

Pocahontas RECORD-DEMOCRAT

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WEATHER
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DAY	HI	LOW	PRCP.	SNOW
Oct. 24	51	31	0.22	
Oct. 25	54	32		
Oct. 26	54	32		
Oct. 27	54	29		
Oct. 28	61	30		
Oct. 29	67	34		
Oct. 30	60	29		

EMS providers talk focus on providing good care

By Erin Sommers
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Editor's note: This article is the last in a four-part series about the proposed EMS essential service tax, which will be on the Nov. 8 ballot.

Any conversation about whether EMS should become an essential service in Pocahontas County starts out the same way, Sandy Wells said.

Wells, who has served on the Fonda ambulance for about three decades, hears the same thing from most people she talks to about the upcoming ballot question.

"We had no idea this wasn't an essential service," is the most common comment Wells has heard, she said. "It opened a lot of eyes."

The conversations have had something else in common, too.

"I have not heard anything negative," Wells said. "I think some good things are going to come out of these meetings."

Pocahontas County voters have through the general election on Nov. 8 to cast their ballots on the question of how the county will fund EMS programs in the future. The question to voters this year is whether to make EMS an essential service. If the answer is, that comes with a price tag: a 1 percent income tax and an increase in property taxes.

"Yes, it's going to add some tax, but it's not a lot," Wells said. "When you figure it out per acre, it's not over the top."

Wells said she's addressed another misconception about ambulance programs.

"Just because we have volunteers doesn't mean we don't need tax money," she said. "We need tax money to sustain us."

That's a point paramedic Shelly Stumpf has made at public meetings in recent months. While she works for the Pocahontas EMS, she's also the director of the

Rolfe EMS, a volunteer service. There just aren't enough pancake breakfasts in small towns to offset the rising costs of technology and equipment, not to mention the increased training required of paramedics and other first responders.

Those fundraisers are great publicity for ambulance programs, Pocahontas Community Hospital EMS Director Patrick Mooney said. They aren't a huge source of revenue, though, The tax will make a difference for both the volunteer services and the hospital's EMS program, he said.

"It's going to bring the funding mechanism that we haven't had," Mooney said. "We've all been working together for years, meeting the healthcare needs. This is no different. It's going to guarantee service into the future."

Stumpf said she wanted the public to know that the EMS programs aren't asking for more money than is absolutely necessary.

"We are a very lean budget," she said. "We are very purposeful in what we're asking for."

A new cot for an ambulance costs about \$40,000, as does a new monitor, she added. An ambulance can come in around \$250,000.

State legislators, in drafting the law designating EMS as an essential service, included a provision that counties implementing the taxes for EMS also create a countywide response system. That doesn't mean one city's or one hospital's EMS program overtakes all the others, Mooney said. It's just a requirement to set up a framework to help each other out and to work together on a budget for spending the EMS tax funds each year.

It's also not a novel approach in Pocahontas County.

"For years, we've been focusing on building a system," Mooney

said. "With PCERS (Pocahontas County Emergency Response System), we have a lot of these pieces in place already. This is the funding mechanism that all of our towns have been missing."

A countywide EMS Advisory Board will make the decisions about how the money is spent.

"The money is all going to be kept track of by the Auditor's office," Mooney said. "No entity is going to have direct access to the funds. There's a lot of checks and balances."

City officials, members of the Board of Supervisors, the county's Emergency Management Agency director and hospital officials will all serve on the Advisory Board.

"We're really passionate about this," Stumpf said.

Stumpf is a second-generation EMS volunteer in Pocahontas County. Her mother, Diane Christiansen, helped to begin the Fonda EMS program in the early 1970s.

She has passion for caring for people.

"When you respond to somebody, you become a little part of their life and they become a part of yours," Stumpf said.

Wells had a passion for emergency care as well. She started as a nurse, but after a medical emergency with one of her own children, Wells said she knew she needed to become a paramedic, too.

She was encouraged by the recent uptick in interest in EMS programs, including from folks in Fonda, where the EMS has come to closing this year for lack of volunteers.

"You can have the money," Wells said. "You still have to find the people to fill those slots."

This funding may just help out with that, Mooney said.

"If we can build on our system and enhance it, that will help," he said.

Chase to speak at PAC Veterans Day

By Erin Sommers
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As he prepares for his first deployment with the Army Reserves, Pocahontas Police Officer AJ Chase will make a stop at Pocahontas Area Community High School.

Chase, a Fonda native and 2020 graduate of Newell-Fonda High School, will be the Veterans Day program speaker at 10:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 11, at the PAC gym. The program is open to the public.

He said he knew from a young age, maybe 4 or 5 years old, that he wanted to enlist in the military.

"My aunt was coming back from her second deployment to Iraq," he said, which piqued his interest in military service. "I originally got involved with the military with the intention of doing that full-time."

Then, he met some Buena Vista County Sheriff's deputies who

were in the reserves and that, he realized, would let him have both a military and law enforcement career. Pocahontas Police Chief Alex Leu, who was formerly the chief in Chase's hometown, was also an influence, he said.

As a horizontal construction engineer, Chase will be headed to the Middle East with the 411th Engineering Company out of Cedar Rapids. He operates heavy equipment, including large vehicles to move earth and to clear routes. He's only known of the upcoming deployment, which happens in later November or early December, since July.

"It's been kind of a time crunch," he said.

In all, Chase will have a 10-month deployment, with one month of training and nine months abroad. His unit starts at Camp Buehring in Kuwait, with missions that could take him into Iraq, Syria and Qatar.

This will be Chase's first

opportunity to leave the United States.

"I'm very excited," he said. "I enlisted in the military exactly for this. It will be fun."

His aunt, who inspired his enlistment, is a little jealous, he added. She's already completed 20 years with the Iowa National Guard and recently switched to the Army Reserves, where she holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

"She has her own battalion," Chase said.

While his entire family is supportive, Chase said his mom is a little nervous about the upcoming deployment.

"I couldn't have asked for a better, more supportive family," he said.

This month marks a year with the Pocahontas Police Department; Chase completed the law enforcement academy in April of this year.

Between working law

At the Rialto

Nov. 4-13 the theatre will be closed.
PAC High School Play, "Suessical the Musical," will be Friday, Nov. 11 & Saturday, Nov. 12. Tickets will be available at the High School.

Coming Nov. 14-24 is "Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile." Rated PG, Running time: 1 hr. 46 min. Starring: Javier Bardem, Scoot McNairy, and Constance Wu.

Feature film based on the children's book about a crocodile that lives in New York City.

Schedule subject to change.

COMING SOON:
"Amsterdam" — R
"Ticket to Paradise" — PG-13

AUCTIONS

Hay Auctions
First and Third Saturdays
of each month
November 5 & 19
@ 10:15 a.m.

@ the Fonda Sale Barn
Hammen Auction Company
Jerry Hammen ~ 712-299-2523

Pocahontas Machinery
Consignment Auction
Items need to be on the lot by
12 p.m. on Wed., Nov. 23
unless we are full before that
date - please call ahead
Tues., Dec. 6 @ 8:30 a.m.
Located at 401 1/2 East Elm,
Pocahontas, IA
Sale Barn Realty & Auction
401 1/2 East Elm,
Pocahontas, IA
712-335-3117
www.salebarn.ncn.net



Pocahontas native Tyson Peterson celebrates after crossing the finish line of the Chicago Marathon Oct. 9. Peterson ran the race to raise money and awareness for children who have been diagnosed with cancer. Submitted photo

Pocahontas' Peterson finishes Chicago Marathon for a good cause

By Erin Sommers
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In the last seven miles of the Chicago Marathon, Pocahontas native Tyson Peterson kept looking down at his arm.

"Miles 20 to 26 were definitely very rough and there were times my muscles were in a lot of pain but I would look down on my arm (where all our mile motivators were, the kiddos we dedicated a mile to) and say to myself - If they can fight cancer I can finish a fricken marathon," Peterson said. "Crossing the finish line was surreal and words can not really explain how I was feeling but it will truly be something I will remember forever!"

Peterson, a Pocahontas Area Community graduate who is studying exercise science on a pre-occupational therapist track at the University of Iowa, hopes to become a pediatric occupational therapist at a children's hospital. He has an entertainment leadership position with Dance Marathon, which provides year-round support to youth cancer patients and their families.

"The organization I am in is way more than just fundraising money," he said. "It is providing endless support to so many people. We just want them to at least feel a little better and truly they never forget and are forever grateful for what we do! I know that I can not fix or cure cancer, nor can I just magically make a child feel better or a family less shaken up in this situation, but what I do know is love and kindness truly makes an impact especially when it is toward someone that is truly broken."

Peterson said he was surprised to learn that just 4 percent of federal cancer research funding is used for pediatric cancer research and that there aren't specific treatments for children who have cancer.

"After hearing that I knew that the only thing I could do is try to help raise awareness and raise money to help make a change for the strongest kiddos in the world," he said. "These kids and their families go through something that I can not even begin to comprehend or explain. And if it meant that I would take a little bit of my time to advocate for them and raise money for them. Then heck yes sign me up!"

Peterson said he's always been interested in the pediatric field and helping younger children. He also helps a family that lost one son to cancer at a young age.

Peterson spends time with the family's other son, acting as a surrogate brother for the boy.

Peterson decided to run the Chicago Marathon and use the race as a fundraiser for pediatric cancer patients.

"It was just another way for me to raise awareness for a cause I have a lot of passion for," he said. "It is one small way I can continue to show the kiddos and their families how much I truly care and how much fighting for them really means to me! You

realize that you are running for something more than yourself and it helps you stay motivated and makes the race a lot more meaningful."

He finished the race in 4 hours and 48 minutes and has raised \$2,100 so far, he said. He completed the bulk of his training this summer, before returning to classes for the fall.

"I just did what I could and as much as I could," Peterson

said of his last few weeks of race training. "Smaller runs during the week and left the long runs for the weekend. I would definitely say because I was running this for a cause and not the time, the training was not as intense. But I would still go for 15+ mile runs to prepare."

The weather for the Oct. 9 race was perfect, Peterson said, and his fellow fundraising runners were some of the best company



Tyson Peterson of Pocahontas ran the 2022 Chicago Marathon Oct. 9 in honor of children who have cancer. Submitted photo

he could have for the event.

"The race was truly so much fun," he said. "I mean I got to experience it with some of the best people I have ever met in my life and it was truly inspiring to all do this together and all have one goal in mind: to do it for more than ourselves and for our kiddos and families."

Being involved with Dance Marathon has taught Peterson several life lessons.

"Overall, Dance Marathon has taught me how to wholeheartedly invest myself into something I really care about and expand on my passion and purpose," he said. "I know that I can always be doing more and I love to inspire others to do the same because the best memories come from doing so."

He also has seen how even simple acts of kindness can have a big impact.

"The smallest actions go the farthest, whether that is just hanging out with a kid to make them forget what they are battling," he said. "You see the impact because their smile and actions make them feel as if they are on top of the world again."

"Or it's being there for a family that has lost a kid to cancer and making sure that they know that their child is never forgotten and that they did not lose their battle

with cancer because they will always be the true winners," he answered. "They finished their part of the race and now it is time for people like me to finish their race and advocate for them so that no one else has to say their children 'lost' their battle."



Doing good in the neighborhood
Youth from Resurrection of Our Lord and Hope UMC gathered food and household items from around town to benefit Upper Des Moines Opportunity. The event was Trick or Treat So Others Can Eat. Submitted photo