

Response

CONTINUED | FROM A1

which is in the bidding process. If granted, it will install 10 sirens in communities which chose to partake in the grant process.

"This is the beginning of a several phase project that I would like to complete," Elder said. "The next step is to work on sirens in some of the higher populated and event areas in our county. It is a result of the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant being opened by FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] because of disasters. I have been waiting to write a grant like this for years, but I had to wait for the grant to become available."

Braudis said Elder has done a phenomenal job in working to acquire the sirens.

"There is a lot of work - crossing of the 'I's' and dotting of the 'T's,'" she said. "Kim has put a lot of work into it. This is going to be an amazing benefit to Marshall County. Any kind of early warning system is better than none."

The process is going slower than what Salasek hoped for, but he assured it is ongoing.

"Hopefully nine months from now, everything will be in place," he said. "The biggest aspect is getting the new additions."

That federal grant program provides financial assistance to county governments, as well as city and state, after a presidential-declared disaster. It is used to help build a hazard mitigation plan to reduce future disaster losses.

Equipment

Fortunately, the emergency siren in Marshalltown was working when the tornado struck, and alerted responders to the impending disaster. Large-scale disasters following the tornado - the COVID-19 pandemic and the June 2020 derecho - tested emergency response changes and skills further.

Elder said after the tornado individual departments were looked at. Necessary equipment was improved, new training was requested and more plans were utilized.

"We do this annually, but stepped up some aspects," she said.

One piece of equipment Salasek spoke of was a new emergency mobile unit, shared by Communications, Emergency Management and the Marshall County Sheriff's Office. The unit was purchased with American Rescue Plan Act funding, which is not taken from local taxpayers.

"The tornado was a major reason for that purchase," he said. "It will be used when Emergency Management or the Sheriff's Office has to be on site."

Elder was satisfied overall with the tornado response, which was made easier by the fact there were no deaths or serious injuries. She had a lot of praise for the response of the team following the tornado, and the praise continues to this day.

"The first thing that stands out to me is always the team effort by all responders, within and outside of our community of Marshall County, that step up and give their all," she said. "Groups from all over the United States came in

to assist us. It is an amazing process to see from the inside. Many do not realize all that goes on behind the scenes of a disaster. There is a non-stop, around-the-clock effort to assist all those in need. It is an amazing thing to be a part of."

Elder said the effort extended beyond first responders. She spoke of neighbors helping neighbors.

"It is so heartwarming to know that in a tough spot like this disaster was, there were always others willing to step up and help without being asked," Elder said. "Our community is great!"

Five years after the tornado, Elder wanted to remind residents to always be prepared.

"We all need to continue to work to prepare our home, family, work and others for those types of emergencies and disasters," she said. "It is best to learn, train and exercise your plans before an event happens. Be prepared, always."

Contact Lana Bradstreet at 641-753-6611 ext. 210 or lbradstreet@timesrepublican.com.

Breniman

CONTINUED | FROM A1

called.

"It was very much a shock," she said. "I was not at all planning for that tonight ... I was honored, really honored."

Breniman, a self-acknowledged "fourth generation 4-H kid" said the fair has been "my summer vacation for 58 years."

Breniman began her 4-H journey in 1965.

"My parents were 4-H members and 4-H leaders," she said.

Having exhibited 4-H projects at CIF as a youth,

her interest in seeing youth from all walks of life have equal opportunities later led to volunteer opportunities on the CIF board.

She is now board president, having served in numerous capacities such as vice-president and queen coordinator over her 10-year tenure on the board of directors.

The fair ran through Saturday at the fairgrounds with a featured "Redneck Race" at the Marshalltown Speedway on the fairgrounds at 1308 E. Olive St.

For more information, contact 641-753-3671 or cifa@heartoflowa.net.

Transit

CONTINUED | FROM A1

the challenges to a number of factors.

"We've had people who have started and quit, (and) we've had a couple that have retired," she said. "(We're) less than half (staffed). We gave up our dialysis routes to PeopleRides because you can only drive one bus at a time."

The most recent driver who abruptly left, she said, didn't give a reason, but with a starting wage of just over \$17 an hour, paid sick days and the ability to qualify for a pension through the Iowa Public Employee Retirement System (IPERS), she doesn't see why the job wouldn't be appealing.

"It's not for everyone," she said. "(But) It's not a hard job. There's a lot of responsibility, though, and you've gotta have a Class B CDL (Commercial Driver's License) and not everybody wants to go through what it takes to get that."

According to Bassett, however, a new driver started in May and has already obtained her CDL, so even if it does require extra work and can be a challenge to get into the necessary classes, it is doable. Pigors said MMT is willing to help with the cost of obtaining a CDL as well, and there is another position driving a smaller vehicle that only requires a chauffeur's license.

Citing the fact that a sizable chunk of the population in Marshalltown does not have access to a vehicle or the money to pay for a cab, Bassett relishes the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those people.

"For a dollar, they can get to the grocery store, to the doctor, to the hospital," she said. "We're everywhere. We go everywhere, and even now, where we've had to cancel some routes, we still will get people where they need to go if they just tell us where they need to get."

As Pigors noted, public transit has become especially important in light of most of the healthcare services in Marshalltown moving to the south side of town for people who live on the north side and don't have any other means to get to their appointments. In addition, about one-fourth of the riderships is students from as young as four or five years old up to college age.

Statistics show that among Iowa's seven small

urban public transit systems (populations less than 50,000), which also includes Burlington, Clinton, Fort Dodge, Mason City, Muscatine and Ottumwa, Marshalltown has seen the largest increase in ridership from Fiscal Year 2019 (76,132) to Fiscal Year 2022 (97,581) at 28 percent, while the other six have all seen declines.

The first canceled route, known as the pink route, took Camp Marshalltown and the St. Francis Summer Camp around to parks and the pool, and the second, the purple route, provided access to the Sunset Village, Theisen's, Menard's, the hospital, the college and IowaWorks on the south edge of town. Nonetheless, if a rider needs to get to one of those locations, the driver simply makes the extra stop after they go to Walmart.

Despite the challenging situation, Marshalltown Public Works Director Heather Thomas, who oversees the MMT, can't say enough good about her drivers and remains optimistic that the right people are out there to join the team.

"I think the great thing about our drivers is the care and passion they have for helping the users that use the system. They're working definite overtime now because of short staffing, and in discussing what we can do, they're willing to work that overtime because they care so much about the public. So we'd love to find some additional drivers that have that passion for the public and can work as part of a team to serve that population," Thomas said.

Anyone interested in applying to become a driver is encouraged to call the MMT's main office at (641) 754-5719, the phone number adorned on the side of every bus, or by visiting marshalltown-ia.gov and searching available positions. Ride-alongs and job shadow opportunities are also available for potentially interested drivers.

"I would just challenge people to come give us a try because it is a rewarding job, and it's not physically demanding. It's really rewarding. People really appreciate us," she said. "(The buses) are as easy to drive as a big pickup. Really, they are. They're not hard at all."

Individual rides cost a dollar, and day passes can be purchased for two dollars.

Contact Robert Maharry at 641-753-6611 ext. 255 or rmaharry@timesrepublican.com.

DeSantis

CONTINUED | FROM A1

DeSantis, an Ohio native, was highly complimentary of Iowa — especially after having recently watched "Field of Dreams" — as her husband seeks a victory in the leadoff Republican caucus state, and she kicked off with anecdotes and reflections on her three children after recently launching the "Mamas for DeSantis" group with Gov. Reynolds.

"When your policies are coming after our children, that's when the claws come out," Casey said. "We're

gonna have the largest coalition of moms and grandmas in the history of this country mobilized to protect our kids and to ensure that parents have rights."

From there, she segued into many of the hot-button issues that have become the Governor's calling card during his tenure as the chief executive of the Sunshine State — preventing the "sexualization" of children and the ongoing feud with Disney that resulted from related laws passed in Florida, transparency in school curriculum, resisting COVID-19 lockdowns and vaccine mandates, ban-

ning gender-affirming procedures for minors, keeping transgender women who were born male from playing women's sports and taking on "Soros-backed prosecutors" while opposing efforts to defund law enforcement.

She recalled that when the Governor held a press conference to discuss allegedly pornographic materials in schools, media outlets wouldn't show it on their newscasts that night because of the content.

"If it's too inappropriate for the 6 p.m. newscast, how on Earth is that OK to have in front of a six-year-old?"

she asked. "That's ridiculous."

DeSantis then told the story of a woman who started the process of transitioning to a male at a young age and deeply regretted doing so to argue that hormone blockers and surgical procedures should not be allowed on minors.

She also pointed out her husband's narrow 32,000 vote victory over Democrat Andrew Gillum to win his first term in 2018 and the advice she heard from those who told him not to "rock the boat" and respect Florida's status as a swing state. Instead, he became known as one of the most conservative governors in the country and won reelection by about 1.5 million votes in 2022.

"When you do this stuff, do what the people ask you to do, you don't back down, you don't look at the headlines and try to, you know, curtail yourself... it works," DeSantis said.

She also lamented what she saw as a loss of freedom, especially for small business owners, during the pandemic.

"That's not our country, and that's why I believe that this election is about the foundation. We either understand what makes our country exceptional and unique, or we are doomed to lose what made us great," she said. "Reagan always said this is one generation away. Is this the generation that lost American exceptionalism, you know, the American dream? Well, the Governor and I have said very clearly 'Not if we have anything to do with it.' We're gonna fight like heck, and we're gonna lead with conviction and we're gonna be bold. And we're gonna make sure that we can do whatever we can to preserve America, not only for ourselves, but to leave it to our kids and to leave it to God better than we found it."

She wrapped up her remarks by promising that those in attendance would be "seeing a lot" of the DeSantis family and that Ron DeSantis would never back down as president, joking that he could be hit with a 2x4 and keep on moving unfazed. No one was anointed to the presidency, she added, and she knew they would have to work for it.

Casey DeSantis posed for photos and shook hands with those in attendance. Ron DeSantis, along with several other GOP hopefuls, gathered in Des Moines for the Family Leadership Summit on Friday night

with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson serving as the moderator.

While DeSantis is widely viewed as the most formidable Republican challenger to Donald Trump in the primary, the former

president still leads the governor by a comfortable margin in most state and national polls.

Contact Robert Maharry at 641-753-6611 ext. 255 or rmaharry@timesrepublican.com.

GREEN means Grow!

15 Month CD Special

earn **4.70%** APY*

if \$25,000 new money or balances greater than \$100,000. 4.60% APY otherwise

23 Month CD Special

earn **4.30%** APY**

\$1,000 minimum to open




GreenState CREDIT UNION

BEST RATE GUARANTEE %***

Stop by a branch, call 844-300-5810, or chat with us at GreenState.org to open an account.

*APY is Annual Percentage Yield. Limited time offer ends soon. Earn 4.70% if balance greater than \$25,000 with at least \$25,000 in new money to GreenState or if balance is greater than \$100,000. Earn 4.60% if balance less than \$25,000 or you do not add at least \$25,000 in new money to an existing GreenState balance. Minimum investment is \$1,000 and maximum investment is \$5 million. Penalty for early withdrawal. **APY is Annual Percentage Yield. Limited time offer. Penalty for early withdrawal. Minimum deposit of \$1,000. ***If you find a better advertised yield on a CD or IRA at a financial institution based in the counties we serve, GreenState will beat it. Guarantee available for a limited time only. Applies only to new CDs or IRAs with comparable terms and conditions. Does not apply in those cases where the credit union does not offer a comparable product. Not available to public organizations or other financial institutions. Maximums apply.



Have A Nice Evening!