

Business

CONTINUED | FROM A1

ant Energy. Our business had power the day after the tornado, and we were able to hold a service at a local church too.”

Like other Main Street business owners, Anderson has followed the progress made in the central business district.

“Of course, I would like projects downtown to move faster, but they will be completed in due time,” he said, noting that some of the most severely damaged buildings had been demolished. “And I was pleased to see the fencing surrounding the courthouse had been taken down recently.”

The fencing had long reminded residents of the devastation caused by the EF-3 tornado to its historic courthouse — an iconic landmark which only recently reopened — and to the many city blocks in the tornado’s path itself. The courthouse lawn is now open to the public, with landscaping efforts underway.

Grabenbauer: ‘Businesses are coming back’

Until recently, former Marshall County Board of Supervisor Dennis Grabenbauer was spending most of his time watching with his wife Barb their two granddaughters compete in softball. Their seasons ended, Grabenbauer had time to reflect on July 19, 2018, and how he views progress in the central business district and other areas impacted.

Grabenbauer, who resides on 29th Avenue on the city’s far southwest side, said he could see the tornado forming. Anticipating danger, he went to the basement.

Barb, a registered nurse, was on duty at UnityPoint Health-Marshalltown — then at its former location

on East Main Street.

“I think Barb must have worked 30 hours consecutively,” he said. “She and other staff had to quickly secure patients in their beds when tornado warnings were issued and then arranged to have those patients safely transported to other UnityPoint facilities after the hospital was deemed unsafe.”

Grabenbauer — a 1968 graduate of (the former) Lenihan High School in Marshalltown — decided not to run for re-election as supervisor after eight years. His last day was Dec. 31, 2015.

“I was shocked to see the damage to the courthouse, to downtown businesses and the neighborhoods,” he said. “Regardless, the businesses, neighborhoods and central business district are getting back to normal. And I am not going to criticize those directly involved in recovery efforts because I knew it would take a lot of time. One doesn’t know the time-consuming processes of getting insurance claims filed and getting reimbursements from state and federal governments.”

Grabenbauer drove stock cars at Marshalltown Speedway and then moved to the announcer’s booth. Additionally, he drove a Colonial Bread Truck and serviced customers along its route. He also worked as a parts manager at a local auto dealership. Grabenbauer also owned and operated a public relations/advertising business, and he found time to give back to the community, volunteering to emcee the annual Oktoberfest parade and Central Iowa Fair’s queen contest among many other events.

As a result, he knows the resiliency of Marshalltonians and is optimistic for the central business district. He said he has seen a lot of progress too in the

northwest and northeast neighborhoods where the tornado’s force resulted in millions of dollars in damages.

Grabenbauer said he was ecstatic that Lennox Manufacturing kept its facility in town, despite suffering heavy damage and that JBS USA Marshalltown recovered in a timely fashion.

“I see the Marshalltown Area Chamber of Commerce and others are moving back downtown after years of being elsewhere. For a time, a lot of business was going to the south-side... now businesses are coming back.”

Thompson True Value rebuilds from the ground up

“Kathy I bought the store (then across the street from its current location) late November, 1985 — 38 years, what a ride!” long-time Thompson True Value Owner-Operator Dave Thompson said in a recent text message to the Times-Republican. “Our store is one of the oldest businesses in Marshalltown, founded by L. C. Abott in 1860. It has always been family-owned and operated. With our son Paul taking over, our family will have the longest tenured ownership.”

The business suffered not one but two major weather-related incidents in 2018.

A late April snowstorm deposited many inches of heavy wet snow all within six feet of the roof edge of the old building. Strong winds followed.

Thompson believed that later caused two main roof trusses to break, resulting in the building’s north wall — also the store’s entrance — to eventually separate from the roof and bulge out. Hay Construction of Marshalltown installed two large steel beams supported by concrete blocks weigh-

ing 18 tons to keep the wall in place.

“Because of the damage, we conducted business out of the front door, making us Marshalltown’s first drive-up hardware store. Customers drove up to the front door and gave their order. Staff would go get it, take it to the customer, get payment and ring-it up on the register,” Dave said.

The Thompsons and staff were in the process of moving into a temporary location at the Marshalltown Mall when the tornado hit.

“Paul and I barely got out (of the old store) in time,” he said. “It further damaged the building making it unusable. We then had a decision to liquidate and take the insurance and retire, or rebuild.”

Paul wanted to continue in the business, so the choice to rebuild and expand was easy.

“We were extremely fortunate to have a successor (in Paul),” Thompson said. “We also loved doing business downtown. We purchased the parking lot (from Wells Fargo Bank) across the street from the old store and broke ground in October 2018. We opened nine months to the day in July the following year. It was either going to be our biggest financial mistake or our best, not knowing if others would follow the path we took. There were many sleepless nights ... keeping with the motto of shop local ... the job you save could be your own.”

The Thompsons exclusively used local contractors and materials in the construction of the new store to support the community that had supported them.

“Those contractors went above and beyond proudly getting us back in business, making us the first to rebuild and return to the downtown,” Thompson said. “We also learned from those weather experiences and engineered the building to withstand more stress and loads.”

The derecho that hit Marshalltown in 2020 only damaged the business sign on the building.

“We can’t thank our customers and employees enough. They followed and supported us through three locations in under a year,” he said.

Five years later, Thompson said he, Kathy and Paul are pleased to see the businesses rebuilt and remained downtown.

“It is great to have the heart of our community, the courthouse back open along with the Lennox Manufacturing and Action Auto nearing completion,” Dave said.

The Thompsons are hopeful that the several choice open lots on Main, Center and State streets will be developed in the near future. They are eager to see how the former McFarland Clinic building on North Third Avenue and UnityPoint Hospital buildings on East Main St. will be developed.

“The major investment by the Karl Auto group on Iowa Highway 14 North has also been key and speaks volumes,” he said. “The 13th Street District is solid. The downtown has become the dining and entertainment hub of our community once again. Hopefully some of our most requested retail needs — mens, womens and childrens clothing — will be filled. All things considered, downtown Marshalltown is headed in a positive direction that others will follow! We made the right decision to rebuild and to rebuild downtown,” he said.

Gilman

CONTINUED | FROM A1

submit two ideas for how they would improve the park, and one of the members of the County Line Band joked that she hoped the committee could raise enough money to install a splash pad.

They don’t have a hard and fast fundraising goal at this point, but Gunderson said the plan is to keep holding periodic events like this one and see what kind of donations they receive.

Prayer

CONTINUED | FROM A1

about it,” she said. “The Lord laid on my heart that what the world needs is Him. He told me to do this, so I did it and it was so great we are doing it again this year.”

Gudith said one of the best parts of last year’s Come Together was seeing all of the people walk through the doors of the Roundhouse and fill up the seats.

“Clearly there is a desire to worship together as a community and to pray over Marshalltown, our schools and citizens,” she said. “It was nearly a packed house [last year], and we are hoping for even more this year.”

The event, which will begin at 7 p.m., will feature local speakers — Dil-

lon Johnson with Journey Church, Tony Willsher with Mosaic Church and David Foix with Restore — testimonies, prayer and local band The 641 Project. Attendees can provide a free will donation to help with future funding needs.

Along with Gudith, organizers include Kylene Leger, Jules McGrew and the Marshall County Prayer Task Force.

“Last year we were blown away, and we believe that God is going to do something amazing again this year,” Gudith said.

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

EVENT INFORMATION

Date: Wednesday, July 19

Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Marshalltown Roundhouse, 102 S. Second Ave.

Contact Lana Bradstream at 641-753-6611 ext. 210 or lbradstream@timesrepublican.com.

Boxing

CONTINUED | FROM A1

coaches trained students in Alejandro’s basement, but they took that situation to teach their students to never quit.

Finding a location which fit space and budget requirements was a challenge, but they found a home in the mall, and Alejandro chose the Liver Shot name for the club because it is his favorite boxing punch.

“It is one of the punches every boxer should learn,” he said. “It’s a knock-out punch.”

Beyond the liver shot punch, Alejandro said students learn boxing skills, discipline and resilience.

“They will learn about taking the right path in life and being respectful,” he said.

Rodriguez said in the beginning, the new boxers will learn more than the basics such as footwork and how to throw punches. He added everything athletes learn at Liver Shot can be taken into the outside world.

“Boxing isn’t just about punching,” Rodriguez said.

Both coaches saw firsthand how boxing training benefited athletes at La Raza. Alejandro spoke about a La Raza student who was very aggressive at the start, but gradually he noticed a shift in attitude and behavior.

“He changed around people,” he said.

Rodriguez recalled the same athlete.

“He couldn’t control his emotions, and he was very closed off in the beginning,” he said. “He would never chat, never say ‘Hi.’ In time, he got accustomed to us and would come up

and talk to us.”

Alejandro provided another example of boxing benefiting a student of theirs. He said the student was looking for trouble and was not doing well in school.

“He became comfortable with us,” he said.

One reason behind the positive change in behavior is boxing releases stress, Alejandro said.

“It also gives you more focus on how you want to live,” he said. “If you want to do this for a living, you have to be disciplined and dedicated.”

Beyond the combat skills and the behavior changes, Alejandro added boxing also instills different habits - what foods to eat, when to go to bed, when to wake up and even impacts grades earned in school.

One boxer who followed the coaches from La Raza to Liver Shot is Luis Garcia, 25, who qualified for the Golden Gloves finals in April. On Monday in the gym, he said he was excited for the opportunity to train in the new location.

“It’s going to be a better environment,” Garcia said. “Nothing is going to hold us back, now. You’re only as good as hard as you work. You’re not going to be the best everyday, but as long as you keep going, you can be the best.”

ABOUT LIVER SHOT

Contact: Instagram, Facebook

Location: 1720 S. Center St.

Hours: Monday through Friday, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$50 per child, \$60 per adult every month

Contact Lana Bradstream at 641-753-6611 ext. 210 or lbradstream@timesrepublican.com.

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T-R PHOTO BY LANA BRADSTREAM

The coaches at Liver Shot Boxing Club look on while their students train Monday. The club is now open at the Meadow Lane Mall as of this week.