degrees 51'-30" East 1376.22 feet along the south right of way line of said Iowa Interstate Railroad; thence South 12 degrees 5'-30" West 172.52 feet; thence south 77 degrees 50'-35" East 223.92 feet to a point on the east line of the Southeast Quarter of said Section 35; thence south 00 degrees 9';-50" West (assumed bearing for this survey) 1418.17 feet along the east line of the Southwest Quarter of said Section 35 to the point of beginning. Containing 53.58acres, more or less.

All members of the public are invited to attend. Comments may be submitted in writing (per email or mail, or left in drop box at city hall with name, phone number, and address) prior to the meeting and said comments shall be a part of the public record concerning this hearing.

**Deana Cavin
City Operations Officer/Clerk**

Durant Municipal Electric Plant Regular Meeting April 8, 2020

The Board of Trustees of the Durant Municipal Electric Plant met in regular session at the Durant Municipal Electric Plant Building. Chairperson, David Krohn called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Trustees Present: Krohn, Paustian & Head. Trustees Absent: None. DMEP employees: Joel Meincke, Superintendent & Tami Allison General Manager.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Superintendent's Report: Joel updated the board members on the daily operations of the month with several items being discussed.

Approve Minutes of Regular Meeting Minutes held March 11, 2020: A motion was made by Trustee Paustian, seconded by Trustee Head, to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting held on March 11, 2020 as written. Motion carried by a 3-0 vote.

Discuss/Consider Group Life, LTD, STD Policy: After reviewing the documents that had been prepared by Susie Pinckney. Because of being with a larger group through IAMU this policy has a percentage change of -59.51% over the current company with the same benefits. A motion was made by Trustee Head, seconded by Trustee Paustian, to change our employee group life, LTD, and STD policy to NIS/Madison National, Option 1. Motion carried by a 3-0 vote.

Discuss Property/Liability Insurance Renewal: After discussion a motion was made by Trustee Paustian, seconded by Trustee Head to renew our property/liability insurance with EMC and Liberty Insurance. Motion carried by a 3-0 vote.

Discuss Easement 605 13th Ave.: Discussion was held on an easement in the alley between 13th & 14th Ave.

Discuss Load of Poles: After reviewing the two quotes presented. A motion was made by Trustee Krohn, seconded by Trustee Head to approve the bid from Bridgewell Resources in the amount of \$12,801.62. Motion carried by a 3-0 vote.

Discuss/Consider Penalties going Forward: Tami

explained to the Board that the IUB has suggested the electric utilities not penalize or disconnect customers during the COVID 19 pandemic. After discussion the board decided to monitor and address this every month for the foreseeable future.

Discuss Employee Compensation if Isolated: After discussion the board approved paying an employee as usual if quarantined for 14 days due to the coronavirus.

Discuss Relay Testing Quote: CIPCO requires the utility to test the relays that are attached to their system every 5 years. After discussion a motion was made by Trustee Krohn, seconded by Trustee Head, to approve the quote from Shermco in the amount of \$1,670.00 to have 2 Schweitzer 351R Relays tested. Motion carried by a 3-0 vote.

Update on New Building: The Board reviewed the plans. Joel will fill out a building permit, put a bid sheet together and get the plans out to 3-4 contractors.

Discuss Potential Development – Industrial Park: Brief discussion was held on potential development in the industrial park.

Review Energy Cost Adjustment: After review of the documents prepared, a motion was made by Trustee Krohn, seconded by Trustee Paustian, to not add an energy cost adjustment to the May 1 bills. Motion carried by a 3-0 vote.

Approval of Disbursements: On a motion by Trustee Head, seconded by Trustee Paustian, warrants numbered 17091 through and to include number 17125 were approved. Motion carried by a 3-0 vote.

There being no further business to come before the board, a motion was made by Trustee Krohn, seconded by Trustee Head, to adjourn at 6:37 p.m. Motion carried by a 3-0 vote.

**David Krohn, Chairman of the Board
Tami Allison, General Manager**

DURANT MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC CLAIMS REPORT	
ADVANCED BUSINESS SYSTEMS COPIER MAINT	
INVOICE.....	104.12
BORDER STATES ELECTRIC SUPPLY EXTRA	
BATTERY FOR CHAIN SAW	238.88
CARDMEMBER SERVICE USER GROUP REGISTRA- TION OFFICE SUPPLIES	169.92
CITY OF DURANT CITY WATER	138.52
CULLIGAN WATER CONDITIONING BOTTLED	
WATER	47.01
DURANT POSTMASTER STAMPS/POSTCARD	
STAMPS	300.00
EFTPS FED/FICA TAX	6,147.45
FASTENAL GLOVES	301.14
FLETCHER-REINHARDT CO INSULATORS/ARMOR	
ROD/X-ARMS/POLE FOAM/3 HOIST	
STRAPS	5,919.15
FRANSYL EQUIPMENT CO INC. REPAIRS LITTLE	
BUCKET TRUCK	1,017.08
IOWA ONE CALL JAN/FEB ONE CALLS	22.70
IPAIT FEBRUARY PURCHASE POWER	61,916.78
IPERS IPERS	3,804.88
KORDICK SURVEYING & ENGINEERING RETRACE- MENT SURVEY THOMA 14TH AVE	1,375.00
LIBERTY INSURANCE AGENCY PROPERTY/LIABILITY INSURANCE	38,024.00
STOREY KENWORTHY/MATT PARROTT UTILITY	
BILLS/DELINQUENT NOTICES	1,273.33
OVESON REFUSE & RECYCLE WKLY DUMPSTER	
SERVICE 520-421	750.00
PAPERS LUMBER & SUPPLY CO MAINTENANCE	
MATERIALS	140.98
PRICE OIL COMPANY TRUCK FUEL	242.64
RELIABLE NETWORK SOLUTIONS APRIL NETWORK. MANAGEMENT/SERVER MAINT	590.50
ROBERT C MEYER CLOSING FEES & PURCHASE OF LOT A OF LOT 4	20,677.20
S J SMITH CO ACETYLENE/OXYGEN	19.90
TOWNSEND ENGINEERING 28X50 POLE BUILDING .. PLANS	850.00
TREASURER STATE OF IA01 STATE TAX	1,190.00
TREASURER STATE OF IA02 MARCH/1ST QTR USE .. TAX	1,223.00
U.S. CELLULAR CELL PHONES	271.88
WELLMARK INC APRIL EMPLOYEE HEALTH	
INS	6,181.09
WILTON/DURANT ADVOCATE MARCH MEETING	
PUBLICATION	71.50
WINDSTREAM BASIC & LONG DISTANCE PHONE	
SERVICE	410.18
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE TOTAL	153,418.83
PAYROLL TOTAL	16,850.71
REPORT TOTAL	170,269.54

Muscatine County Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting Minutes Monday, April 6, 2020

The Muscatine County Board of Supervisors met in regular session at 9:00 A.M. via a Go To Meeting with Holliday, Sauer, Sorensen, Mather and Saucedo present. Chairperson Sorensen presiding.

On a motion by Sauer, second by Saucedo, the agenda was approved as presented. Ayes: All.

Ed Askew, 2952 155th Street, recommended each department have a Go To Meeting for a couple of hours daily for citizens to ask questions. Askew also recommended Muscatine County make their webpage more interactive like Scott County's webpage.

On a motion by Mather, second by Sauer, claims dated April 6, 2020 were approved in the amount of \$2,575,741.11. Ayes: All.

Discussion was held with Planning and Zoning Administrator Eric Furnas regarding the local match for the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Furnas stated this resolution is required to move the grant application forward for three properties. Furnas stated he has been told that

CDBG funding may be coming in August that would cover the 15% local match. Furnas stated the Board of Supervisors previously said they may fund the Antram property and verbal agreements have been secured from the other two homeowners who understand they would fund the 15% local match if for some reason CDBG funds do not materialize. Furnas stated the County could also withdraw the application at any time if funds do not materialize.

On a motion by Mather, second by Holliday, the Board approved Resolution #04-06-20-01 Local Match for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Roll call vote: Ayes: Holliday, Sauer, Sorensen and Mather. Saucedo's vote could not be heard.

RESOLUTION #04-06-20-01 LOCAL MATCH FOR THE HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Muscatine County (hereinafter called "the Subgrantee"), County of Iowa, has made application through the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD) to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for funding from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, in the amount of \$541,558.89 for the total project cost; and

WHEREAS, the Subgrantee recognizes the fact that this grant is based on a cost share basis with the federal share not exceeding 75%, the state share not exceeding 10% and the local share being a minimum of 15% of the total project cost. The minimum 15% local share can be either cash or in-kind match or another source provided that it is not federal funding.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Subgrantee agrees to provide and make available up to \$81,233.83 (eighty-one thousand two-hundred thirty-three dollars and eighty-three cents) of non-federal contribution to be used to meet the minimum 15% match requirement for this mitigation grant application.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 6th day of April 2020.

**/s/Leslie A. Soule, Muscatine County Auditor
/s/Jeff Sorensen, Chairperson
Muscatine County Board of Supervisors**

On a motion by Sauer, second by Mather, the Board approved the following utility permits: Muscatine Power and Water – transfer overhead electrical lines to underground along 57th Street; and Muscatine Power and Water – transfer overhead communication lines to underground fiber lines along 57th Street. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Holliday, second by Mather, the Board authorized the County Engineer to sign utility permits temporarily once they are approved by the Board of Supervisors. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Saucedo, second by Sauer, the Board approved the Muscatine County Auditor's Report of Fees Collected for the quarter ending March 31, 2020 in the amount of \$25,675.87. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Mather, second by Saucedo, the Board approved the Muscatine County Sheriff's Office - Civil Department Report of Fees Collected for the quarter ending March 31, 2020 in the amount of \$25,643.11. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sauer, second by Saucedo, the Board approved the Muscatine County Treasurer's Report of Fees Collected for the quarter ending March 31, 2020 in the amount of \$240,856.65. Ayes: All.

County Engineer Keith White updated the Board on secondary road projects.

On a motion by Mather, second by Holliday, the Board approved an application for an 8-month Class C Beer, Liquor, Sunday Sales and Outdoor Service Permit for The Chart House, Inc., DBA The Lighthouse, 2142 Water Street, Muscatine, Iowa. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Saucedo, second by Sauer, minutes of the March 30, 2020 regular meeting were approved as written. Ayes: All.

Correspondence:
Sauer reported numerous conversations regarding the closure of County buildings and how to transact business with the County departments.

Holliday reported a contact from Kelsey Morris concerned with the lack of income to the Muscatine County Fair due to cancellations in March and April.

Sorensen reported a letter from the Iowa Department of Human Services placing Muscatine County into the Eastern Iowa Mental Health Region effective July 1, 2020.

Committee Reports:

Saucedo attended a West Liberty Economic Area Development (WeLead) meeting March 31st. Saucedo stated the WeLead Director has resigned and the position will be posted.

Sorensen attended an Eastern Iowa Mental Health Region meeting electronically March 31st.

Sorensen attended Regional Workforce Investment Board meetings electronically April 1st and April 3rd.

Sorensen attended a virtual EOC Conference April 1st. County Auditor Leslie Soule informed the Board that polling places were being temporarily combined for the Primary Election to be held June 2, 2020 due to COVID-19. Soule strongly encouraged voters to consider voting absentee by mail for this election. Soule stated there will be six polling sites open on Election Day. Soule stated the sites and precinct assignments are posted on the Auditor's page on the County's website.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Eric Furnas informed the Board that the Board of Adjustment meeting scheduled for April 3rd was cancelled at the request of the applicants.

Emergency Manager Brian Wright updated the Board on flooding issues and COVID-19.

On a motion by Holliday, second by Sauer, the County Sheriff was authorized to execute a Midwest HIDTA Award Recipient Agreement in the amount of \$73,305.00. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sauer, second by Holliday, the Board appointed Janelle Spies to the Muscatine County Zoning Board of Adjustment to fill a vacancy for a term ending March 31, 2025. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sauer, second by Holliday, the Board appointed Lisa Johnson to the Muscatine County Veterans Affairs Commission to fill a vacancy for a term ending June 30, 2020. Ayes: All.

Chairperson Sorensen provided a COVID-19 update stating County buildings remain closed to public access. Sorensen stated phone numbers for each department are on the door, there is a drop box next to the door and appointments can be set if necessary.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 A.M.

**Leslie A. Soule, County Auditor
Jeff Sorensen, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors**

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500 small businesses receive relief grants



DES MOINES – The Iowa Economic Development Authority recently announced that 500 small businesses have been awarded a total of more than \$10 million in grants through the Iowa Small Business Relief Grant program. The program has a total of \$24 million available to allocate, the additional grant recipients to be notified through additional rounds soon.

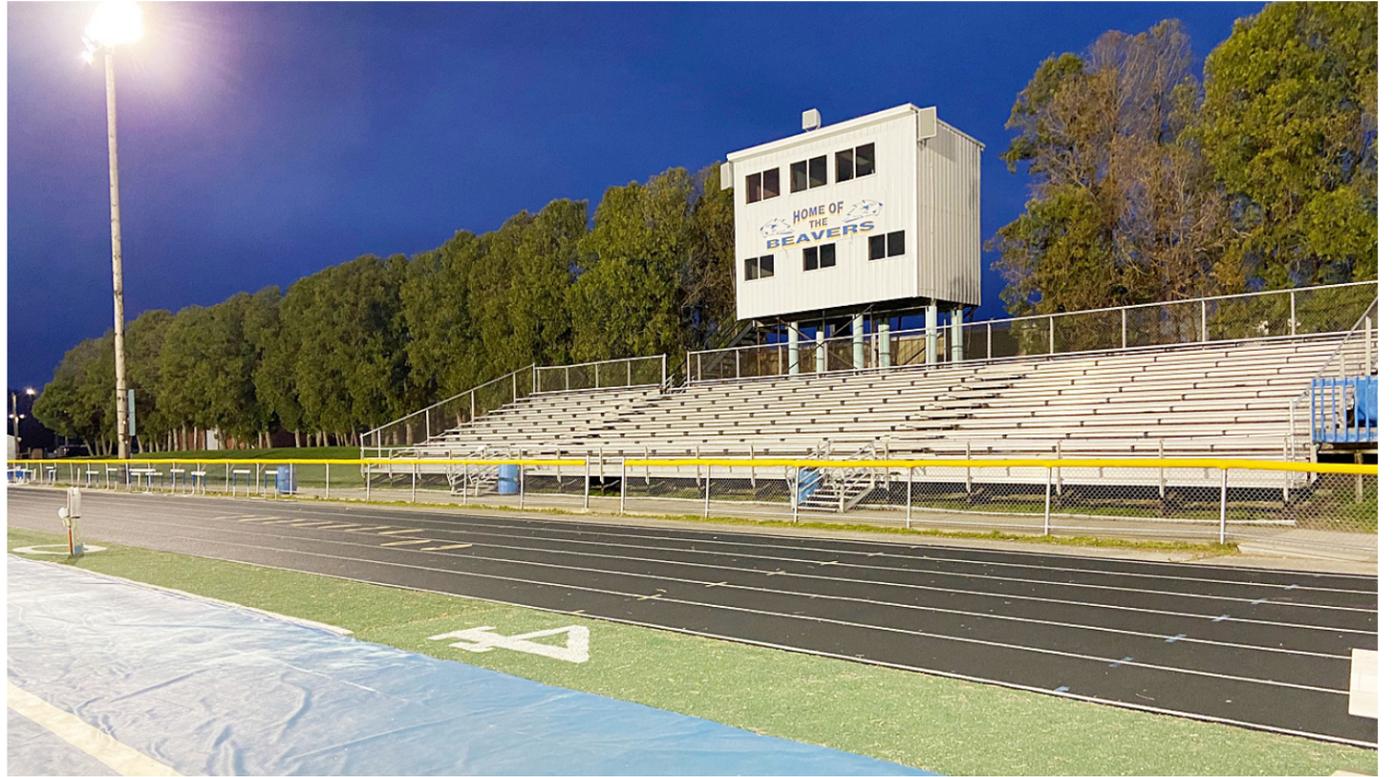
“The grant awards announced this week will provide critical short-term assistance to support Iowa small businesses in maintaining or reopening business operations impacted by the public health emergency,” said Iowa Economic Development Authority Director Debi Durham.

Nearly 14,000 businesses applied through the program, requesting a total of more than \$148 million in eligible assistance.

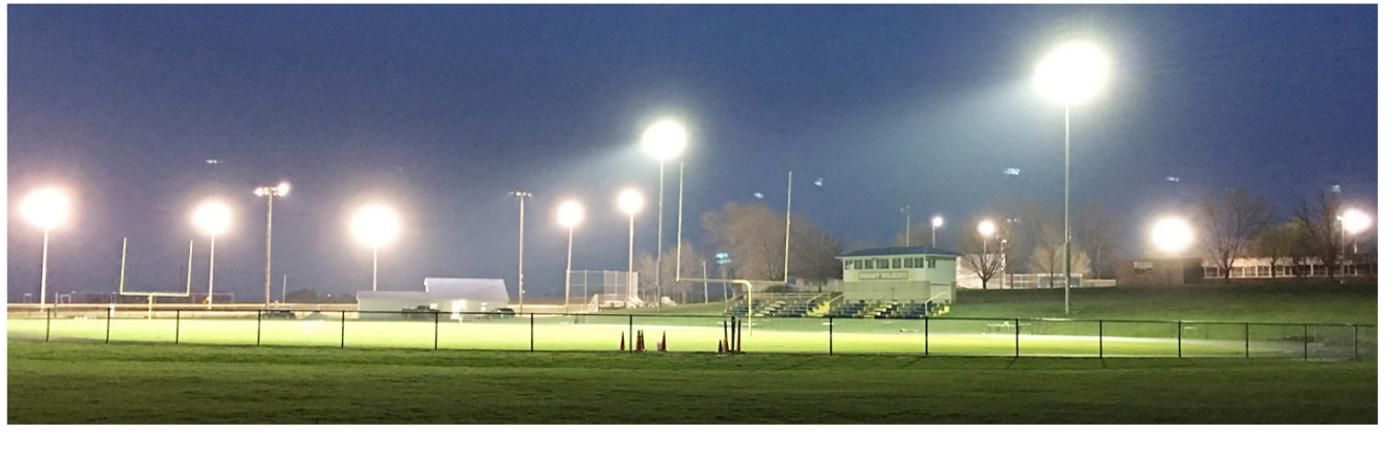
Due to the high demand, the funding capacity of the program has been expanded to a current total of \$24 million, provided through the state Economic Emergency Fund and the Iowa Economic Development Authority. The application period is closed and any additional awards will be made from the current pool of applicants.

The assistance provided through the Iowa Small Business Relief program is intended to provide businesses with immediate, short-term cash flow assistance for the next 30 days. Businesses with 2-25 employees who had been economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic were eligible to apply.

The grants awarded through the program range from \$5,000-\$25,000. Applications were triaged for eligibility and the businesses identifying the greatest revenue disruption were awarded in the first round of funding.



Friday night lights—The Iowa High School Athletic Directors Association asked Iowa high schools to participate in a program called “Light Up Iowa” every Friday night from 8 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. The program is a way to show students and communities that schools miss them and look forward to having them back in home stadiums with lights on and fans back together, hopefully in the near future. Note: this is not intended to be a weekly social gathering, so visitors are asked to merely drive by stadiums and stay in their cars to maintain social distancing guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both Wilton and Durant took part in the first Friday night of the program April 10, turning lights on at their football stadiums, baseball and softball fields. Photos by Derek Sawvell and Teresa Benischek



OPINION

Stimulus checks are coming

WAHLS
continued from page 8

Economic impact payments: The federal CARES Act has authorized cash rebates to individuals. Most Americans will get their payment automatically, and no further action is needed. Payments will be made by direct deposit or by check. For others, the IRS will soon provide guidance on how to get their payment as soon as possible. Check the IRS coronavirus page for updates.

Payroll Protection Program: Forgivable loans are available to businesses with fewer than 500 employees. The Small Business Administration will forgive these loans if all employees are kept on the payroll for eight weeks and the loan is used for payroll, rent, mortgage interest or utilities. Complete details are available on the SBA website.

What’s in the CARES Act: Iowa-based Alchemy Community Transformations has a helpful breakdown of the \$2 trillion federal relief bill on their website. It includes information on relief benefits for individuals, as well as a guide to federal funding resources that can be searched by topic, eligibility, cost-share requirements and funding type.

For ongoing updates on Iowa’s key recovery resources, check our Senate Democrats caucus web page: senate.iowa.gov/democrats/covid-19.

Durant looking to cut costs amidst COVID-19

DURANT COUNCIL
continued from page 2

COVID-19 affecting city projects

The city is already looking at ways to cut costs due to COVID-19. Cavin said that at minimum, road use tax funds would be reduced by 25 percent due to travel across the state dropping by 50 percent as a result of the pandemic. The city has begun revising how it will use its already limited resources even more wisely.

To concrete Yankee Avenue to the lift station would have cost an estimated \$170,000 minimum. Bailey expected the actual figure to be more than double the initial one presented due to having to fill ditches, install storm pipe and move hydrants. Council decided instead to asphalt the area at a cost of \$33,360.

Officials chose to rescind approval for Shilo repairs, hoping the work can be done

in a year or two. The change keeps the city from spending just over \$66,000 on the project during these uncertain times.

Finally, public works has reduced the amount of streets that will be seal coated. The initial cost to do the city was \$62,033.25, but officials were able to bring the total down to \$46,437 by approving revisions.

Miscellany

In other action, council:
* Opened the meeting with the approval of the agenda, approval of city bills and approval of the minutes for the March 23 council meeting.

* Council discussed meeting with the public works committee to discuss a position for a summer/fall opening. It was tabled until the next meeting due to COVID-19 restrictions.

* Approved a complaint form policy and process for citizens to follow. Cavin said the

goal would be to have the forms online as well as on the city’s website, Facebook page and at City Hall.

* Approved the March financial statements.
* Approved a bid for \$2,447 to install a security camera system at City Hall.

* The start of the Durant Farmer’s Market was tentatively pushed back to the first week in June. Council also discussed waiving the fee for vendors due to the shortened season. They chose to leave that decision up to the community center board, which organizes the weekly event.

Council members Noel Price, Dave Schulz and Diane Quiram called into the meeting. Council members Dan Sterner, Kevin Mundt and Mayor Scott Spengler were present. All action taken was unanimous unless otherwise noted. The next city council meeting will be held on Monday, April 27 at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

Iowa Small Business Relief Tax Deferral Program still accepting applications

DES MOINES — On March 23, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds announced a new Iowa Small Business Relief Program to support the state’s small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program offered small business relief grants, administered by the Iowa Economic Development Authority. It also offered busi-

nesses a tax deferral of sales and/or withholding taxes due and waiver of penalty and interest, administered by the Iowa Department of Revenue.

The tax deferral is available to employers and businesses of all sizes impacted by COVID-19. The department expects to keep the application process open through April 30. Information

about the program and the application is located at tax.iowa.gov/COVID-19, including answers to frequently asked questions.

The department has received more than 5,700 tax deferral applications and will review each application to determine deferral eligibility.

For any sales and/or withholding tax filing due

during the period beginning March 20, through the close of business on April 30, the tax deferral provides an additional 60 days from the original due date to file your tax return and remit your tax payment.

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Develop a vehicle maintenance schedule *Keep the environment in mind when changing motor oil*

The oft-sudden expense of vehicle repairs can throw monthly budgets into disarray. Maintaining a routine service schedule is one way for drivers to keep repair costs down. The online automotive resources Edmunds.com says many car owners do not adequately prepare for scheduled maintenance, and may not give maintenance a thought until it's too late. The first step drivers take upon purchasing a new or preowned vehicle should be to familiarize themselves with the vehicle's owner's manual, which is filled with valuable information and likely includes maintenance interval recommendations.

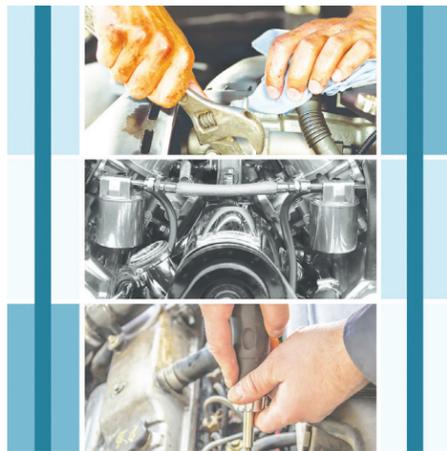
Next, drivers should learn about their vehicle, which is particularly relevant when buying a preowned vehicle. Getting to know how the car or truck rides, as well as any sounds it may make, can provide drivers with a solid foundation they can then use to keep their cars running strong. Routine service typically includes tire rotation, oil changes and topping off of fluids. So just how long between service appointments can a car go? Here are some generalized estimates.

• **Oil change:** Oil chemistry and engine technology have improved so much that most cars can go well beyond the once-recommended 3,000 mile interval between oil changes. Now many vehicle manufacturers recommend between 5,000 and 10,000 miles between changes, advises Edmunds. Drivers should err on the side of caution if they do a lot of stop-and-go driving and short trips. Other drivers may want to invest in vehicles that have oil change maintenance minders built in. A light or countdown will come on the dashboard, indicating when the oil has reached the end of its usefulness.

• **Tire rotation:** Rotating tires helps prolong the life of the tires and alleviates un-

even tread and wear. During the rotation, each tire is removed and relocated to a different position to ensure that all the tires will wear evenly. Michelin Tires states that tires should be rotated around every six months, or between 6,000 and 8,000 miles.

• **Vehicle fluids:** Your best bet is to see what the manufacturer recommends in regard to fluids such as transmission fluid, differential oil, brake fluids, coolant, etc. Some transmissions need regular maintenance, while others can go 150,000 miles between changes, according to the vehicle information site The Drive. Coolant typically can last 100,000 miles. For these types of changes, it may be best to go to a mechanic or service center familiar with your make and model rather than a quick-lube center, as knowing when to drain and refill can be more complicated. Service schedules can be designed to adhere to manufacturers' recommendations and drivers' personal preferences.



Developing a routine service schedule can help decrease unexpected vehicle expenses.

Vehicle engines rely on many components to run efficiently, and motor oil is just one of the things that can affect how well engines run.

Motor oil serves to reduce wear on moving parts. Oil also cleans, inhibits corrosion, improves sealing, and cools the engine by carrying heat away from moving parts. Each manufacturer has its own recommendations for oil-change intervals, but many advise that conventional motor oil be changed every 3,000 miles, while synthetic oils should be changed between every 7,000 to 10,000 miles. Excessive driving, extreme heat and even cold starts can cut down on oil life.

Vehicles receive many oil changes over their lifespans, and as a result motor oil can have a significant impact on the environment. When not handled responsibly or when discarded improperly, petroleum-based oils can wreak havoc on wildlife, water supplies and more. Eco-conscious motorists can keep the following tips in mind when changing their vehicles' motor oil.

• Rely on a major oil change chain or service center. Oil change locations generally offer motor oil recycling so the oil

can be reused and disposed of properly. These centers also will top off other fluids and give your vehicle a brief inspection, making them quite convenient.

• Bring oil to a recycling location. If you perform your own oil changes, be sure to collect all of the drained oil and put it into a canister. Vehicle repair centers generally offer motor oil recycling services and serve as drop-off centers. Check with your municipal recycling center as well, as they may have a motor oil drop-off policy.

• Opt for recycled motor oil. Certain brands of motor oil, such as EcoPower, are made from recycled and refined reclaimed motor oil.

• Learn about synthetic oils. Synthetic oils can be more effective at lubricating and cooling, and they can be changed less frequently than traditional motor oils. This helps generate less waste.

• Repair leaks promptly. If you notice oil or other fluids pooling under your vehicle, take the car to a mechanic. Even small leaks can contaminate the environment. In addition, leaks put neighborhood animals and pets at risk, as animals may be drawn to the sweet taste or aroma of automotive fluids.

5 simple towing tips for novices

1. Use the right hitch. Novices may not immediately recognize if they have purchased an incorrectly sized hitch, but that might become apparent when the trailer is detached during a ride. Consult with a representative at your local auto parts retailer to determine the correct size.
2. Make sure the trailer is level. When attached to a vehicle, trailers should be level.
3. Drive more carefully. Discomfort or inexperience may propel many drivers to be extra careful when towing a trailer, but even drivers with significant experience towing trailers should keep greater distance between their vehicles and other cars and trucks sharing the road.
4. Practice turns. Turning is complicated when towing a trailer. Beginning a turn later can help drivers avoid having their trailers clip curbs, a potentially sticky situation that can cause trailers to flip over.
5. Avoid reversing when possible. Many people towing trailers for the first time and even some drivers with significant experience towing have difficulty going in reverse. Avoiding situations that require putting vehicles in reverse is ideal for novices.




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2020 SPRING...on the road

Exercise caution around brake dust

As cars age, certain wear and tear is to be expected. One of the realities of frequent driving, particularly for drivers who routinely drive in stop-and-go traffic, is the gradual deterioration of brake pads. Do-it-yourselfers can replace brake pads on their own, but those that do should be aware of a potential hazard when doing so.

The Mesothelioma Center says that brakes sometimes contain asbestos due to that material's heat-resistant qualities. As brakes start to wear down over time, the asbestos can escape. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) says that, while many new automotive components are asbestos-free, asbestos hasn't been eliminated entirely from the industry. That is why mechanics and do-it-yourselfers need to exercise caution when repairing or replacing brakes.

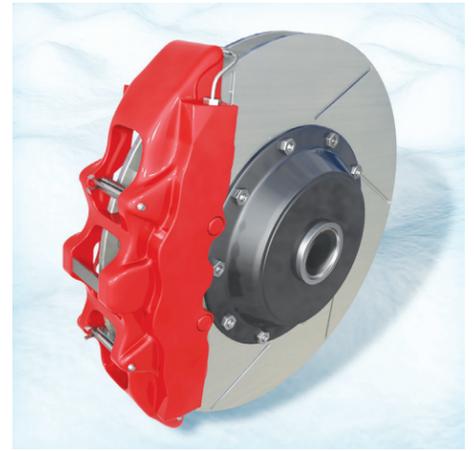
Brake dust may inadvertently expose individuals to cancer-causing asbestos through inhalation or ingestion. OSHA says that exposure to asbestos, if not properly controlled, can cause mesothelioma, lung cancer and asbestosis. Symptoms may not appear for years or even decades after contact with asbestos fibers.

The Mesothelioma Center estimates that asbestos is present in 30 to 80 percent of brakes and other components. The routine task of "blowing out" brake surfaces, which involves using an air hose to clean the surfaces of brakes and rotors, is one of the most common ways people are exposed to asbestos through brake dust. Gray-black brake dust is made up of iron particles formed by the grinding of the brake rotor by the brake pads. However,

brake dust also can contain some metallic elements and other components housed in the brake pad — including asbestos.

The automotive resource YourMechanic says that, while brake dust is not indicative of a poor braking system, over time brake dust can corrode the clear coat on a car and may eat into the aluminum alloy surface of the wheel. That is why so many drivers try to clean away brake dust, potentially exposing them to dangerous materials. DIYers may be better off visiting professional service centers to have brakes addressed rather than doing the job on their own.

OSHA says all automotive brake and clutch repair facilities in the United States must comply with the OSHA asbestos standard. These include using negative pressure enclosure/HEPA vacuum systems and low pressure/wet cleaning methods.



While asbestos is being phased out of many automotive components, it is always best to treat bakes, clutches and more with extra caution in the event that asbestos is present.

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How to approach buying a preowned vehicle

Vehicles are considerable investments. According to Kelley Blue Book, the estimated average transaction price for light vehicles in early 2018 was \$36,270.

Perhaps because of that price tag, many people in the market for cars and trucks shop for preowned vehicles, which statistics indicate are considerably less expensive than new automobiles. Edmunds.com notes that the average transaction price for a used vehicle purchased in the first quarter of 2018 was \$19,700.

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Of course, preowned vehicles carry more risk than new cars. That said, car buyers in the market for preowned vehicles can take steps to protect themselves against the risks associated with buying used cars.

- Shop for certified preowned vehicles. Certified preowned vehicles, or CPOs, typically come with an inspection and extended warranty. That can ease the concerns of buyers worried about buying a lemon. Many CPOs are recently returned off-lease vehicles that tend to have low mileage. Lessees are obligated to return leased vehicles in good condition or suffer financial penalties, meaning most off-lease vehicles will be well-maintained.

- Recognize "certified" and "CPO" are not the same thing. Edmunds.com notes that there's sometimes a difference between vehicles that are characterized as "certified" and "certified preowned." The CPO designation typically means the vehicle manufacturer stands behind the vehicle and its warranty. A vehicle described as "certified" may only be backed by the dealership itself. That's an important distinction for buyers who may travel a lot or those who plan to move, as a manufacturer-backed warranty should allow them to take the vehicle to any of the manufacturer's dealerships for repairs, regardless of where those dealerships are located. Drivers of vehicles that are only certified by a dealership may only be able to take their cars in for repairs at that particular dealership.

- Get a vehicle history report. Some sellers, whether it's dealerships or private citizens, may provide vehicle history reports. But even if they don't, the cost of such reports is negligible compared to the value of the information they provide. These reports indicate if a vehicle has been in any serious accidents and indicate mileage that can alert buyers to illegal odometer adjustments, and some may even indicate if maintenance was performed at manufacturer-recommended intervals. If sellers are reluctant to provide reports or the VIN numbers of a vehicle necessary to order them, then walk away.

- Take a long test drive. A long test drive through various conditions (hills, curvy roads, highways, etc.) can give buyers a feel of how a pre-owned vehicle handles. Don't succumb to pressure to cut test drives short, and be wary of sellers who want to keep test drives to a minimum.

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2020 SPRING...on the road

The benefits of waxing vehicles

After a thorough washing and interior detailing, many vehicle owners put the finishing touch on their cars and trucks by applying a coat of wax. Is this a practice of automotive vanity, or does waxing actually pay legitimate dividends?

A coat of wax provides a pristine shine and can help protect paint from the elements. Waxing may not be as essential as

in years past, when vehicle paints were run-of-the-mill lacquers that didn't offer much in the way of protection. But waxing can still provide a variety of benefits that go beyond making a vehicle look good when cruising down the highway.

- **Protects paint's clear coating:** According to the research team at consumer resource site Angie's List, failing to occasionally apply wax or another protectant to the vehicle's exterior can cause a breakdown of the clear coat that protects the paint. If the clear coating deteriorates, the paint can be exposed to road salt and may be vulnerable to damage from oxidation.

- **Covers up blemishes:** Properly applied wax can cover small scratches or light blemishes in the paint job. This may delay having to get a new paint job.

- **Shields against bugs and bird debris:** A freshly washed car can seem like a magnet for bird droppings and bug splatter. A coat of wax is another protectant against these issues, and may make it easier to clean off residue so it doesn't stick to and damage the vehicle's paint.

- **Reduces leasing expenses:** Lessees may want to know that applying wax can keep a vehicle in better condition, which can pay dividends when it is time to turn in a vehi-

cle. The dealership will perform a thorough inspection and could charge for discoloration, scratches or other paint issues. Waxing regularly may help reduce those expenses.

- **May help prevent careless driving:** A person who diligently takes care of his or her vehicle may translate that care into caution behind the wheel. If one is excited to keep a clean and well-maintained car, it makes sense that the same person will want to protect the vehicle in other

ways, such as through safe driving habits.

- **Provides exercise and fresh air:** A day spent washing and waxing a vehicle can be enjoyable to those who can use some time outdoors.

- **Improves resale value:** A well-maintained car or truck is more attractive to potential buyers. That can translate into a higher resale value, whether the vehicle is sold privately or as a trade-in. Waxing a vehicle is beneficial in various ways.



New formulations of automotive wax are easier than ever to apply and can provide that shiny, well-maintained look drivers covet.

Signs transmission fluid is low

In many of the following instances, drivers may only need to top off the transmission fluid in their vehicles. However, if issues persist, schedule an appointment with a mechanic.

- **Overheated transmission:** Smoke billowing from a car is a sight no driver wants to see. But as bad as it may look, smoke coming from a car may only indicate the transmission is overheating due to lack of fluid. Smoke also can be indicative of a host of other problems, so if transmission fluid levels are not low, consult a mechanic. Loss of power and a burning smell also may indicate low transmission fluid levels.

- **Erratic shifting:** Drivers can notice how their vehicles shift whether the cars or trucks have automatic or manual transmissions. Transmission fluid may be low if shifts appear to be delayed or faster than normal or if the vehicle appears to be slamming into a new gear. The automotive service provider Aamco notes that shifting issues related to transmission fluid may indicate the presence of a leak. If the issue disappears after refilling transmission fluid but then reappears shortly thereafter, consult a mechanic.

- **Pausing when engaging gears:** A two- to three-second pause when shifting into drive and reverse is another indicator that transmission fluid levels are low. The automotive experts at Firestone note that manual transmissions require fluid to keep gears lubricated, while automatic transmissions rely on fluid to create the hydraulic pressure necessary to power movement within the transmission. When fluid levels are low, shifting from park to drive or reverse can take longer than it should.

- **Slipping transmission:** Vehicles that are not staying in gear also may be in need of transmission fluid. However, a slipping transmission also may indicate significant damage to the transmission has already occurred, so this issue should be brought to the attention of a mechanic.

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The Wildcat Chronicles

Durant High School

April 16, 2020

Senior pursues nursing to work on frontlines

By Rylee Page

Before the recent pandemic, Durant senior Hannah Frisch worked as an emergency room technician at UnityPoint Health-Trinity in Bettendorf.

Due to an underlying respiratory issue, Frisch was advised by her doctor to take medical leave from work to prevent possible infection from COVID-19 virus.

Next fall, the 18-year-old is still undecided where she will be attending college, but knows that wherever it may be, she will be studying nursing.

"This recent pandemic hasn't scared me away from becoming a nurse," said Frisch. In fact, it is motivating her to work even more to obtain her degree in the

health care field, so that one day she can be on the frontlines during a time of need.

Frisch said that she still has close family members in the medical field who are working during the outbreak. Her sister, Alissa Frisch, is currently working as an intensive care nurse at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, and her mom, Lori Gruman is a paramedic and ER technician for Trinity as well.

Frisch comes from a long background of family members in the health care



Frisch

system and says that she wants to follow in their footsteps. Besides Frisch's mom and sister, her uncle also works as an ER doctor in Florida, and both her paternal grandparents have a background in the health care field.

As a high schooler in the medical field, Frisch feels the pressure to succeed at her job. Before her medical leave on March 17, she worked from right after school until midnight.

At work, she helped out with anything that the nurses or doctors might have needed. She did tasks from cleaning rooms to performing EKGs on patients. Frisch sometimes lended a hand with more major procedures such as stitches, putting catheters

in, and exams.

Even though being in the emergency room for long periods of time can be stressful, Frisch says that it makes her feel accomplished.

Frisch said that she is "hopeful for the future of becoming a nurse since I'm getting experience early on."

As a young person working in the health care system, Frisch wants to let everyone know that "this disease [COVID-19] is serious and can affect anyone."

In an interview on April 3, Frisch warned that this pandemic is "not even at its all-time worst." So the best thing everyone can do is stay inside and protect themselves and their loved ones.

DHS classes move online during school shutdown

By Timothy Junis and Ellie Olsen

Shutdown a month ago as part of a nationwide effort to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, Durant High School is now holding classes online for the student body.

Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds originally recommended that schools shut down until April 13, but then extended her recommendation to April 30 (as of time of writing).

On April 7, Durant High School had its first day of online classes.

"Our goal was to meet students' needs the best we can through online availability," said Superintendent Joe Burnett, who heads up both the Durant and Wilton school districts.

Despite the shutdown, he wants the students to have an opportunity to continue their learning experience.

Once a week, high school classes now gather online using Google Meet, where teachers can interact with students through video and chat.

Tuesdays are A-day classes, and Thursdays are B-day classes. These online classes are completely voluntary. Students are not required to attend, and there are no graded assignments.

Mr. Burnett explained that there were certainly obstacles to the online classes, but the district was working really hard to stay on top of it. He gave a lot of credit to the staff and all they have done during this time.

"Please take advantage of the opportunities that your teachers are giving you to continue your learning," said Mr. Burnett, addressing the student body.

Mr. Jeff Trask, a high school Spanish teacher, enjoys being able to communicate with his students even though he isn't at school.

He said that participation in his classes for the first day of online instruction April 7 was very high. He only missed about three students the whole day.

He believes that this online format was the best option for the school. As it can be tough for some students to connect through the internet, a mandatory format may not have succeeded as intended.

"I think some students are more likely to be engaged because they aren't being judged and tested on their responses," said Mr. Trask.

Brock Jones, a junior, said that online classes in the first week were pretty laid back and featured mostly discussion and that more students will probably attend future classes because the classes weren't what they thought they would be.

As for prom and graduation, the district is hoping that these crucial events will still happen for the Durant students. The plan right now is to wait and see where the situation goes. Mr. Burnett knows that these are big memory makers.

"Someone's gone to school for thir-

teen years," he said. "We certainly like to recognize them and their work."



Photo by Mrs. Laurie Botkins
Dalton Tegtmeier carries sticks and leaves to a garbage bag during last year's Day of Caring, one of several events that have been cancelled or postponed because of the coronavirus-related school shutdown.

He said graduation is a way to cap off a large part of someone's life.

Some of the girls in the senior class have also spent up to \$500 on a dress and would be very upset if it got cancelled.

"I'm actually glad that prom was moved back and not cancelled. A lot of other high schools just cancelled, so I feel lucky our school cares enough to still give us prom," said senior Kira Schult.

Prom was originally scheduled for April 25, but holding it much later could have its drawbacks, according to senior Laura Stineman.

"I feel like it won't be the same prom if it got moved back," said Stineman.

"I feel like the atmosphere will be different having it at a later date, and I think if we move it back past graduation, some people may not want to go."

If school does not resume after April 30, many seniors are concerned about missing their "lasts," their last walk through the hallways of Durant High School or their last time sitting in the cafeteria.

"I miss everyone, and it's hard to wrap my head around what's happening with how quickly things are progressing," said senior Allie Poston.

"It sucks that we can't have classes with our classmates after being with them for 13 years," said senior Jake Willkomm.

Bored students find activities to pass time in pandemic

By Sofia Reyna

With so many places closed, such as state parks, malls, and other hangout spots, Durant students are part of the nationwide effort to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus by staying home.

And Durant students are finding it to be very boring, even if they still have activities to keep them occupied.

Senior Laura Stineman has regular dance classes she has to attend, which are online for now. Even if she isn't at her studio, she still practices at home using the app Zoom.

She explains that these classes run as normally as they can, except for each class ending five minutes early to allow instructors to set up for the next online class.

Thankfully, there aren't many prob-

lems with this way of learning; however, she says sometimes difficulties with the internet causes the audio to lag, making it hard to follow the instructor.

However, Stineman still has days when some of the only things she does is watch Netflix and walk her dogs.

When the boredom hits her really hard on particular days, she goes on her phone.

"Those are the days where all I do is watch TikTok," she said.

Sophomore Ella Mundt is another high schooler who is dealing with boredom. She usually goes on walks with her family every day and watches Netflix to take her mind off of it, though.

She has been able to still see her friends' faces through FaceTime, but she

misses being able to actually be at school.

"I have been missing more social interactions and having more activities to keep me busy," she said.

Ella's parents, Kevin and Elaine Mundt, have also been meeting their friends on the app Houseparty. Even if it isn't the same as physically going out, they still enjoy the opportunity of interacting with their friends.

"It's definitely a different way of doing things! We get to talk, which, before this happened, we would see our friends every day. This way we can keep up with each other and their families," said Mr. Mundt, the sixth-12th band instructor at Durant.

Mr. Mundt said there are even some advantages to using Houseparty.

"Well, I don't have to dress up or

spend any money on going out to eat, so that's good!" he said. However, he said it's "still not the same as actually hanging out with friends."

Junior Allaina Bennett-Casali says that she usually just drives around and goes to places just to pass time.

"I drive to Walmart and McDonald's a lot," she said.

Along with driving, she has been planting things such as rosemary, sage, and chamomile. She still interacts with her friends, even hanging out with them online.

Allaina's freshman brother, Brayden, has opted to stay inside more often than his sister.

"I get to play video games all night, and that's good," he said.

Kindergarten down to one class next year

Beloved teacher to retire early in wake of cut

By Keagen Head

Now it's personal.

Durant's falling school enrollment has forced the early retirement of my kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Jill Gerdts.

Earlier this year, Mrs. Gerdts decided to step down from her position. She has taught at Durant for 19 years now. Previously, she had taught preschool at Muscatine for five years, adding to her total of 24 years.

Way back in August of 2008, I, along with many of my classmates still at Durant today, was in Mrs. Gerdts' class.

Back then, the kindergarten class size was a little over 50 students. For the fall of 2020, however, Durant's kindergarten class is expected to have somewhere between 22 and 25 students, according to Mrs. Gerdts, a number that calls for only one teacher.

Currently, Mrs. Gerdts teaches one half of the grade, and Mrs. Kris Daufeldt teaches the other half. Mrs. Daufeldt has seniority over Mrs. Gerdts, so Mrs. Daufeldt will be the sole kindergarten teacher next year.

If Mrs. Gerdts wanted to remain teaching at Durant, she would have to take a different position at a different grade, and the teacher with the least amount of seniority

would lose his or her job to Mrs. Gerdts.

Mrs. Gerdts has decided to not do that. Instead, she'll retire earlier than she had planned to.

"I just really didn't feel comfortable pushing someone else out of their job," said Mrs. Gerdts.

She also believes that adopting a whole new curriculum for a different grade level and leaving kindergarten would be too uncomfortable for her.

"I have to say, kindergarten is my jam," said Mrs. Gerdts. "I love it here. This is me."

However, if another position were to open up, and she no longer had to push anyone out of their job, she would take it despite the transition to a different grade.

"If there was an opening that would come open, I would go to that," said Mrs. Gerdts.

That's the thing.

If every year's kindergarten class is this small, and if the 2020-2021 kindergarten class doesn't grow, the elementary grades will eventually need one teacher per class.

This would cause a different elementary teacher every year to lose his or her job. The enrollment crisis is upon us, and it's time to take action before it's too late.

Mrs. Gerdts has been an inspiration to many, including myself. It's impossible to replace a teacher like her, and unfortunately, due to the falling enrollment, we don't need to.

It'll be different coming to Durant next year for the first time without my kin-



Photo by Nicole Brown

Kindergarten teacher Mrs. Jill Gerdts will take early retirement at the end of the school year.

Kindergarten teacher in the building, but it's something we're going to have to live with.

Freshmen overcome their high school anxieties

By Sofia Reyna

When I first started high school in the fall of 2018, I had a couple of fears. Grades, loads of homework, and having enough leisure time were a few.

A handful of this year's freshmen were also a bit anxious about high school when classes started last August.

For example, when I was a fresh-

man, I got stressed over my grades and homework at times.

Max Thoma, a freshman this year, was also anxious about homework. Luckily, he got into the swing of things and seems to have gotten over his fear.

"It wasn't that difficult once you get the hang of it. I was a little scared about it at first, but then once you get in the hang of it, it's a lot easier," he said.

Freshman Allie Taylor seemed to be worried about some of the teachers being mean, along with keeping up her grades. She soon found out that the teachers weren't as bad as she thought.

"They're better than what I thought they would be," she said.

However, her grades aren't as high as she hoped they would be.

"I can't keep my grades up," she said.

Nora Ramer was worried about her friendships and how they would change when entering high school.

"I didn't know if we would still be friends and if we would have enough time to

hang out," she said. Thankfully, this hasn't come true, but she still worries about her grades through the year.

Mackenzie Oberlander, who is in multiple sports this year, wasn't sure if she could juggle sports and school at the same time.

"It's definitely a challenge," she said.

While some freshman had fears regarding grades and homework, one had a different fear.

Freshman Ethan Bell was more scared about what kind of creatures he would find in the high school.

"Spiders in the ceiling," he said.

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Senior Hannah Frisch is a first-year member of NHS. She has enjoyed participating in the High School Lock-In night, as well as reading to elementary students during Christmas time and making crafts with them. "The kids loved it, and we had the opportunity to tell them about NHS and what it's all about," Frisch said.

Frisch

The Wildcat Chronicles journalism staff feels a school newspaper is uniquely qualified to inform, entertain, and represent our peers. We strive to present accurate stories and thought-provoking commentary and are responsible for the content of each issue.

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Michelle Tate

Durant grad lobbies for the visually impaired

By Koby Paulsen

Central College senior Beth Rouse has been making an impact for students who are visually impaired for just over four years now.

Rouse, the former Durant High School 2016 graduate, has been to Washington, DC three times over those four years, meeting with legislators such as Iowa Representative Steve King and Senators Joni Ernst and Chuck Grassley and lobbying to get more aid for the visually impaired.



Rouse

Rouse is a part of the National Association of Blind Students (NABS), which is a division of the National Federation of

the Blind.

The NABS goal is to promote the equality of the blind by taking action in ways such as fighting for new things to help them in their everyday life.

Rouse made her first trip to DC in January of 2017. Rouse has been back to the nation's capitol two more times during her college career, lobbying for people who are blind just like her. In her last visit in February of 2020, there were three topics on her agenda.

The first item on the agenda was the Excess Technology Affordability Act. This would provide blind people with technology such as a screen reader and also provide students with braille text.

The group also lobbied for more accessibility within college classrooms, including braille textbooks that are properly formatted and greater access to non-visual technology such as medical and exercise

equipment that blind people can use and know their data.

Rouse knows the importance of these things to the blind because she uses them in her everyday life.

"I realize the frustration of my everyday life compared to the life of a sighted person," Rouse said.

She hasn't personally run into very many accessibility issues due to the fact that she has chosen all of her classes at Central, located in Pella, Iowa, and knew what classes to choose to best accommodate herself.

But still she has had a few. One of these issues is difficulty with a textbook scan. If a columned text book is not scanned correctly, it will read as a row rather than column by column.

Rouse says that one of the most frustrating things is having to take a one-on-one quiz with one of her professors, saying it "can be very intimidating at times."

She credits most of her success in high school and college to her support staff in high school.

She says that her teachers helped her tremendously outside the classroom, including Spanish teacher Jeff Trask and math teachers Abigail Straube and Joey Kramer. Rouse stated that those teachers would spend hours after school helping her with one concept.

"I don't think I'd be as successful if I had not received that support in high school," Rouse said.

Rouse is in for the long haul with the NABS saying that she will continue helping to aid those who are visually impaired and will definitely be going back to the capitol.

"I can't imagine not going unless some external factor makes it so I can't go," she said.

DHS siblings inspiration behind nonprofit RoEll

By Danielle Paulsen

A local citizen and mother of two DHS students, Dorian Maag, started a nonprofit organization called RoEll just two years ago that helps children and families afford medications that otherwise could cost hundreds, if not thousands of dollars.

"Our mission is to assist families with children as well as young adults up to the age of 30 with lifesaving medicine, medical equipment or medical care," she said in a series of written responses to the *Chronicles*.

"Our belief is that no one should have to choose between paying for the medicine/medical equipment/medical care they need to stay alive or prevent a life threatening emergency in lieu of paying for other basic life necessities like housing, food, utilities, transportation etc."

Her two kids, freshman Robbie Olsen and senior Ellie Olsen, were diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at a young age and are what really motivated Mrs. Maag to start this business, hence the name. Her kids have inspired her in many ways.

"It is a lot of responsibility every day for them that other kids don't have to think or worry about and can be life threatening if they don't take care of themselves or pay attention to their body," she said.

"Ellie and Robbie are my heroes. They are two of the strongest, bravest, resilient people I know. We have always taught them that their Type 1 Diabetes isn't an excuse but an obstacle to overcome."

RoEll has helped more than 20 people since beginning, and the organization only plans on growing that number and pos-



Photo courtesy of Dorian Maag

Two Durant High School siblings, senior Ellie Olsen and freshman Robbie Olsen, inspired their mother, Dorian Maag, to start RoEll, a nonprofit organization.

sibly even expanding the maximum age limit of 30 years old.

Its board of directors has worked hard to raise over \$10,000 these past two years. This money comes from a variety of places including grants that Mrs. Maag writes and donations from private individuals, local groups, churches, and businesses.

One of the families that RoEll has helped is the Metcalfs of Davenport. Jessica Metcalf said her daughter Caylie has had Type 1 diabetes for three years.

Mrs. Metcalf first heard about RoEll last year on an episode of Paula Sands Live that Mrs. Maag appeared to explain her

organization.

"She [Caylie] has a Dexcom G6 that allows her to view her blood sugars on her phone without having to do an actual finger stick. The Dexcom checks her blood sugars every five minutes. I am able to monitor her blood sugars as well on my phone via bluetooth," Mrs. Metcalf said in a series of written responses.

The Metcalfs recently got new insurance that made them question whether or not they would have to get rid of the Dexcom since it would be over \$1,000 every three months to keep it. However, Mrs. Metcalf remembered that episode of Paula Sands Live

and decided to contact the organization.

Mrs. Metcalf said that her entire experience with RoEll has been amazing. She worried that other families might need the help more, but Mrs. Maag didn't hesitate to help them.

"Without the help of Dorian and RoEll, we most likely wouldn't have this device right now. Her foundation has been a huge blessing to our family and because of that we are eternally grateful for her and her generous heart," Mrs. Metcalf said.

Mrs. Maag started RoEll for many reasons. She knew what these medical expenses were like for many other families because she has had firsthand experience with this.

She said some families who have children with diabetes may have to pay up to \$1,000 for insulin each month because they don't have health insurance, or their insurance has large copayments or deductibles.

She says those families may have to face a difficult choice of paying for the medicine or paying for other essential items like groceries, a car payment, or a mortgage payment.

"Not taking home the medicine that keeps your children alive isn't a choice, but many people do have to make that choice in this country, and we want to help," she said.

"I started RoEll Inc. to help these families and young adults by giving them some hope with temporary financial assistance as well as providing them support and education for some longer term solutions."

The website for any information about RoEll can be found at <https://roellinc.com>.

New mother appreciates local community's support

By Kiley Stineman

Life has changed drastically for 15-year-old Rebecca Paustian, a Durant High School student.

The sophomore has quickly learned that the responsibilities of motherhood would have been much more difficult if she did not have the community's support.

Paustian gave birth on February 21 to a healthy baby boy named Henry, who weighed seven pounds and ten ounces.

In the meantime, the Paustian family has been overcome with the positive support of the community.

Many people have shown their support by giving the Paustians diapers, clothes, wipes, and anything that could help them take care of their new addition.

"People we wouldn't expect have donated things to us and the support has been amazing," said Paustian.

In an interview last month before

the coronavirus-related school shutdown, she said her schedule was a mix of going to school and coming home to take care of Henry. Paustian attended first hour and then went home until noon.

"School hasn't really changed much for me," said Paustian.

However, her responsibilities at home have heightened even more so.

"At home it's more like you don't just go home and sit around. You go home, and you take care of him," said Paustian.

Dayna Maiers, one of Rebecca's closest friends, goes over there at least once a week to help out with Henry.

Maiers believes that Rebecca has become way more focused since having Henry.

"You can tell it's been hard for her to be focused on school and him," said Maiers.

In the interview last month, Paus-

tian said that during the day when she is at school, her mother watches Henry among the other kids in her daycare. Along with her mother, Rebecca's sister has also been a huge help.

Grace, who is in junior high, has helped her older sister with watching Henry when she has to go somewhere.

Grace also loves to hold Henry whenever she can. Paustian's friends have also had a huge impact on her transition to motherhood. Many of them have stopped by to see Henry, and they are continuously checking up on Rebecca to make sure she's doing ok.

"I think that with all the support that people have been giving us, it's made it a lot easier than what it would be if no one was there for us," Paustian said.

Paustian enjoys spending as much time with Henry as she can, and she can't imagine not having him.

"I can't imagine life without him," said Paustian.

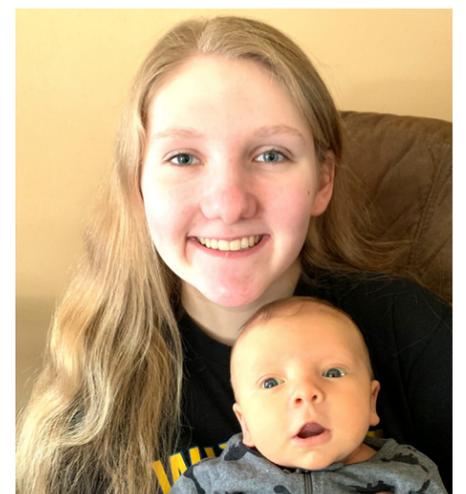


Photo courtesy of Paustian family
Durant student Rebecca Paustian gave birth to her son, Henry, on February 21.

Former DHS softball star new Wildcat coach

Aubrey Bland part of 2013 state title team

By Lucas Callison

The Durant Softball program recently hired Aubrey Bland this spring as the new varsity head coach.

Coach Bland is a former student-athlete at Durant, graduating in 2014. She grew up in Durant and played softball, volleyball, and golf in high school.

Coach Bland was a member of the 2013 2A state softball championship team and a part of one of the only teams in Durant history to ever win a state championship.

Coach Bland was selected to second-team all-conference in 2012 and 2013, as well as being on the all-state team in 2013. Also in 2014, Coach Bland made first-team all-conference.

As for personal accomplishments, the third baseman set the school record for RBIs in a single season (57) and doubles in a single season (23) in her senior year.

Coach Bland is one of the youngest softball coaches to ever come through Durant, but she still has plenty of experience. After graduating from high school, Coach Bland went on to play one year of Division I softball at the University of Northern Iowa.

Recently, she was a coaching intern for Wartburg softball. She also spent some

time coaching the junior high team at Durant for several years prior.

Coach Bland will be the third coach in three years at Durant. Coach Kevin Kaalberg coached the softball team last year in his only season at Durant before resigning in December.

Coach Steve Hopkins was coach before Coach Kaalberg and was the head coach during prime Durant softball years, including the state championship in 2013.

The 2020 season will be crucial in determining where the softball program heads in the future. The Wildcats entered the 2019 season ranked #1 in Class 2A but fell just short of making it to the state tournament after losing in the sub-state final to Beckman Catholic.

A senior class of only three players (compared to seven seniors last season) will mean underclassmen standing out and filling varsity roles. Seniors Allie Poston, Kira Schult, and Kylie Kay are returning along with sophomores Ally Happ and Kylie Schult, and junior Brooklyn Bullard.

Coach Bland believes it is important “to have some sort of consistency, stability, and structure” for the program, and she added that it’s “going to take more than just one year.”

However, because of COVID-19, school is closed until April 30, and there are some worries for the coaching staff about how this shutdown will affect a coach’s ability to work with players.

“I think that for not only our team and new coaches, but for all teams, hav-

ing a month without any kind of structured practice or fundamentals is going to affect everybody’s playing because off-season and pre-season is where you build up muscle memory and get reps to get going for the season,” Coach Bland said.

Coach Bland believes the school

shutdown will be detrimental to all teams this year, but especially for newer coaches like herself.

“This virus has cut into open gyms, and there’s a whole bunch I want to teach them, but I can’t even do that right now,” she said.

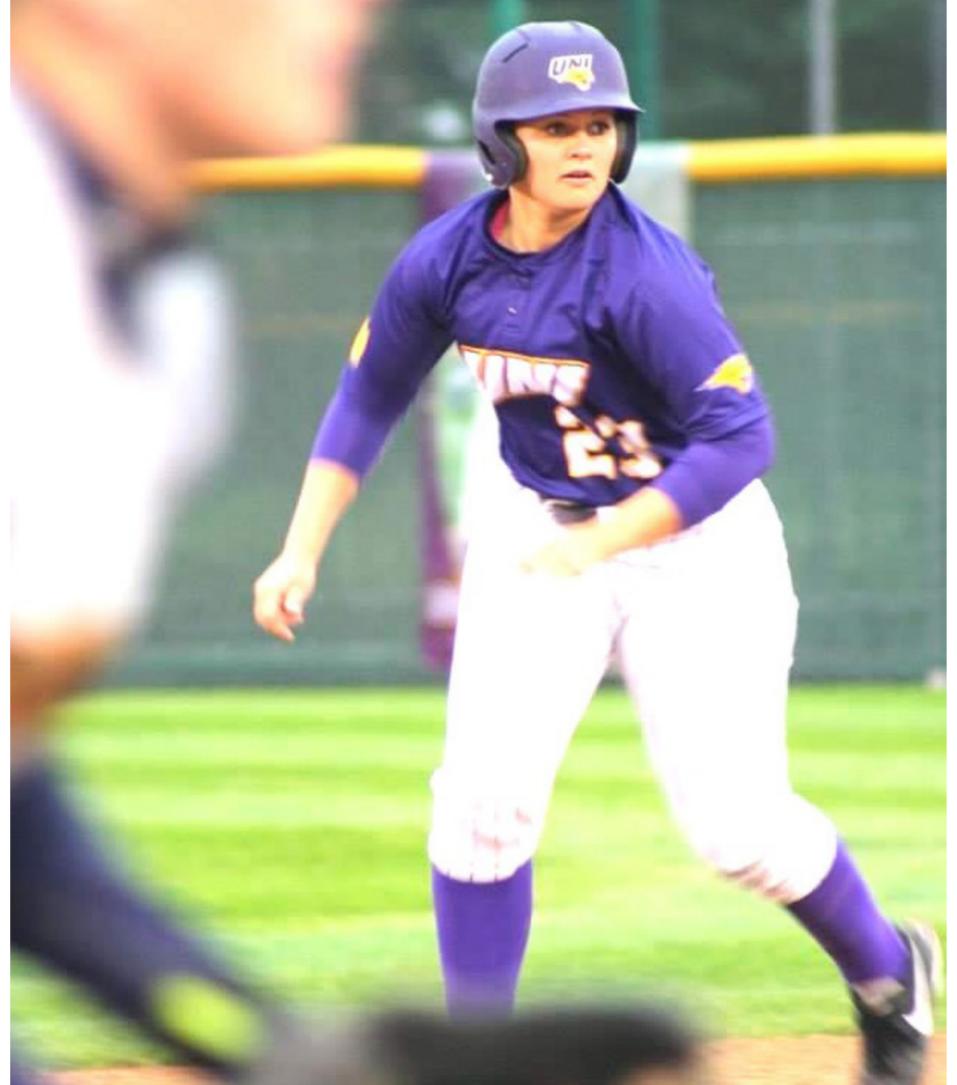


Photo courtesy of UNI Athletics

New softball head coach Aubrey Bland was part of the 2013 Wildcat team that won a state championship and later played collegiate ball at the University of Northern Iowa.

Fans cope with no live sports to watch on TV

By Koby Paulsen

Since the world seemingly shut down in the middle of March, Durant students have been struggling to find things to keep themselves busy.

This is especially so for avid sports fans like myself because all the major sporting leagues in the United States postponed operations as well. I have been missing being able to watch a sporting event, including March Madness, the NBA, and the start of the MLB season.

To get my sports fix, I’ve been playing golf at Wahkonsa and shooting hoops in my driveway. It turns out I’m not alone.

Other students in my first period Sports Literature class last week shared some of my frustrations during our online class session.

Sophomore Kyle DeWulf, a Chicago Cubs fan, said he has been keeping himself busy with sports by rewatching old highlights and games, including Game 7 of the 2016 World Series, adding that he even had a little anxiety because it was like he was

watching the game live.

A few students in my class commented specifically on the NBA postponing the season.

Junior Timothy Junis wished he could have watched his favorite team, the Oklahoma City Thunder, in the playoffs.

“The Thunder would’ve been in the playoffs,” Junis said. “I don’t know if they were going to do anything, but it would’ve been cool to see what they did.”

Junis added that he hopes the NBA finishes its season at some point.

Sophomore Tysen McKinley doesn’t normally watch sports during this time but wishes he could watch the Masters.

“I wasn’t able to watch the Masters this year,” McKinley said. “I like to watch the Masters and then talk about it with my grandpa, but I can’t do that this year.”

McKinley also talked about the MLB postponing its season, saying it’s a bummer, but he wasn’t too thrilled about prospects this upcoming season for his beloved Boston Red Sox anyway.

Junior Brian Graves sees a silver lining with sporting events being cancelled, saying that people have to start seeing a life without sports.

“I’ve had to keep busy working,” Graves said. “I haven’t sat at home all month.”

Arty's Ice Cream and Grill girls' track athlete of month

Heidi Wolf is a senior middle-distance runner for the Durant girls' track team. This year Heidi will be running the 400-meter dash and the 800-meter run. Her best time for the 400-meter is 1:10 and 2:45 for the 800-meter. Heidi's season goals are to get her 800-meter time down to 2:35 and finish in the top five in the conference, as well as make it to state.

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Wolf
Wolf

Peels Inc. golfer of the month

Junior Belle Rockow looks to lead the Wildcat girls' golf team again this year as the spring season hopefully gets underway next month. As a sophomore, she had the lowest scoring average on the team for a nine-hole course with 49.4. When the Wildcats played 18 holes, her scoring average was 101.75.

Rockow

Wilton Cafe boys' track athlete of month

Braden Wagner is a junior for the Durant boys' track team and runs the 800-meter, 1600-meter, and 3200-meter races. Last year, Braden finished the year with a 1600-meter time of 5:05. He is hoping to get his 1600-meter time down to 4:45 and his 3200-meter time down to 11:30. Braden's goal is to make it to Des Moines for the state track meet.

Wagner

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Today's Dentistry sports volunteer of the month

Dawn Lafrenz is a DHS alumni and works at Durant Elementary School as an intervention associate. She and her husband, Jeff, have three sons, Logan, Kyle, and Bryce. All three were multi-sport athletes while at Durant. Dawn enjoys volunteering at sporting events. “This is a way I can give back to our athletic program that supported my kids over the years,” she said.

Lafrenz

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HHS awards \$11,736,310 to Iowa in response to COVID-19

On April 8, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), awarded \$11,736,310 to 14 health centers in Iowa as part of a historic U.S. response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Health center award-ees in Iowa may use these funds to help their communities detect coronavirus; prevent, diagnose and treat COVID-19; and maintain or increase health capacity and staffing levels to address this public health emergency.

“This new funding secured by President Trump will help our community health centers continue the work they’re doing on the ground

against the coronavirus,” said HHS Secretary Alex Azar. “HRSA-funded health centers are already playing a critical role by delivering essential services, serving as community testing and screening sites, and alleviating burdens on our nation’s emergency rooms and hospitals. HHS will continue bringing every resource we have to support heroic healthcare workers across the diverse settings health centers serve, from our cities to our rural towns.”

On Friday, March 27, the president signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, into law. HRSA is making these vital health center investments available immediately, as they are a key ele-

ment of the nation’s public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“HRSA-funded health centers are part of the backbone of our nation’s health care system, serving 1 in 12 people nationwide,” said HRSA Administrator Tom Engels. “Increasingly, people are turning to health centers for the first line of defense in combating emergency public health priorities like the novel coronavirus. Health centers will put these resources to immediate use to respond to emerging and evolving local needs and continue to deliver high-quality primary health care services to their patients.”

HRSA funds nearly 1,400 health cen-

ters that operate in nearly 13,000 locations nationwide. Health centers deliver care to the nation’s most vulnerable individuals and families, including people experiencing homelessness, agricultural workers, residents of public housing, and our nation’s veterans. Led by patient-majority boards, these health centers provide affordable, accessible, and quality primary health care to over 28 million people a year, regardless of their ability to pay. Visit [FindAHealthCenter.HRSA.Gov](https://bphc.hrsa.gov/emergency-response/coronavirus-cares-FY2020-awards) to locate the health center closest to you.

For a list of award recipients, visit <https://bphc.hrsa.gov/emergency-response/coronavirus-cares-FY2020-awards>.

USDA announces more than 3.4 million CRP acres signup

DES MOINES – Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue announced the acceptance of more than 3.4 million acres in the general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup recently completed, the first general signup enrollments since 2016. County offices began notifying producers with accepted offers no later than April 3.

Through CRP, farmers and ranchers receive an annual rental payment for establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. Farmers and

ranchers who participate in CRP help provide numerous benefits to the nation’s environment and economy.

Over 35 years, CRP has addressed multiple concerns while ensuring the most competitive offers are selected by protecting fragile and environmentally sensitive lands, improving water quality, enhancing wildlife populations, providing pollinator forage habitat, sequestering carbon in soil and enhancing soil productivity. Seventy percent of the nation’s land is owned and tended privately, and America’s farmers, ranchers and landowners have willingly stepped up to protect the environment

and natural resources.

This general signup included offers for State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), which allows producers to install practices that benefit high-priority, locally developed wildlife conservation objectives using targeted restoration of vital habitat. Over 95 percent of SAFE offers submitted were accepted under this general signup representing more than 487,500 acres. This acceptance level highlights the commitment to SAFE as an important part of CRP.

The 2018 Farm Bill established a nationwide acreage limit for CRP, with the total

number of acres that may be enrolled capped at 24.5 million acres in 2020 and growing to 27 million by 2023.

While the deadline for general CRP signup was Feb. 28, signups for continuous CRP, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, CRP Grasslands and the Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP) are ongoing. The CRP Grasslands deadline is May 15, and the SHIPP signup began March 30, and ends Aug. 21.

For state-by-state information on general signup results, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.



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Wilton Elementary gets creative with student interaction

By Ashley Darnold
of the Advocate News

When the COVID-19 virus reached area hometowns, it didn't come by itself — several uncertainties rode sidecar, stopping and visiting many doorsteps. One of the biggest uncertainties the Wilton and Durant communities are facing is in regard to school closures and the continuation of education at home.

When Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds temporarily shut down Iowa schools through April 13, then extended it to April 30, and enforced social distancing measures, many teachers were met with shock.

"It was heartbreaking and a little scary. I have such a wonderful, kind and motivated group of kids. I knew many of them would be disappointed and a little nervous about not being able to come to school. I thought about how much we would all miss each other. I am thankful for the technology that is available so that we can at least see each other's faces. I do miss their hugs," said Kelly Kirkman a Wilton Elementary Second Grade Teacher.

"When Gov. Reynolds originally said school is temporarily closed, it was late on a Sunday evening. I was full of emotions and recall not being able to sleep that night with all the unknowns ahead. However, I thought it was a smart decision as safety and health is important for everyone. I knew that we as a community and teachers would help get the kids and families what they needed during this time. I never would have thought we would be out through all of April, but I am grateful to live in a community where our school district is amazing as well as the people in the community," explained Rachel Bohnsack, a Wilton Elementary Kindergarten teacher.

Because of the pandemic, the Wilton district decided to make contact with each of their students shortly after deciding to temporarily close the schools. For the initial contact with students, teachers thought an in-person visit with each student would be more personable.

"Where it was possible and parents agreed, student homes were visited and teachers and families seemed to all appreciate this opportunity! We are trying to put our children first and this seemed to be very beneficial to them — seeing their teachers was a positive for all, and I appreciate all of the effort teachers made to get this done," explained Wilton Elementary Principal Denise Austin.

Parents were asked at the initial contact from their child's teacher if they wanted to receive voluntary learning opportunities for their child or not during the school's temporarily

closure. For those parents who answered yes, some have decided to receive electronic copies and some have chosen hard copies of the learning opportunities.

"We are sending resources and being very specific about what students should be doing; hopefully this takes decision making off the parents' plate," said Austin.

Administrators asked teachers to provide two reading learning opportunities, two math learning opportunities, one science and one social studies learning opportunity per week, allowing teachers to fill in learning opportunities when requested or needed.

Teachers have also been asked to connect with their students a minimum of once per week via some sort of online resource such as Google Meet.

"Teachers were also asked to look at their remaining standards and bundle them and focus on priority standards so they can choose learning opportunities from these standards to make sure we are continuing to move students forward and they are as ready as they can be for the next grade level," said Austin.

"Our administration has been wonderful with guiding the teachers. From encouraging individual home visits (outside, socially distanced), recommending appropriate suggestions for our e-learning, to providing technology access for the students without, the administration has been great! They are always very supportive," said Kirkman.

Families in the community may be concerned with learning gaps between children once school resumes. When asked how the district envisions closing that gap, Austin responded, "Teachers are excellent at assessing where students are and moving them to where they should be with small group instructionally matched to student need. We will take them where we are and move them to where they need to be. We are also very pleased with the number of children who are currently able to participate in our voluntary learning opportunities!"

Tammy Place, Wilton Elementary's Instructional Coach, gave some tips for parents during these uncertain times with continuing educational learning with their children.

"This is not 'home schooling,' rather it's 'crisis schooling.' No parent would come to us for a haircut, and in turn we don't expect parents to be teachers. Here are three tips: Be patient,



With schools shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers are continuing to educate their students with the help of some creativity. Wilton second grade teacher Kelly Kirkman is shown meeting with one of her students, Kendra DeVore, during the initial teacher visits performed district-wide. DeVore's student envelope was filled with educational learning opportunities to work on while school remains closed through April 30. Photo by Ashley Darnold

not demanding with yourself and your kids. Make a goal of having your child read something daily, a book, magazine, comic, directions on making mac and cheese, anything you have at home. Reach out, call/email your child's teacher or call the instructional coach. We are here to help you!" said Place.

"For children in pre-K through fourth grade: keep the same routine. When you are home — talk, talk, talk to your kids. So much development comes from talking. Continue to have them read for a set amount of time, whatever your nightly routine has been. For children in fifth through 12th grade: continue your nightly reading routine. Talk, talk, talk! This is an isolating time and we all just need to communicate, even if it's yelling or crying. Together, set a goal of having your child do some online learning every week," explained Place.

"This is new for all of us. Many of the activities can be done by the students independently. The Google Meets with the teachers will be helpful and students can use this time for some guidance if needed. Some families have found it handy to have a schedule with school times and break times. You know your children and you know how much they can handle. Don't overload the kids, or yourselves. Some days, you may just want to read a book with your child, and that is great!" explained Kirkman.

#InThisTogether

- bringing the community together when we are apart -



Henry Tucker's dad, Alex Tucker, is an ER doctor at Genesis in Davenport. Alex is a 2007 graduate of Durant High School. Henry is pictured on his first birthday March 5, with a sign stating, "My daddy is my superhero!" Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone is urged to stay home as much as possible.

Contributed Photo



The daffodils are in full bloom, as the Durant Schools remain quiet with no students or teachers in their classrooms. Perhaps we can take a lesson from the daffodils and rise up against and conquer the COVID-19 pandemic. #COMMUNITYSTRONG

Photo by Teresa Benischek



At the end of March, red ribbons were placed around trees lining Fifth Street in Durant. These ribbons were displayed to show support for EMS, fire departments and police officers during the COVID-19 pandemic. These services are essential, and they are bravely serving our communities during the outbreak.

Photo by Teresa Benischek

Watch for our **weekly special section** of #InThisTogether. Please email adnews@netwtc.net with pictures that may be featured in the paper.