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Emergency responders learn valuable lessons from tornado



Crews work on the Marshall County Courthouse, which lost part of its clock tower, after the 2018 tornado. The clock reads 4:38 p.m., which is the time the tornado got to the building. Supervisor Steve Salasek went to the courthouse immediately after the tornado dissipated and helped turn the water off. A major water line had broken in the top floor and the lower floors were flooding.

By **LANA BRADSTREAM**
TIMES-REPUBLICAN

(Editor's note: This is the third in a series of stories looking back at the July 19, 2018 EF-3 tornado leading up to the fifth anniversary, but also looking forward and detailing rebuilding and revitalization efforts since then.)

July 19, 2018 was a learning day for Marshall County Emergency Management. After the EF-3 tornado ripped through downtown Marshalltown, emergency responders jumped into action and kept note where enhancements in their response could be made.

Marshall County Supervisor Steve Salasek said the biggest change to the emergency response of the county was heightened awareness.

"We are much more attentive to what is coming toward us, as a rule," he said. "A good example is



A special commemorative series celebrating 5 years of continuous growth after the July 19, 2018 EF-3 tornado

[Thursday] night."

On Thursday evening, the emergency siren was turned on in Marshalltown, alerting residents of possible danger. Rhonda Braudis, director of the Marshall County 911 Communications Commission, said the siren was set off because

rotating clouds were spotted over the Marshalltown Police and Fire Building.

Marshall County Emergency Management Coordinator Kim Elder said when the county experiences a large disaster or event, they look for ways to improve, of which there is

always room.

"We always critique our response, even on a simple motor vehicle crash," she said. "We learn better ways of training, better ways to respond, how to teach the public by outreach, where our holes in training or response may be and many other things."

Emergency sirens

While the tornado did not alter first responder training, Elder said perspectives certainly changed on how to better serve Marshall County communities. One way the county is doing that is installing 21 emergency sirens. However, Elder said that effort is not connected to the 2018 tornado. Salasek agreed, stating the actions to install new and improve existing sirens was prompted by a collection of storms.

Elder is working on a large tornado siren grant

RESPONSE | A3

Municipal transit struggling with staffing shortage

By **ROBERT MAHARRY**
TIMES-REPUBLICAN

Marshalltown Municipal Transit recently announced that it would be suspending two seasonal routes "until further notice" effective last week, and the reasoning behind the decision was fairly straightforward — they simply can't find the staff to drive the city's buses.

The organization usually operates with six full-time drivers and a part-timer, but they're down to three full-time drivers without any part-timers. It's gotten so bad that Director Kevin Pigors, his dispatcher and a mechanic can often be seen driving the half-hour routes themselves.

Pigors was fresh off of driving one of those routes when he met with the T-R at the Marshalltown Arts and Civic Center (MACC) bus stop earlier this week.

"I really hope we get four



Marshalltown Municipal Transit Bus Driver Karen Bassett stands in front of one of the department's vehicles during a break at the MACC stop earlier this week. The department is currently struggling with a staffing shortage and consolidating and suspending routes as a result.

more drivers. I just don't know when (it will happen)," he said. "We're to the point where we can't consolidate any more routes. We're at the lowest (num-

ber). It would be cutting the fixed route or giving up more of the subscription service routes."

Karen Bassett, who has driven for the city for the

last five years and previously served as a bus driver for the Gladbrook-Reinbeck school district, attributes

TRANSIT | A3



Florida First Lady Casey DeSantis, left, walks with Marshall County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jarret Heil, center, and Heil's children before addressing the Marshall County GOP Pachyderm Herd at the Central Iowa Fairgrounds on Friday afternoon.

Casey DeSantis hits the campaign trail at Central Iowa Fairgrounds

BY **ROBERT MAHARRY**
TIMES-REPUBLICAN

Florida First Lady Casey DeSantis received an enthusiastic reception at the Central Iowa Fairgrounds on Friday afternoon as the lunch guest of the Marshall County GOP's weekly Pachyderm Herd luncheon, and she made the case for why her husband Ron — who was also in Iowa — should be the next president of the United States.

Marshall County Board of Supervisors Chairman and DeSantis supporter Jarret Heil introduced Casey to the crowd and gave the governor high marks for "taking on Fauci" and "Disney's wokeness," noting that the First Lady was being personally attacked in the media because she has stood up for conservative principles, drawing parallels between Florida and Iowa, where Gov. Kim Reynolds has pursued a similar agenda.

"They're calling her names. That's when you know the Left, the liberal media, the corporate media, they are out for attack on this family, but I've got a name for you. We have America's Mama Bears here today," Heil said.

During a stump speech that lasted around 15 minutes,

DESANTIS | A3



Jodi Breniman, pictured, received a special recognition when she was inducted into the Central Iowa Fair Hall of Fame before the queen crowning on Wednesday night.

Breniman elected to Central Iowa Fair Hall of Fame

By **MIKE DONAHEY**
TIMES-REPUBLICAN

For nearly six decades, Jodi Breniman of Marshalltown has devoted herself to the principles of 4-H: "Head, Heart, Hands and Health," and to the success of her beloved Central Iowa Fair.

In acknowledgement of that commitment and devotion, Breniman was elected to the CIF Hall of Fame recently.

She received a large, handsome plaque in recognition of that highly selective honor Wednesday in ceremonies at the fairgrounds.

The crowd in the standing-room only Show Pavilion gave her a hearty round of applause when her name was

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