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Gov. Reynolds honors local heroes for lifesaving efforts



Governor Reynolds presented Lifesaving with Valor Awards to Cory Fleming and Rich Kopera and an Outstanding Service Award to Trisha Keim during ceremonies at the Iowa State Capitol last Friday. The gentlemen on the right are Iowa State Troopers.

By Karen Spurgeon, Publisher

Cory Fleming of Bloomfield, Rich Kopera of Milton, and Trisha Keim of Bloomfield were honored March 3 during the 2022 Governor's Lifesaving & Sullivan Brothers' Awards Ceremony in the rotunda of the Iowa State Capitol.

Fleming and Kopera were two of only three Iowans who were awarded "Lifesaving with Valor Awards." These awards are given to individuals who attempt to save the life of another individual while risking their own lives.

Keim was given an outstanding service award for unselfishly rendering service in a time of emergency.

All three received the awards for the service they rendered to Abby Johnson when she was involved in an accident as she was driving east along J40 on July 9, 2021.

A pickup truck backed out from an adjoining driveway and struck Johnson's vehicle before

she was able to react. Her vehicle veered into the ditch and struck a telephone pole.

Johnson was trapped inside her SUV as the vehicle began to smolder. Cory Fleming, who lives close to the site of the accident, was the first person to reach the SUV, but could not pry open the damaged passenger door.

The next person to reach the scene, Trisha Keim, stopped to offer her assistance and focused her efforts on keeping the driver of the other vehicle, Phil Archer, seated and calm until more help arrived. When Chase Johnson, Abby's husband, arrived at the scene later with the couple's two sons, Keim was there to help calm them.

Rich Kopera was the third person to come upon the collision and immediately ran to the burning SUV. Kopera and Fleming quickly came up with a plan to tear off the SUV's door with a log chain from Kopera's truck.

Fleming managed to pull down part of the SUV's window frame with his bare hands and attach one end of the log chain to the SUV door. Kopera backed his truck up to the burning vehicle and secured the chain around the hitch.

The first attempt at pulling the door off failed as flames started to reach Johnson's seat. Kopera quickly repositioned his vehicle and attempted a more forceful run at jerking the door free.

On the second attempt, Kopera floored his vehicle and the driver's door broke free of its hinges.

Kopera and Fleming pulled Johnson out of her vehicle just before it burst into flames.

Filling in the details of the rescue as he spoke to the Bloomfield Democrat Monday morning, Fleming said his daughter Leah saw the accident from a window in their home and immediately called 911. He and his

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Town Hall addresses the 'elephant in the room'

By Karen Spurgeon, Publisher

The Davis County Schools' third Town Hall meeting on a 4-day school week became more intense as more participants expressed divided opinions on the pros and cons of a 4-day schedule.

Superintendent Dan Maeder opened the meeting by thanking the public for their level of participation and said that means people care about Davis County Schools.

Maeder reiterated the reasons for considering a 4-day week: the stress level of teachers, hiring challenges, and the changing needs of the students.

The discussion suddenly began to cut to the root of the problem when former school board member Alan Bodkins asked, "What is the number one reason people leave the profession? Let's talk about the elephant in the room. Is it the behavior problems that teachers have to deal with?"

"The problem is kids act so much different than they used to," he said. "That's what the problem is. It's how people's kids treat staff. That may be the biggest issue we have to face. Our teachers are good, but there needs to be

more structure at home."

Following Bodkins' train of thought, art teacher Kim Byrd responded, "School does not look the way it used to look at any of the three levels. I think people in the community need to come in and see for themselves."

Katie Houston, who teaches an education class at the high school level, commented, "It's hard for me to tell my students to do this (go into teaching) with all of the other incentives in other professions."

High school English instructor Brooke Mason spoke in favor of the 4-day week, saying she believes teachers would continue to work on Fridays, students would have a study day, and the quality of education would be better.

"I hope you'll consider the 4-day week to take care of students and teachers," she said.

Mason fears remaining on a five-day schedule could mean losing teachers and result in larger class sizes.

High school librarian Danna Cook agreed that "it takes everything out of you to be everything to these kids who are not learning to respect teachers at home."

Cook commended the study committee for its

research and suggested the community should look at schools in other states that have gone to 4-day schedules. "I feel we can work through this and do the best for our kids," she said.

Kevin Cook, who teaches English, literature, and humanities at IHCC, which is on a 4-day schedule, believes the most important thing in school is the teacher-student relationship. "Schools reflect society," he said. "Beware of the pressures facing schools. I do believe this community can handle this and figure it out."

Traci Wiegand, owner of Wigwam Daycare and Preschool, commented, "I know that we have really difficult students right now, but I don't believe another day off will fix that problem. We need more mental health programs and specialty staff."

"At what point are we going to say, 'We're not doing this anymore.' Our teachers are not social workers."

"I want teachers applying (for positions) who are invested, not because they only want to work four days a week."

Mari Melvin, former middle school teacher

SEE TOWN HALL, PAGE 7A

Webster nominated for federal award



Preston Webster, his wife Denise and sons Carl and Martin enjoy the out-of-doors near the Sandia Mountains in New Mexico.

Dr. Preston Webster, a 2007 graduate of Davis County High School and son of Lori McAllister and Tom Webster of Bloomfield, was recently named one of two U.S. Air Force nominees for the 74th Annual Arthur S. Flemming Award.

The Flemming Award honors federal employees with 3-15 years of service who have been nominated by their federal agencies, selected through a competitive judging process, and have made significant contributions to the federal government.

A press release from the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) said Webster is an engineer in the Space Vehicles Directorate at

the AFRL in Kirkland, New Mexico. He heads a research team that develops novel space sensor technologies for the nation's infrared surveillance missile warning and tracking, weather monitoring, and various other systems. His work focuses on high performance and highly manufacturable sensor solutions that can tolerate the harsh space radiation environment to ensure the nation's satellites remain resilient and robust.

Webster said for decades, having the highest performance sensors was the ultimate high ground and was enough to maintain the U.S.'s economic dominance and the

warfighter's asymmetric advantage. However, he stated, the situation has changed.

"Our nation is rapidly reaching a point where this strategy of having the best things will no longer be as effective as it once was," he said. "New innovations in spacecraft launch technology have dramatically reduced the costs to launch satellites into orbit, enabling the U.S. and our adversaries to launch more spacecraft more rapidly than at any point in history."

Webster said we still want the best sensors in space, but now we must prioritize sensor technologies that are manufacturable and radiation-tolerant to outfit the large numbers of next generation satellites.

"We must ensure the nation's ability to provide critical information to the warfighter is resilient to disruption so that the U.S. armed forces are never left blind on the battlefield," he stressed.

If selected at the next level of competition, Webster will be honored in June at the Flemming Award ceremony held at George Washington University Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration in

SEE WEBSTER, PAGE 4A

'Rock Local Tour' will highlight local musicians at DC Fair



The Jacks, a band of 1970s DCHS graduates Chuck Locke, Marty Sanders, Jon Locke, and Raymond Murrell, will perform at the Davis County Fair this summer.

The Davis County Fair entertainment line-up will highlight local talent on Friday night, July 14, as three members of Yukon Jack return to Bloomfield and join guitarist Raymond Murrell for a free concert in front of the grandstand.

Yukon Jack was a band consisting of 1977 and 1978 DCHS graduates Chris Hopkins, Jon Locke, Chuck Locke and Marty Sanders. The group reunited last September to relive old times and play for the 45th reunion of the Class of 1977. The enthusiastic response of their audience led Dan Hutchings of the Davis County Fair Board to schedule the band for the 2023 DC Fair.

However, a problem arose when the group learned Hopkins would not be available for the performance at the fair.

Jon Locke, bass guitarist, said Sunday, "When Chris said he wouldn't be able to play, he suggest-

ed Raymond (Murrell)."

Murrell responded to the invitation by saying, "My motivation is to have fun, and if we can sound good along the way, it will be even better!"

As three members of Yukon Jack merge with Murrell for the fair, the new group will be calling themselves The Jacks.

Locke said the group will be playing five of the Yukon Jack originals at the fair and add five or six newer covers from the same era and genre.

The John-Paul Jones group, a trio led by Jones who is an Indian Hills Community College instructor, will round out the evening's entertainment. "He is a tremendous guitar player," Hutchings said.

Saturday night at the fair will feature country music with performances by Chase McDaniel and Aaron Tippin.

McDaniel was influenced by the music of George Jones, Johnny Cash and Conway Twit-



Aaron Tippin

ty. He released his first song, "Relapse," online and garnered over 2,000,000 streams without any playlisting or other help. His follow-up release, "Project," has made it to the top of the charts.

Aaron Tippin has had a 25-year career in the music business. His first single, "You've Got to Stand for Something," hit the Billboard Country Singles chart and peaked at number 6. He returned to the top of the charts with "Where the Stars and Stripes and Eagle Fly" during the aftermath of 9/11.

Tippin said he thinks of his fans as family and looks forward to signing autographs every night as he "gets out there, shakes their hands, and gives them a big hug just to say thank you."

Other entertainment lined up for the Davis County Fair includes harness races on Tuesday, July 11; 12th Outlaw Truck and Tractor Pull on Wednesday, July 12; car races on Thursday, July 13, featuring 4-cylinders, hobby stocks, B-mods, and stock cars, and Lunatic Promotions Demo Derby on Sunday.

Kenny's Funland will provide the carnival.



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\$1.25



Little League requests user agreement with city

Tisha Scott spoke to the Bloomfield City Council Thursday night proposing a user agreement between the Davis County Little League Board and the city council, especially regarding trash pickup. Scott said there is no written agreement between the two entities regarding property upkeep. While the city has been mowing the lawn at all four fields and paying for utilities, Scott said the Little League Board is especially concerned about a \$1,200 charge per season for dumpsters and garbage pickup.

"My concern," Scott said, "is the fields are open and lots of the trash is not coming from Little League. It's community members going down and playing on the field."

The field is also used for those playing travel ball.

For those reasons, Scott said her board is not in agreement with contracting their own dumpsters

"If we take on a contract for three years (for garbage pickup), the board can't promise they can pay for that," Scott said.

Scott said Little League volunteers willingly clean up the fields and use their machinery to maintain the fields, but they feel trash should be the city's responsibility.

Scott said the organization asked for dumpsters to be emptied weekly. "We had a lot of trash last year — especially at Kevin Ritz field. There are city people who dump there, and now the dumpsters are smaller and dumped fewer times. I think there needs to be an agreement."

City Administrator Tomi Jo Day said her main issue was not with trash pickup, but with the approximately \$2,000 per month in utility expenses the city incurs when the season is extended for travel ball.

Scott commented that "every entity that uses the field should be responsible."

City Attorney Gayla Harrison agreed to look over Scott's proposed agreement and present suggestions to Day and Scott.

Scott said she hopes dumpsters can be in place for Little League clean-up day on April 1.

Following a lengthy, and at times heated, discussion, the council approved the following disbursement of Community Development funds for the next fiscal year:

- Bloomfield Main

- Street — \$50,000
- Davis County Development Corporation — \$15,000
- Historic Preservation Commission — \$9,750
- Tourism — \$1,100
- Mutchler Community Center — \$8,000 (placed in an account for a future request)

The meeting began with a public hearing to amend the ordinance regarding compensation to council members. Council members had been paid \$50 per meeting; the amendment, if approved, would raise that amount to \$100 per meeting. No members of the public were present for input.

The four members of the council who were present (Don Walton, Earl Howard, Jennifer Spargur, and Jake Bohi) approved the first reading of the ordinance. Two additional readings of the ordinance must be approved before the ordinance goes into effect.

City Administrator Tomi Jo presented the first update at the meeting and reported she is working on a budget amendment for the FY23 budget. The budget was originally set at \$13,000,000 but is being amended to \$16,000,000. The difference results from grants received last year. Amounts granted were for facades — Blackboard Printing, Image Shapers, Wells Hometown Drug, and the Bloomfield Democrat — \$459,000; HVAC at the Mutchler Center — \$130,000; playground equipment — \$550,000; sidewalks — \$450,000; gas (which has doubled in price) — \$550,000; and TIF on streets projects (which will be recouped next year) — \$900,000.

Day also announced valuation rollbacks will bring the city's valuations down from \$82,000,000 to \$63,000,000. This will result in \$250,685 less for the city's budget.

Assistant Police Chief Zach Dunlavy announced there are two interns working with officers. He also said the department is working with DCHS Instructor Kelsi Sankot and her students to create a video for the police department's website.

Mutchler Center Director Taylor Helton announced biddy ball is underway at Mutchler and the men's league is finishing up its season with a tournament. Helton said weight equipment has been ordered, and an ad has been run in the Bloomfield Democrat for pool employees for the summer.

- Main Street Director

Jen Cutler reported the organization has added several members to its committees; a kids' mini-market is being contemplated as an addition to the Farmers' Market, and an opener is being considered for Hairy Nation Days' entertainment.

Fire Chief Jeff McClure reported in the last two weeks the department has responded to a house fire, a car wreck and an ice rescue in an abandoned coal pit.

"We were scrambling when we got a page that two people were in the water," he said, "but they managed to get out on their own."

McClure, who is also code enforcement officer, said cleaning up properties will become more of a priority with nicer weather. He said someone was caught on camera dumping trash at the tree dump last week. "The police knew who it was and escorted them out there to clean it up," he said. "They were fined \$250."

A sign announcing the \$250 fine will be posted at the tree dump.

DPW Rusty Sands reported utilities have been disconnected from the property the city purchased on North Washington Street and the house will be burned by the fire department as a training exercise.

Tammy Roberts, Community Development Director, reported an application for solar credits has been submitted, but additional documentation is being requested because the field has been sold three times since it was built.

In other action, the council:

- approved a change order from RG Construction for the Blackboard Printing facade in the amount of \$1,980;
- accepted a bid packet for Howard Street and Walnut Street culverts;
- approved a Class B retail alcohol license for Family Dollar;
- approved the purchase of a new generator for lift station #5 in the amount of \$15,295;
- approved payment of an invoice from Altech in the amount of \$147,067.05 for the purchase of a bucket truck for the electric department;
- approved invoice of \$122,678 from ICAP;
- approved payment of \$8,450 to Dixon Engineering for water tower inspections;
- approved a resolution setting a public hearing on March 16 to change utility rates and set an effective date.

Students explore death penalty, McDonald's, and radiation



ELP students Gabi McGregor, Brock Brinegar and Grayson Meyer work on their projects for National History Day.

By Kimra Hines, Reporter
Davis County Middle School Extended Learning Program (ELP) students are preparing research projects for the National History Day competition.

The Extended Learning Program provides challenge and enrichment for high ability students. Susan Hazen, K-8 ELP Instructor, revived Davis County participation in National History Day.

According to Hazen, "National History Day (NHD) is a yearlong academic program focused on historical research, interpretation, and creative expression for 6-12 grade students. By participating in NHD, students become writers, filmmakers, web designers, playwrights, and artists as they create unique, contemporary expressions of history."

Hazen's 6-8 graders had the opportunity to use their study hall twice per week to work on a research project that will be judged March 10 at NHD district level at Indian Hills. Students could make a website, exhibit, documentary, write a paper, or act out a drama.

Seventeen students started projects with 12 finishing. Hazen relayed that several students had other extracurricular activities that conflicted with the project timeline.

The projects include: Liam Emerson—Lightning/Martin Uman (website), Canon Smith—Louis Chevrolet/William C. Durant (website), Trysten Armstrong—Chess (exhibit), Ellie Humphrey and Addison Bigsby—deep sea/Jacques Cousteau (documentary), Ace Rush and Brock Brinegar—International Space Station (exhibit), Rydale Horn—Stalin (paper), Clayton Lauer—McDonalds/frontier of fast food (exhibit), Grayson Meyer—Radiation (documentary),

Zaylee Clark—Death penalty (paper), and Gabriella McGregor—Hindenburg Disaster (website).

"The public library has been very helpful, especially Deb Barnhart. They get resources for us through interlibrary loans," Hazen pointed out. "One of Gabi's books came from a library in New Jersey which was neat for the kids."

Along with their projects, each student must submit an annotated bibliography listing primary and secondary sources in alphabetical order with a hanging indent and an annotation, and a process paper explaining how they chose their topics, did their research, and the significance. Those items are submitted online.

Hazen relayed, "The cloud is nice because 10 years ago their info was on a flash drive and sometimes mom accidentally washed it if they forgot it in their pocket."

Grayson Meyer explained that his documentary on radiation was focusing on the Radium Girls. "They were a group of women who worked in factories and painted watch dials with radioactive paint during WWII." He went on, "They put the brush in their mouth and used their teeth to bring the bristles to a point, and got radiation poisoning. The paint glowed so they would even paint their nails with it."

Brock Brinegar discussed the International Space Station exhibit he and his partner are working on. "I wanted to do something on galaxies but needed more specific info. I have a console game on the space station so I decided to do that."

Brinegar said he chose to do an exhibit because, "I do exhibits for 4-H and I'm a visual learner."

He recounted interviewing Janice Theobald from Kirksville, Mo. She was in the group of teachers right after the Challenger exploded, who went to NASA hoping to be selected to go into space.

Gabi McGregor conveyed that she saw a book on the Hindenburg Disaster and thought it looked interesting. The Hindenburg Disaster was an airship carrying passengers that exploded on May 6, 1937 in Manchester Township, N.J., killing 36 people.

McGregor said, "I like tech and the website let me use a lot of pictures." She was able to embed the audio from the radio broadcast that was happening when the aircraft exploded and the video of the explosion into the website and sync them up.

McGregor reported using 13 different sources for her project. She called universities in both Iowa and New Jersey trying to find an expert on the disaster to speak with her.

After being unsuccessful, she called a residential care center in New Jersey. There she found two men who were alive in that area when it happened. She spoke with Nicholas Rakoneza, 91, and William Higgins, 93, over zoom, arranged by the facility's activities coordinator. McGregor said they both had military careers and one was stationed at a base in Manchester Township.

She also called Lakehurst Historical Society Museum in New Jersey hoping to speak with someone about the disaster. Hazen said, "We were expecting to schedule a time to talk with someone but they called him to the phone right then. Quick kid, you're on!"

McGregor confessed, "It's sort of stressful towards the end (of the project) but was worth it."

TOWN HALL: Maeder : 'We have to have refreshed staff every week'

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who now teaches the Nest program at the Davis County Extension Office, said many parents attend the program because they want to learn to be better parents, but some come only for the free diapers.

"I agree you have some of the best teachers here in Davis County," she told Maeder, "and school is the best place for these kids. It breaks my heart that some of these kids are going to be home another day in this situation."

"Mari, I'm glad that you said that," Maeder replied. "You definitely have a con (to the 4-day week)."

Kristy Miller and Ashley Tuvera, social-emotional learning specialists at Davis County Elementary, suggested people write their legislators and request more support for mental health services in Iowa.

"We need more programs like Mari's," Miller said. "The number one thing people should be doing now while they are around kids is putting their phones away. Phones are programmed to be addictive, and kids have to struggle to get their parents' attention."

Blake Barnhart expressed concerns about a 4-day week saying a lack of consistency is a problem for some kids and younger kids need more breaks with a longer day. "Mormon Trail Schools do not have good results with this schedule," he said.

Alexis Henderson, a graduate of Mormon Trail, said test results remained steady as the school transitioned to a 4-day week and special activities were offered on Fridays. "However, they don't have those (special activities) anymore," she

said. Barnhart said Pleasantville tried a 4-day week but ran into childcare problems and scrapped the plan.

Supt. Maeder admitted he was leaning toward the 4-day schedule because of his concerns about teacher retention. "I don't think we have a problem...yet," he said. "But we need to stay competitive. I want to keep the best and the brightest. As a superintendent, and a soldier, I would rather have a great employee for four days versus a good employee for five days. I'm primarily concerned about great people and staff."

Maeder said as a soldier he has experienced stress in combat zones. "The level of stress in schools is approaching that level," he said. "We have to have refreshed staff every week. Quality of life is

important and we have to have staff who can bring their best to the classroom."

Barnhart replied, "For \$400 a day, we should be able to handle stress rather than taking kids out of the classroom."

One woman in the room commented that kids on a 4-day schedule are happier and want to be at school.

As those attending the town hall asked about opportunities for additional input on the issue, Maeder said parents were being surveyed at parent-teacher conferences, staff will be surveyed again, students have been surveyed and the business community will be surveyed.

The 4-day week study committee will make a recommendation to the board later this month followed by a board of education decision.

In closing the town

hall, Maeder told the crowd, "I believe we're going to get better through this process."

Our community does love and care about each other."

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