

Pocahontas RECORD-DEMOCRAT

Official County Newspaper

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\$1⁰⁰



WEATHER

WESSELS OIL COMPANY, INC.
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DAY	HI	LOW	PRCP.	SNOW
Aug. 14	67	54	0.08	
Aug. 15	77	55		
Aug. 16	82	59		
Aug. 17	73	48		
Aug. 18	77	58		
Aug. 19	91	64		
Aug. 20	82	63		

Attendees fill conference room at PCH to learn about Pocahontas nursing home situation

By Erin Sommers
pokyrdnews@gmail.com

Pocahontas Community Hospital CEO James Roetman was frank with community members last week.

Finding a way to keep a nursing home in Pocahontas won't be easy or inexpensive.

But Roetman, whose own mother spent seven years at Pocahontas Manor, said the investment in some kind of nursing home would be worth it for the community. That value isn't just for the aging population in the county, he said, but also for the community as a whole — when people are looking to relocate to a new community, they look for schools, hospitals, grocery stores and nursing homes. Pocahontas Manor's location immediately adjacent to the hospital had been a selling point for years.

"We think we need to have a nursing home in the town," Roetman said. "Having a nursing home is a big deal."

PCH officials did reach out to the company that owned and ran the Manor, to see if the hospital could purchase the building.

"Originally they told us they wanted \$600,000 for it," Roetman told a crowd of about 70 people at PCH Aug. 15.

That was too much, Roetman and the PCH board decided. The owners came back with a lower cost — \$300,000. The board had a counter offer.

"I talked to them about donating the building to our foundation," Roetman said, adding nursing home officials spent about a week considering the request. "They came back and said they weren't interested

in that." Roetman said he and county economic development officials had been working with Manor officials for four or five years, talking about improvement projects or even building a new care facility. Early cost estimates were \$4.5 to \$6 million; after the pandemic, those costs have jumped to \$9 to \$11 million, Roetman said.

That doesn't mean a new nursing home is out of the question, Roetman said. Humboldt lost all but 28 nursing home beds in recent years, and a group of investors has come together there to build a new nursing home. Building a new facility, or even reopening Pocahontas Manor comes with some additional hurdles, though, Roetman warned. State officials, including Gov. Kim Reynolds, have taken a stance that the state has enough nursing home beds, but that they aren't all being staffed. Roetman said an application to get a nursing home license for Pocahontas County may be approved, if the county is determined to have a nursing home desert — a documented lack of nursing home beds.

Laurens Care Center currently has four openings, while Accura in Fonda also has four openings. Just outside of the county, the nursing home in Pomeroy has three open beds and the one in Manson has four open beds.

Community members asked about the feasibility of tearing down part of the Manor and keeping part of it, or rehabilitating it all. "The biggest road block we have is the shape this building is in and the efficiency of it,"

Roetman said. "The people I talked to said you would be ridiculous to invest into that building."

An architect who works with UnityPoint hospitals and clinics walked through Pocahontas Manor to help assess the condition of the building. The "H" shape made it particularly inefficient, Roetman said.

He has also priced the cost of demolishing the building and taking the lot back to level ground. That alone could cost several hundred thousand dollars, possibly up to half a million dollars. The hospital might be able to receive grants to help with those costs, he said.

The location remains ideal for a nursing home, though, and the hospital would prefer to see a nursing home there than some other alternatives — Roetman mentioned other nursing homes that have closed and the buildings purchased with plans to make apartments. Many of those plans have not come to fruition and the buildings have begun to deteriorate as they sit empty.

He said a few other nursing home companies did reach out to the company that owned the Manor, but none have followed through indicating an intention to purchase the home.

Roetman had a bit of reassurance for community members.

"This is not a Pocahontas County issue," Roetman said.

Nursing homes in Newell, Albert City, Humboldt, Fort Dodge and Primghar have all recently closed, he said.

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Luke Dahl, a Rolfe native, joined the Iowa Army National Guard and served as a medic. At left, he's seen hanging out of a medevac helicopter. Above, Luke Dahl is seen with his son, Gary Robert Dahl, in front of a military medical helicopter. Submitted photos

They got their start in Rolfe

By Erin Sommers
pokyrdnews@gmail.com

An interesting tidbit came up during the discussions leading up to the EMS essential service vote.

The Rolfe ambulance crew had been the starting point for a number of locals who have made a career in the emergency medical field. A few of those professional first responders answered some questions recently about how they got their start in Rolfe and how that shaped their career trajectory.

Zach Higgins, who is now a flight paramedic with Air Methods, is one of those locals. He said there was a house fire in the summer of 2008 that sent him down his career path.

"A lot of times when these calls occur the community gathers around to be nosy, if you will," Higgins said in an email interview. "During this specific house fire, I walked down from our home and watched the crews work from the street. When I was there Shelley Stumpf came up to me and started talking to me about volunteering with the Rolfe Ambulance. They needed volunteers to keep the ambulance in service. At that time the ambulance crew included a driver and an EMT."

Higgins went home and thought about it. "I wanted to be more involved with the community where I was born and raised," he said. "I wanted to make a difference in the lives of others."

He decided to go for it, completing the training to become a driver that same year. In 2009, he signed up for a class at Pocahontas Community

Hospital, where he earned his EMT certification. The Rolfe Ambulance Department paid for his tuition and books and, because the class was offered by Iowa Central Community College, he was also able to earn college credits that counted toward his high school classes. He graduated from PAC in 2009.

"I spent the last semester of high school attending EMT class and preparing for the credentialing process," Higgins said. "When I became certified as an EMT I was able to continue to volunteer with the Rolfe Ambulance and be able to provide patient care."

That one question from Stumpf completely changed his mind about what he wanted to



Zach Higgins, who is a flight paramedic, got his start in emergency medicine working with the Rolfe EMS in high school. Submitted photo

do professionally, Higgins said. "Throughout my high school years, I was interested in mathematics and accounting," he said. "I had the intention and interest to attend college for an accounting degree. This changed after becoming a volunteer with the Rolfe Ambulance. I enjoyed my experience with the Rolfe Ambulance so much and took an interest in prehospital emergency care that I changed my major from Accounting to Paramedic Science."

Higgins went on to earn his paramedic licensure in Iowa and, in recent years, has earned the same license in a total of 37 states. He also earned a flight paramedic co-certification, which allows him to work in the air ambulance.

"I worked for some very busy 911 ambulance services and was able to get a lot of experience in prehospital emergency care," he said. "I'm able to travel to different states to work with different Air Method's programs to fulfill scheduling and service needs."

PAC High School played a role in shaping his career path as well, Higgins said. For one, he said, the school system encouraged students to be involved in community service.

"The school system had programs that would compensate you for so many community service hours completed," Higgins said. "So, it seemed like my generation of students were directed towards a path for community service in some way. Also, what I think is a big contributor in encouraging

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Fun in downtown Pocahontas

Downtown Pocahontas was hopping all weekend with live music, the annual Princess City Car Show and Poca-fest, which brought a carnival back to town. Rod McClurg of Pocahontas won the People's Choice Award, earning the most votes from attendees. Organizer PK Killian said 116 vehicles registered and another six were on display. A highlight of the show was the Ford GT 40, a sports car that retails for more than \$1 million. This particular vehicle has just 11 miles on it, Killian said, and the owner, a physician who holds clinics at Pocahontas Community Hospital, had the vehicle brought to town on a trailer for the show. Photos by Erin Sommers

Potato digging and apple pressing available at Wiegert this year

By Erin Sommers
pokyrdnews@gmail.com

A few new fun events are on the schedule at the 39th annual Wiegert Prairie Fall Fest.

"Something we are bringing back this year is potato digging," Pocahontas County Conservation's Dayton Harson said. "We will be making apple cider again this year. We obtained an apple press, and our guys have worked hard to restore it to how it originally was."

Fall Fest is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Aug. 26 at the Wiegert farm and homestead site, 27575 615th St., Palmer.

To restore the apple press, county conservation employees sandblasted the rust off, made

new wooden supports and painted and stained it.

"It is a very cool old piece that they brought back to life," Harson said.

Potato digging will take place at 1 and 2 p.m.

The day begins with the Pioneer Church service at 10:30 a.m. Special events include live music from The Sandhill Kid and prairie rides. Pilot Creek FFA will be grilling hamburgers and hot dogs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Ongoing demonstrations will be available throughout the property. There will be demonstrations, lessons at the country school, information at the smokehouse and farmstead tours. Some farm pets and

animals will be on display. Civil War re-enactors will provide historical information about Iowa's role in the war. Cowboy coffee, root beer floats,



Homemade quilts were seen on display in a barn at the Wiegert farmstead last year. Photo by Erin Sommers

homemade pie and ice cream and kettle corn will also be available, and some local vendors will be set up and selling their wares.

Entrance to the event is free.

Wells AG SUPPLY Join us for an **OPEN HOUSE**
55560 150TH AVE B | FONDA, IA 50540

AUGUST 29TH - 31ST
11 AM TO 1 PM EACH DAY
FREE LUNCH
TOURS OF OUR FACILITY

Your Local Family-Owned "No Bias" Ag Supplier.
FERT / CHEM / BIOLOGICALS

Pocahontas Farmers' Market to be held on Wednesdays

The Pocahontas Farmers' Market will begin on Wednesday, June 14. It will be from 4-6 p.m. on Wednesdays. Located on South Main, behind Pocahontas Inn and Suites.

Pray and Play Playdates at Covenant Church

Pray and Play Playdates - a Mom's group will meet every second Saturday from 3-4 p.m. at the Outreach Center at Covenant Church of Pomeroy. All moms and kids are invited to come and play and meet new friends.

Grief and Loss Class to be held Sept. 21

A Grief and Loss class will begin Thursday, September 21, and will run for 6 weeks. The class will take place at Covenant Church of Pomeroy. This class is open to anyone in the area who has experienced loss. The class will be led by Eric and Annette Howard from Fort Dodge.

Rolfe Lions Club has Vision Aid for Area Residents

Do you have difficulty reading newspaper and letter? The Rolfe Lions Club has Low Vision Readers available for area residents in need of assistance. Contact any Rolfe Lions Club member or call 712-848-3843, 712-848-3284, or 712-335-8060.

Adult Summer Reading Program at Pocahontas Library to start August 1

August 1 - Adults Only - at the Pocahontas Library! For the month of August through September 15 the Pocahontas Public Library is sponsoring an Adult Reading Program entitled, "Find Your Voice by Reading." How it works is check out and read 3 books - fill out your slip and return it for a choice of a prize. Also, every time you stop at the Library sign your name, and drop it in the basket. A drawing will be held after September 15 for prizes. Every Thursday in August come join us for Refreshments at 2 p.m. So, Adults - check out the Pocahontas Public Library, pick up a good book and increase your chances to win in the Adult Summer Reading Program!

Can/Bottle Kennels

The Rotary/Interact cans and bottle kennels have been moved to the south side of the new recycling center, Pocahontas Can & Bottle Redemption Center, across the street from the New Way Ford-Lincoln dealership.

The local Rotary and Interact members appreciate your contributions. The funds from the cans and bottles will be used to purchase fireworks for the annual display which will be held during Heritage Days and the Pocahontas County Fair. The local Rotary and Interact members appreciate your contributions.

This is sponsored by the Pocahontas Area Rotary Club & the PAC Interact Club.

LifeServe Blood Drive will be Sept. 19

The monthly Pocahontas Community Blood Drive will be held Tuesday, September 19 at the Expo Center, 310 NE 1st Street, Pocahontas, IA. Hours of the drive are 12:30-5:30 p.m.

To set up your lifesaving appointment, text: LIFESERVE to 999-777 or call: 800-287-4903 or visit: lifeservebloodcenter.org. This is sponsored by the Pocahontas Area Rotary Club & provided by LifeServe.

American Legion Post #18 to hold meeting Sept. 13

The American Legion Post #18 will hold their monthly meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. at the American Legion Building. Bring your own steak. The Post will furnish the rest.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL FOOD BANK

Any donations of items or monetary donations to purchase food, personal products, or meat would be greatly appreciated.

All donated items can be brought directly to the Upper Des Moines Opportunity Outreach office located at 406 NW 7th Street (Hwy. 4), Pocahontas, Iowa.

ISU Extension's Iowa Concern Hotline is available to call 24/7

Who are you going to call if you have a legal question, need someone to talk to, trying to find a resource, or just feeling stressed? Iowa State University Extension and Outreach's Iowa Concern Hotline (1-800-447-1985) is a toll free number that is available 24/7 for these such problems.

NURSING: Community meeting held to discuss nursing home

From Page 01

A big factor has been the cost of staffing. While PCH, as a critical access hospital, gets reimbursements from Medicare and Medicaid based on the cost of providing those services to patients, nursing homes do not. The majority of the residents at Pocahontas Manor were on Medicare, which pays substantially less than a private insurance provider. At the Manor, 70 percent of patients were on Medicare, while only 30 percent had private insurance. At the time of the closure, the Manor had just 22 residents, although when fully staffed. At its heyday, the facility housed 80 to 90 residents.

John Pohlman and Ron Hersom informed the crowd about how Laurens residents were able to save their nursing home a little more than a decade ago. A few things worked in Laurens' favor, Pohlman said, starting with the previous nursing home owner being willing to sell the facility to a 501c3 nonprofit group for \$1. At the time, Pohlman was a part of the Laurens Industrial Association, which was a nonprofit, but not 501c3. Laurens did have another nonprofit that could help - the Laurens Senior Pioneers. The Industrial Association stepped in to help, providing about \$60,000 toward repairs at the care center. Laurens Municipal Power and Communications applied for and received a USDA grant, which it used to start a revolving fund.

The first beneficiary was the Laurens Care Center, Pohlman said. Those funds were vital because the care center needed a new sprinkler system throughout the building. The City of Laurens helped out with a project to bring larger water lines to the nursing home as well, he said. "It's worked very well," Pohlman said of the care center, which still has a board of community members to oversee it. "We're tickled to death to have it." Hersom said a few other things worked in Laurens' favor. For one, Good Samaritan sold it to the Senior Pioneers without closing it, so the nursing home

never lapsed. Laurens Care Center has been able to keep about 40 percent of the patients as private pay, which helps to offset the losses incurred with Medicare patients, and the nursing home was running in the black for many years leading up to the pandemic. In more recent years, Laurens Care Center has needed to have more patients to break even, so the facility has relied on savings to offset losses.

It helps that the nonprofit nursing home doesn't have investors. "We're not in this to make money," Hersom said. "If we can break even, we can live off the depreciation."

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ROLFE: Local EMS helps launch career direction for two men

From Page 01

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Luke Dahl came to the emergency medical field in a slightly different way, starting with a job as a lifeguard. Dahl grew up on a family farm south of Rolfe. Working as a lifeguard ignited a passion for medical rescue, Dahl said, and that led him to take an EMT class in college. From there, he started volunteering with the Rolfe Ambulance and the Rolfe Fire Department.

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Premium Iowa Land To Be Sold At Auction Humboldt County Iowa Avery Township Section 5, 87 Acres M/L Wednesday, AUGUST 30, 2023 @ 10:00 AM Directions to Farm: From Bradgate Iowa go North on P-19 for 1 Mile then East on 160th St for 1/2 Mile on South Side of Road Auction Location: Rolfe Community Building, Rolfe Ia Father Dennis Sefcik Estate ~ Owner Attorney for Estate ~ Jeff Kuchel William Bunda Jr & Mary Nieland -Executors Sale Barn Realty and Auction Website ~ salebarn.ncn.net For More Information Go To website Or Call: 712-335-3117 Office Rick Winegarden ~ Auctioneer/Real Estate Broker Rick's Cell 712-358-0974 401 1/2 East Elm Avenue Pocahontas, IA

Pocahontas County Sheriff's Office New Law Enforcement Center INFORMATIONAL TOWN HALL MEETINGS Monday, Aug. 28 6:30 p.m. City Hall, Rolfe Tuesday, Aug. 29 6:30 p.m. Fire Station, Plover Wednesday, Aug. 30 6:30 p.m. Courthouse Assembly Room, Pocahontas Thursday, Aug. 31 6:30 p.m. Fire Station, Fonda Tuesday, Sept. 5 6:30 p.m. City Hall, Laurens Wednesday, Sept. 6 6:30 p.m. Amvets, Havelock Thursday, Sept. 7 6:30 p.m. Courthouse Assembly Room, Pocahontas Monday, Sept. 11 6:30 p.m. Catholic Parish Center, Varina Tuesday, Sept. 12 6:30 p.m. Community Center, Palmer

Pocahontas Farmers' Market Wednesdays 4-6 p.m. South Main Street Available this week: FRESH HONEY pokyfarmersmarket

Fall League Baseball for High Schoolers, including 8th Graders, starts September 10th at the three locations of Sioux City, the Iowa Great Lakes, and the Highway 20 location with fields in Early & Holstein. You chose your location closest to you! TWO FREE SATURDAY CAMPS FOR ALL PLAYERS IN THE TBD FALL LEAGUE! SEE ALL INFORMATION & SIGN UP TODAY: www.totalbaseballdevelopment.com

3 Bedroom 2-Story Home Up For Auction 105 2nd Ave SW ~ Pocahontas, IA Wednesday, September 6, 2023 @ 6:00 PM Home will be sold As-Is Condition. Rosemarie Mell ~ Pocahontas, IA THE SALE BARN REALTY & AUCTION 712-335-3117 Rick Winegarden, Auctioneer, 712-358-0974 Pictures & More Auctions Go To: salebarn.ncn.net

Women of Hope (formerly UMW) ANNUAL NUT SALE Pre-Orders ONLY • Orders close September 10 Order a bag or a case (12 bags) of pecans (halves and pieces, walnuts (light or black), cashews, almonds, deluxe mixed nuts, healthy mix, almond cranberry covered, sweet & salty trail mix, chocolate covered pecans, chocolate covered cashews, chocolate covered raisins, chocolate covered peanuts, dark chocolate covered cranberries. Pick-up dates: Friday, Oct. 13 • 1-4 p.m. and Saturday October 14 • 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Hope Church, Pocahontas Contact: Hope Church to place your order, 712-335-3663 Tues.-Fri. 1-5 p.m.

Does your club or organization have something special going on? Let us know or send pictures and information to get it covered in the RECORD-DEMOCRAT 218 N. Main St., Pocahontas, IA 712-335-3553 • recorddemocrat@gmail.com

We can stop HIV, Iowa. A person living with HIV can take as little as one pill a day to help them achieve what's called an undetectable viral load. When a person's viral load is undetectable, it protects their overall health. It also prevents HIV from passing to sexual partners! Undetectable = Untransmittable STOP HIV IOWA Learn more at stophiviowa.org

Attention Machinery Wanted Start bring items Tuesday ~ August 22, 2023 Until we are full ~ Please call ahead Auction Date: Wednesday ~ September 13, 2023 @ 8:00 AM When Machinery is brought to our lot, we handle everything from showing the equipment to loading. The Sale Barn offers a hassle-free way to sell and we pay our sellers 2 days after the auction! Wanted: Tractors * Planters * Sprayers * Skidloaders Tillage Equipment * Combines & Heads * Trucks * Trailers * Construction Equipment Email Items To: salebarn@evertek.net Rick & Kendra Winegarden ~ Owners ~ 712-335-3117 Rick's Cell ~ 712-358-0974 Online Bidding Provided By Equipmentfacts Please register prior to auction with Equipmentfacts Website: salebarn.ncn.net Pocahontas Machinery Auction Auction Lot Located on Hwy 3 ~ 401 1/2 East Elm Pocahontas, IA (The Big Red Shed)

39th Annual Wiegert Prairie Fallfest Sunday, August 27, 2023 "Wiegert Ways" No Admission Charge Pioneer Church Worship Service 10:30 a.m. PAC FFA Grilling Hamburgers & Hot Dogs 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Prairie Rides & Live Music Lots of Activities & Demonstrations! For more information contact: Pocahontas County Conservation 712-335-4395 • email: conservation@pocahontas-county.com