

The Paper

Our Town, Our Paper!



Laurens, Iowa



Vol. 10 No. 34

www.thepapernow.com

December 21,
2016

Local News

ISU Extension and Outreach Pocahontas County After School Programs

Youth in Rolfe, Laurens, and Pocahontas created small gifts and ornaments for the holiday season. The leadership skills of the older children in Rolfe was amazing as they assisted the younger children complete their gifts. Each program is unique and is trying to fit the needs of the community. Laurens 2nd and 3rd graders meet at the Laurens Public Library at the same time the 4th through 12th grade in Laurens have their 4-H Meeting. Pocahontas children meet at PAC, serving the children of Pocahontas and surrounding areas. Rolfe children meet at the Rolfe Public Library. If you have a child in 2nd through 12th grade and would like them involved in 4-H or ISU Extension and Outreach Pocahontas County programs, please call the Extension office at 712-335-3103 or email lzeman@iastate.edu.



Festival of Trees

Come recharge your Christmas Spirit at the 17th Annual Laurens Festival of Trees Saturdays & Sundays in December from NOON - 7:00 p.m. each day at the Laurens United Methodist Church. Decorated trees, wreaths, table settings and other beautiful displays of all kinds have been created by many area residents. Free Will Offering. Come see displays with themes such as “Baking with Granny,” “Dinner with Santa,” “Frontier Christmas,” “Hearts on Fire”, “Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer”, “Merry Marketing” and many more!



John Schuler Named BOBALEE's 2016 Employee of the Year

John Schuler, a six-year employee at BOBALEE Hydraulics in Laurens, was honored Saturday night, December 3, as the recipient of the annual BOBALEE Hydraulics Employee of the Year Award. The announcement was made at the annual awards evening at the Marathon Community Center in Marathon.

John started his career at BOBALEE Hydraulics in August 2010 in the Drill/Mill Department. In 2012, he transferred to the Maintenance Department, where he troubleshoots machines and provides preventative maintenance.

The runner-up finalists for the 2016 award were warehouse coordinator Lisa Benson, and oil tester Christopher Hiatt.

For the BOBALEE Hydraulics Employee of the Year Award, each company employee is invited to nominate a candidate. The top vote recipients are narrowed down to three finalists. A committee reviews the finalists, and then selects the Employee of the Year based on their accomplishments of the last year, attendance, contributions, loyalty, integrity, flexibility, and leadership.



At the presentation of the BOBALEE Hydraulics Employee of the Year Award are, from left, Rich Smith, CEO of BOBALEE Hydraulics, and John Schuler and his wife, Kelly.

Sharing Update

PAC has declined the Laurens-Marathon offer to reach a draft agreement for whole grade sharing. To move forward with whole grade sharing, a draft agreement would need to be approved and a public hearing held by the end of December.

The Laurens-Marathon board's offer was comprehensive. We offered to pay 85% of the per pupil costs as requested by PAC. We conceded full control to PAC for the 7-12 athletic program with teams to be known only as PAC rather than PAC/L-M. We requested to share the position of transportation director and expressed our desire to have PAC utilize L-M staff for 2.4 full time equivalent positions to help with the teaching load. We requested a 3 year agreement and expressed a desire to work cooperatively as a partner.

PAC asked to include the one cent sales tax revenues for all high school students as an additional funding source. PAC seemed to fail to recognize that Laurens-Marathon would suffer revenue loss when state sharing funds cease.

The goal to negotiate and work as a partner eroded early in the negotiations process. The L-M board wanted to work with a mediator to help find resolution, but that request was denied.

It is the position of the L-M board that sharing should be beneficial to both partners without jeopardizing the educational needs of either district.

At the Library with Glenda Mulder December 21, 2016

I think it's close enough now that I can actually say it, "Merry Christmas!" And it certainly is beginning



to look a lot like Christmas around here! The Library will be closed December 24 to 26 as we celebrate Christmas. We will be open regular hours December 27 through 30. In celebration of the New Year the library will be closed December 31 to January 2. After that 2017 will be in full swing and so will we!

Karl Jirgens has donated a memoir written by his brother Valdis, better known as Wally. The title is "Memories are Better than Realities." Isn't that a great title?

New novels this week include *Moonglow* by Michael Chabon, *Spy* by Paulo Coelho and *Swing Time* by Zadie Smith. New nonfiction includes, *Courage to Soar; a body in motion, a life in balance* by Simone Biles, *The Undoing Project: a friendship that changed our minds* by Michael Lewis, *Talking as Fast as I can: from Gilmore Girls to Gilmore*

Girls and everything in between by Lauren Graham and *All the Gallant Men: an American sailor's firsthand account of Pearl Harbor* by Donald Stratton (Large Print) We also received *The Secret Life of Pets* if you're in the mood for a movie!

Upcoming Events

- Closed December 24-26 for Christmas
- Closed December 31-Jan 2 for New Years
- Tell Me a Yarn every Monday 5-7 p.m.
- Card Making every 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
- Take it Tuesday - Make a T-shirt into a Hobo bag! - 1st Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
- Book Club every 4th Monday at 7 p.m.
 - Pioneer Farming Tuesday, January 10 at 7 p.m.

Thank You

Many thanks to those who nominated and voted for my property to win the Hometown Pride Yard award for 2016! "Thanks" to the City for the Laurens Chamber Bucks! (What a nice prize to receive this time of year!) I enjoy working outside, but need to thank family and others who helped with my lawn and garden care. I also enjoyed driving to find all the other entrants' attractive and well-kept yards. We have such a pretty town!

Jeanette Korreck

**Friday night,
December 23rd,
special will be
spaghetti dinner or
you may order off
our full menu!**

**Grab some friends
and come relax and
let us do the cooking!
PUBLIC WELCOME**



Holiday Heroes Needed

Blood donors are needed urgently ahead of the upcoming holiday season.

With family traditions and holiday travel falling at the same time as winter weather and the flu season, the community blood supply often becomes scarce as blood donors are unable to make their regularly scheduled appointment this time of year.

If you're able to donate, please do! Every two seconds, someone in the United States requires a blood transfusion to survive. Blood cannot be produced in a lab, so healthy volunteer LifeServers are the only lifesaving link for these hospital patients.

Make your lifesaving gift at an upcoming community blood drive!

• **Laurens Community Blood Drive, Thursday, December 22, 2016 from 1:30 PM - 5:30 PM at Bethany Lutheran Church, 213 S. Harrison St..**

Schedule a blood donation appointment online at: www.lifeservebloodcenter.org or call 800-287-4903.

LifeServe Blood Center was established in April, 2010 when The Blood Center of Iowa joined operations with Siouxland Community Blood Bank. As one of the 15 largest blood centers in the country, LifeServe Blood Center provides blood and blood products to more than 100 hospitals located across Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota. LifeServe is committed to saving lives by providing premier service to volunteer blood donors and access to a safe, quality blood supply for hospitals and patients.

For more information about blood donation or to schedule an appointment to donate blood, call 800-287-4903 or visit www.lifeservebloodcenter.org.



**Visit Laurens
Festival of Trees**
*at the Laurens
United Methodist Church
201 West Main*

HOURS:
noon to 7 pm
each Saturday
& Sunday
in December
will close in bad weather



Did you learn to swim at the Laurens Swimming Pool? Please donate now so future generations can have the same privilege!

Everyone....Let's Create a SPLASH together by:

-Using our New Online Donation page: <https://www.youcaring.com/residents-of-laurens-501476>

-Sending a Tax Deductible Donation to:
Laurens Pool Project, c/o City of Laurens,
272 North 3rd Street, Laurens, IA 50554

-Dropping it off at City Hall

Like us on Facebook: Laurens Pool Project
www.laurens-ia.com

The Paper

Published weekly by
My Laurens, Inc.
112 Walnut St.
Laurens, IA 50554

Phone:
(712) 841-2684

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www.thepapernow.com

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Card Shower!!

Join Dave, Dan, Donn, Doug and Dirk in wishing a Happy Birthday to Joanne Crotty, who turned 85 on Thursday, December 15.

Cards can be sent to 406 Allen Street, Laurens, IA 50554.

HELP WANTED

Hwy 10 Hardware is Seeking Part Time Help! Can pick up application at Hwy 10 Hardware.

Happy Birthday, Mom!

Ring in the New Year at Laurens Golf & Country Club!

Ribeye Steak or Jumbo Shrimp Dinner with full salad bar!

Serving from 5-8 p.m.

For Reservations,
Please Call:
(712) 841-2287



12582 Hwy 10 | Laurens, IA
(712) 841-2287



***Grace Lutheran
Church Marathon,
Our Savior's
Lutheran Church
Albert City & St
John Lutheran
Church Rural
Albert City***

Pastor John Mayer
Saturdays 5 p.m. Worship Service @ Grace
Lutheran Church - Marathon

Sundays 10:30 a.m. Worship @ Our Savior's
Lutheran Church - Albert City

Sundays 9:00 a.m. @ St John Lutheran Church
Rural - Albert City

***This Week at First
Christian Church***

Pastor Rev. Rita Cordell

Wednesday, Dec. 21
1:00 p.m. - Willing Workers

Thursday, Dec. 22
2:00 p.m. - Coffee with Pastor

Friday, Dec. 23
7:00 p.m. - AA

Saturday, Dec. 24
6:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, Dec. 25
9:30 a.m. - Sunday School
10:30 a.m. - Worship

Biggest Little Paper In Town!

***This Week
at Bethany
Lutheran***

Wednesday: December 21, 2016
5:00 PM - 125th Committee Mtg.

Friday-Saturday: December 23-24, 2016
6:00 PM - 1:00 PM - Prayer Vigil

Saturday: December 24, 2016
5:30 PM - Christmas Eve Candlelight
Service w/Communion

Friday, Saturday, Sunday: December 9-11,
10AM-8PM - Viewing the Nativity Scenes

Sunday: December 25, 2016
CHRISTMAS DAY
NO SS & CONFIRMATION
10:30 AM - Worship w/Communion
Ushers: Volunteers

Greeter: Becky Braesch
NO YOUTH GROUP
Tuesday: December 27, 2016
10:00 AM - Coffee Time

Friday, Saturday, Sunday: December 9-11,
10AM-8PM - Viewing the Nativity Scenes



Sacred Heart Church Laurens

Pastor - Father Francis Makwinja
Weekday Mass : Friday - 8 AM
Weekend Mass: Sunday - 10:30 AM (November-February)
Christmas Eve - 4 PM - Christmas - 10:30 AM

Cluster Parishes
St. Joseph Catholic Church, Sioux Rapids
Weekday Mass: (Monday & Wednesday) - 8 AM
Weekend Mass: Sunday - 8:30 AM (November-February)
Christmas Eve - 6:30 PM - Christmas - 8:30 AM

St. Louis Catholic Church, Royal
Weekday Mass: (Tuesday & Thursday) - 8 AM
Weekend Mass: Saturday - 5 PM (November-February)
Christmas Eve - 9 PM

***This Week at
Laurens United
Methodist Church***

Wed., Dec. 21st:
NO Puppets
Administrative Council @ 8:15 p.m.

Fri., Dec. 23rd:
Men's Bible Study @ 7 a.m.

Sat., Dec. 24th:
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ 5 p.m.

Sun., Dec. 25th:
NO Sunday School
Fellowship Coffee @ 9:30 a.m.
Worship @ 10:30 a.m.
NO Youth Group

Mon., Dec. 26th:
CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
Festival of Trees tear down 9 a.m.-7 p.m.



Crop Advantage Series will Bring the Latest Crop Production Information to Storm Lake. Early registration deadline is January 3.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach specialists will travel to Storm Lake on Tuesday, January 10 for the 2017 Crop Advantage Series. The meeting location is Siebens Forum at Buena Vista University. They will provide farmers and agri-business with current crop production information from Iowa State University. The meeting will also offer continuing education credits for private pesticide applicators and Certified Crop Advisers (CCA). Iowa State University Extension and Outreach will travel to 14 locations across Iowa for the 2017 Crop Advantage Series from Jan. 4-27.

“The Crop Advantage Series is an educational program that brings the expertise of extension specialists to 14 locations across the state,” says ISU Extension and Outreach Field Agronomist Paul

Kassel. “Content at each meeting is driven by local agronomic issues.”

Topics at the Storm Lake Crop Advantage Series meeting will include: Palmer waterhemp by Bob Hartzler, grain market outlook by Gary Wright, Nitrogen and cover crops by John Sawyer and drainage designs for profit and water quality by Greg Brenneman.

Early registration for Storm Lake is \$50, and late registration made less than seven days prior to the meeting or on-site is \$60. Registration includes lunch, printed proceedings, private pesticide applicator recertification and CCA credits. Online registration and additional information is available at www.cropadvantage.org or from your county extension office.

For questions, contact ANR Program Services at 515-294-6429 or anr@iastate.edu, or Paul Kassel at 712 262 2264 or kassel@iastate.edu.

Crop Advantage Series is presented by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach with support from the Iowa Soybean Association and from the North Central SARE Program—Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education.

4-H Community Service

The 4-H’ers in Pocahontas County will be collecting personal care items and paper products through the month of December. All items collected will be donated to Upper Des Moines Opportunity. If you would like to contribute to this cause, you may drop items off at the ISU Extension and Outreach Pocahontas County during regular business hours (M-F 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) or give to any 4-H member.

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Farmland Values Show Historic Third Year of Decline *ISU Land Value Survey shows 5.9 percent decrease statewide since 2015*

Average Iowa farmland value has shown a decline for the third year in a row — the first time this has happened since the 1980s farm crisis — and is now estimated to be \$7,183 per acre. The statewide per acre value declined \$449, or 5.9 percent, since November 2015. Farmland values hit a historic high in 2013, but have steadily declined since then. The statewide average value for an acre of farmland is now about 17.5 percent lower than 2013 values.

Land values were determined by the 2016 Iowa State University Land Value Survey, which was conducted in November by the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development at Iowa State University and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Results from the survey are consistent with results by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, the Realtors Land Institute and the US Department of Agriculture. Wendong Zhang, assistant professor of economics at Iowa State University, led the annual survey.

The \$7,183 per acre, and 5.9 percent drop in value, represents a statewide average of low, medium and high quality farmland. The survey does also report values for each land quality type, crop reporting district (district hereafter) and all 99 counties individually.

Average farmland values hit a historic peak of \$8,716 per acre in 2013, but declined 8.9 percent in 2014, 3.9 percent in 2015 and have now fallen an additional 5.9 percent.

“The golden era of phenomenal, yet abnormal growth in farm income and land values, as we saw from 2006 to 2013, is already behind us. The land market is going through an orderly adjustment while the U.S. agricultural sector, a competitive industry, is trying to adjust to the old normal of zero industry-wise net profits,” said Zhang. “For a pessimist, there are reasons to worry, especially for landowners and/or producers who are over-leveraged. For an optimist, this decline is still modest, and the probability of a replay of the 1980s farm crisis is low.”

Zhang said the likelihood of another farm crisis is low due to steady farm income accumulation before the downturn, a stronger government safety net and an overall lower debt level in the agriculture sector.

Starting in 2004, several factors, including the ethanol boom and historically low interest rates, drove five consecutive years of double-digit growth in average farmland values. By 2008, average values were almost 70 percent higher than 2004, and by 2013, average values were over 230 percent higher than 2004 values. While they have declined three years in a row now, average values are still 173 percent higher than 2004.

The decline didn't come as a surprise for some — in November 2015, over 75 percent of ISU Land Value Survey respondents thought land values in their territory would continue to decline in 2016. The majority predicted the decline would be either less than 5 percent or between 5 and 10 percent, which is consistent with the 5.9 percent decrease reported by the 2016 ISU survey.

“Looking ahead, land values might continue to adjust downwards in the next year or two,” said Zhang. “This is consistent with the stagnant corn and soybean futures prices and potential rise in interest rates; however, many respondents to the ISU survey are hoping for the market to rebound in three or four years.”

Land Values by County. All 99 counties reported a drop in average land values this year. For the fourth year in a row, Scott and Decatur counties reported the highest and lowest farmland values, respectively. Decatur

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County reported a value per acre of \$3,443, a loss of \$71, or about 2 percent, from last year's report. Scott County reported a value of \$10,335, a decrease of \$583 per acre, or about 5.3 percent, close to the statewide average decline of 5.9 percent.

Plymouth and Sioux counties reported the largest dollar decrease in values, \$747 per acre, and Monona County reported the largest percent decline in values, 8.4 percent. Decatur County reported the smallest dollar decrease, \$70 per acre, and Decatur, Appanoose, Wayne, and Lucas counties all reported the smallest percent decrease in average values, at 2 percent.

Land Values by District. All nine districts reported a loss in average land values in 2016. The highest average land values were reported in the Northwest district, at \$9,243 per acre. The lowest average values were reported in the South Central district, at \$4,241 per acre.

The largest district-wide decrease in value was in West Central Iowa, which reported a drop of 8.7 percent, bringing farmland values there down to \$7,358 per acre. The smallest decrease was reported in the Southeast district, 2.6 percent, bringing values there to \$6716 per acre.

Values by Land Quality. Low-quality land in the Southwest and South Central districts were the only areas to show an increase in average values, reporting gains of 2.9 and 5.2 percent, respectively. Zhang says that the increase is due to strong recreational demand and high Conservation Reserve Program payments.

Statewide, low quality land declined the least, \$169 per acre, or 3.5 percent. Medium quality land declined \$422 per acre, or 5.9 percent. High quality land statewide declined the most per acre, losing \$606, or 6.5 percent, of its value. The statewide averages per acre for low, medium and high quality land are now \$4,665, \$6,705 and \$8,758, respectively.

Factors Influencing Land Values. The most common positive factors influencing land prices noted by survey respondents were low interest rates, strong crop yields, limited land supply and strong demand. The most commonly cited negative influences were lower commodity prices, high input prices, livestock losses, weak cash rental rates and a weakening global economy and stock market returns.

The ISU Land Value Survey was initiated in 1941, the first in the nation, and is sponsored annually by Iowa State University. The survey is typically conducted every November while the results are released every mid-December. Only the state average and the district averages are based directly on the ISU survey data. The county estimates are derived using a procedure that combines the ISU survey results with data from the U.S. Census of Agriculture.

The ISU Land Value Survey is based on reports by agricultural professionals knowledgeable of land market conditions such as appraisers, farm managers and agricultural lenders, and actual land sales. It is intended to provide information on general land value trends, geographical land price relationships, and factors influencing the Iowa land market. The 2016 survey is based on 518 usable responses providing 711 county land values estimates. Forty-eight percent of respondents answered the survey online.

CARD offers a new web portal at <http://www.card.iastate.edu/farmland/> that includes visualization tools, such as charts and interactive county maps, allowing users to examine land value trends over time at the county, district, and state level.