

The Paper

Our Town, Our Paper!



Laurens, Iowa



Vol. 10 No. 13

www.thepapernow.com

July 27, 2016

Local News

New House, New Hope

By: Flor Johnsen

Every morning, the sun pushes my feet to my favorite place: the seashore of Sogod, Tinambac, Cam. Sur, Philippines, my birthplace. Once, this shore sparkled in the sun like jewels, and was beautiful and clean. Many people long to experience and see this for themselves and enjoy the beauty of the sky, the sea, the sunrise, sunset, the shellfish and children swimming in that sea.

Now it is congested, and dilapidated shack houses cover its

beauty. The poor inhabit this land now. For these people, these are ordinary wonders but this is still their small paradise. This land connects them with the Creator in the midst of poverty and they show no regret. They are happy.

I continue to walk and jog near the seashore and look at these houses and people who live there, and say to myself: "I have to do something!"

"Reach for the Stars", with the help of coordinators, found an indigent family: Mariano and Nida Abunda, with six young children ranging from two to ten years old, with one on the way, living near this seashore.

The mother and four children sleep on the bamboo floor with holes so large that sometimes the feet of their



children fall into the holes, and the father and other children sleep on the ground with cardboard covering the ground beside their three-stone stove. The walls are patched with plastic grocery bags, tarp and some cardboard boxes.

This dwelling has no formal windows, but a small hole, covered with a rag, serves as their window. The roof leaks and part of it is covered with tarp and used tires to prevent storm winds from blowing it away.

The family has very few belongings: a piece of tattered blanket, half of a mat, two pillows, and two small boxes of clothes. They possess only five plates, four

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glasses, one cooking pot and one tea pot.

The children eat on the floor on cover of plastic containers. The father works on "padyak" (a bicycle with a side car) that transports people. Someone else owns this and the father rents it for 25 cents a day.

He makes \$3-4 per day, which is just enough to buy daily rations of rice, small amounts of fish, and gas for their lamp. The children don't even go to school because they can't afford it. Their ten year old daughter is only Grade 2.

The children ran around with no flip flops, and only wearing tops and no underwear. The mother takes care of these little ones, sometimes she does laundry, but not enough to cover the family needs.

The eldest daughter sometimes takes care of the little ones so the mother can work. With six children and the mother being pregnant, their income cannot suffice the needs of the family.

They must divide four pieces of

small fish among them. Oftentimes, they eat nothing for breakfast, except for some small pieces of bread their money can buy.

However, I noticed that the mother always had a smile on her face. I asked: "How can you live here?" This house is not suited for these children; they will get sick. I saw some wounds on some of their bodies, and applied some medicines.

I gave her fifty pesos (one dollar) to buy one kilo of rice, since the children were hungry and had nothing to eat that time I visited them.

"Well, Madam, it's ok, with God's love, we are alive and hoping someday we can have a nice place to live also." I could have shouted and told her: "This is your lucky day".

And she hugged me. "Really?"

"Yes, I replied.

"Yes, you will have a new house and we will get your family out of this place!" I told her, with her children looking at us, and we hugged each other and cried. "Let's get to work!"

Among the poor people in this area, RFTS chose this



family to award a housing project, relocated to a better place away from the sea. With the help of other RFTS recipients, volunteers, and some paid skilled workers, we finished the house in two weeks. It was a great feeling to help in the construction of the house.

"Look at Madam Flor, she is painting!"

"Don't worry about me, I am used to this", so they had to help also. We became their role model. The house measured 4/6 meters with nipa (palm leaves) as the native roof. This is better than a steel roof, because it's cooler. Also, the house had cemented walls and a cement floor. It has two bedrooms, a small living room, a tiled counter top, a spacious kitchen for the family to eat together, and a tiled bathroom.

RFTS also furnished the new home with a table and chairs. A "dirty" kitchen was added too. Their old house measured 2x3 meters,

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which was as big as our bathroom in the Philippines.

ABS CBN, Naga City TV channel, interviewed Flor Johnsen, RFTS founder and also the family recipient of the house. In addition, they also covered the house blessing with Pastor Serrano, as the officiant. They visited the old house and continued their interview and documentation.

"What will you do with all these old belongings" Mrs. Abunda was asked.

"I think we will just leave it here. We like to start new ones in our new house." Nida told the anchorwoman with a big smile on her face and tears of joy. During the house blessings, other recipients of the foundation, and members of Pamilyan Pinagpala: Blessed Families: helped cook and did other preparations for the event and were there for moral support, as a family. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship and food.

The family moved in June 25, 2016, after the house blessing. Mr. Mariano Abunda begged me and said "Madam Flor, can you please leave us



something to start with?"

I asked, "What is it?"

"We don't have enough clean plates, silverware, glasses, pots and pans, mats, blankets, mosquito nets, some underwear for the children, pail, and basin."

"Done!"

RFTS furnished these, and to his surprise, the house now had curtains. My brothers even tiled their counter top and bathroom and made their beds, tables, and chairs.

The family couldn't believe what they received. As they entered their new home, they became very emotional. Mrs. Abunda said with tears in her eyes, "This is really a surprise for me, I just can't believe this is real, am very thankful!"

They left most of their belongings to the old house as they wanted to start a new life, new things, new hope.

The ABS CBN anchorwoman Rizza Mostar asked the eldest daughter. "What room is your favorite? "My room, coz I never had one", she smiled.

With nice beds they won't sleep on the cold floor with holes anymore. Mosquitoes will



not bother them at night and they can sleep peacefully.

Other recipients of Pamilyan Pinagpala (Blessed Families) gathered together and witnessed this very memorable event: How the life of this family was transformed in just a few days. All of these recipients also received gifts from the foundation, like housing projects, but not as fancy as this house of Mariano. This is now the eighth housing project done by the foundation. The house cost \$1,200.00

With the help of local churches in Iowa, our families, and other private individuals, RFTS carries out these projects. Flor Johnsen, the founder, spent months in missionary work in the Philippines, April 12 and came back June 27, this year.

We did many projects such as: Operation toilet, giving away toilets to selected families, visited and handed out school supplies to scholars and selected poor students. We opened boxes of books and

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distributed them to school recipients, distributed flip flops, set up a feeding program, started vacation bible school, summer reading programs and reading seminar for teachers K-3rd grade, and helped in the family garden of Pamilyang Pinagpala (Blessed Families) that has now expanded to 20 families. We also initiated visiting and preaching to an orphanage, and more, and the highlight was the construction of this cemented house.

When I was asked by the ABS CBN anchorwoman why I did these things, I replied "I was once in their shoes, finishing high school with only one skirt and two blouses and I sold seashells and oysters to the neighborhood and I took in laundry. I see myself in them, and being blessed in America, I want to share my blessings also to my fellow countrymen in the Philippines, especially to those needy families in my birthplace and other places that we can help.

What do I get in return in giving

these gifts? All I want from them is to change their lifestyle, stay away from and stop the bad habits and vices that affect their lives and families. They have to change things in order to get ahead in life. Their changes should start within themselves. Showing good deeds to these kinds of people, gives them a chance to examine themselves for room to change, to grow, and that someone cares, and be thankful to God for the blessings. I believe they will change if they want to. We don't easily give up.

Many of the recipients of this project have initiated to improve what was given to them. The members work together, care for each other in times of need, and they spend time in the garden daily, teaching their children to plant and enjoy the harvest, attend meetings that pertain to them and their group. RFTS monitors their progress through dedicated coordinators. It is important for them to follow the rules of the foundation. "Discipline is a must. It's for the good of everyone." Flor added.

All recipients of these projects such as houses have to sign contracts to preserve the gifts and take care of them.

The Foundation awarded scholarships to Mr. Abunda's three children into a private Christian school. When asked by a teacher about their dream, this young girl of Mr. Abunda replied:

"I want to finish my education."

We all have dreams, just like this little girl of Mr. and Mrs. Abunda to finish her education, and the family's dream to have a nice house. Their dream house came true. Their little girl's dream to finish her education is a long way to go, but with a beautiful house to live in, she will have a good start in life and all the family members. Mr. Abunda, who has a bad habit of drinking, promised to change his lifestyle gradually and his wife is now happy and ready to plan for the family, especially their seventh and last child and everyone now enjoys their new home.

Where ever we walk on this planet, poor people always exist around us, we cannot help all of them, but at least we can try to help lighten the burden of a few. This makes our lives more meaningful to live in this world, not just for ourselves, but for others. I am not sure where my feet will take me again in the future, but for sure "Reach for the Stars" will continue to reach out to our "stars" the poor, especially the children in need, to help them shine also. And in all we do, we give God the glory!

"Reach for the Stars Foundation" welcomes any donations to help our ministry in the Philippines. RFTS is a 501 (c) (3), any donation is tax deductible. RFTS has been active for 5 years now.

To donate: please contact Flor Johnsen, 518 Bissell Street, Laurens, Iowa, 50554, (712) 841-4911. Check our site in Facebook 'Operaton Tsinelas - Reach for the Stars'. Thank you.



Second Sunday at Fonda Arts Center

The Fonda Arts Center presents another enjoyable afternoon of music as August's Second Sunday rolls around! Larry Heschke and Randy Schmitt will keep you entertained with a musical "back and forth", as the curtain goes up on "Two Men & Their Music". Randy is well known for his unstructured adeptness on the piano and his theatrical wit, whereas, Larry has a singing voice loaded with emotion.

All this happening on Sunday, August 14th, beginning at 2 p.m., at the Fonda Arts Center, located on the Northwest corner of Fourth & Main in Fonda. As always, free admission, free refreshments! Everyone is welcome!

*JH Design
Bridal
Registry*

*Jena Hopkins &
Kristopher Hauswirth
Wedding - August 12*

Come & Go Baby Shower

There will be a Come and Go Baby Shower for Shelby (Heuton) Stafford on August 6th from 9-11AM at the Cornerstone Room at West Iowa Bank, 202 West Main Street, Laurens.

Shelby and her husband Matt are expecting a little girl, and they are registered at Target.

FOR SALE:

There is a chain link fence for sale by Laurens-Marathon CSD. Please contact Jim Hodgell or Troy Oehlertz at 712-841-5000 for more information.

ATTENTION: **RESIDENTIAL REMODELING CONTRACTORS**

The City of Laurens is seeking qualified general contractors to bid on remodeling jobs within the City. The work is being financed through a grant from the Iowa Economic Development Authority. Typical repairs may include re-roofing, re-siding, foundation repair, window/door repair and/or replacement, painting, electrical and mechanical work.

No person will be excluded from the opportunity to submit bids on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, handicap, political affiliation, citizenship, or family status.

Minority and women contractors are encouraged to participate. Contractors with Certifications of training in Lead-Safe Work Practices will be required on some projects.

Open Houses for the two projects will be held on July 29, 2016 with Bid Letting on August 9, 2016.

Interested contractors should contact:

Simmering-Cory, Inc.
PO Box 141
Clear Lake, IA 50428
641-357-7554
or Laurens City Hall.

E.O.E.

MakerSpace at Laurens Public Library

Patrons of all ages, but especially the youngsters, have enjoyed expanding their creativity thanks to the new MakerSpace at the Laurens Public Library this summer. They have made imaginative creations using recycled items such as egg cartons, cardboard tubes, plastic lids and scrap mat board; combining them using paper, glue, scissors, staples and tape (colored masking tape is definitely the favorite!) The MakerSpace equipment and organizing items were purchased with a grant from the Pocahontas County Foundation.



At the Library with Glenda Mulder July 27, 2016

Our digital archives have recently been updated and they have a new home. You can now search the archives of the Laurens Sun from 1885 to 2014, as well as our town's Centennial book, "Laurens 100" from any device with Internet access. In this new format, no password is necessary! Here's the new address: <http://laurens.advantage-preservation.com/> There is also a link on our library website if that's easier for you. I also recently discovered that "The pioneer history of Pocahontas County, Iowa: from the time of its earliest settlement to the present time" by Flickinger is online a couple different places in a digital format. Look for the links to that on our webpage also.

We will have a new nonfiction book available August 2nd that I know we

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won't be able to keep on the shelves. It's *The Happiness Dare: Pursuing Your Heart's Deepest, Holiest, and Most Vulnerable Desire* by Jennifer Dukes Lee. This book is difficult to pigeon-hole, but I've seen it referenced in the "Inspirational Nonfiction" and "Christian Living" categories. I've requested a visit from this Marathon native when her schedule allows. If you've read her first book, *Love Idol*, you know you'll just have to read this one! Contact the Library to get on the list!

New selections in our fiction department include: *Time of Torment* by John Connolly, *Sweet Tomorrows* by Debbie Macomber, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* by J. K. Rowling, *Smooth Operator* by Stuart Woods, *Bullseye* by James Patterson, *We Are All Made of Stars* by Rowan Coleman, *Dark Matter* by Blake Crouch, *Killer Look* by Linda Fairstein, *Sunday Kind of Love* by Dorothy Garlock and *Truly, Madly, Guilty* by Liane Moriarty.

Today (Wednesday) is the last day of our scheduled Summer Reading

programs, so we booked Pockets Full of Fun Puppets to present a show, followed by a puppet-making workshop. If last year is any clue, it will be a crazy/fun day! BUT we've had so much fun with our Summer Reading that we are not ready to be done yet! We will continue our story times every Wednesday at 1:30 for the rest of the summer!

Laurens native Madyson Main will be here Saturday, August 6th at 10 am with a program detailing her trip in which she worked with children with special needs in an orphanage in Romania. I am so looking forward to hearing about her life changing experience! I don't think we've had a Saturday morning program before, so this could be an interesting experiment!

- LegoMania is all day Friday, every Friday!
- Book Club is 4th Monday of every month at 7 pm
- Romania by Madyson Main – August 6 at 10 am
- Meet Your Pocahontas County Candidates October 3

A colorful graphic with the words "back to School" in a playful, multi-colored font. The word "back" is in blue, "to" is in red, and "School" is in green and blue. There are yellow rays emanating from the text. Below the text are several colorful pencils and a stack of books.

**LAURENS-MARATHON
2016-2017**

SCHOOL REGISTRATION

Wednesday, August 3, 2016

8:00 AM - 7:00 PM

***Registration forms are also
available on the school website***



**Special for
Friday, July 29th
is homemade
lasagna or order off
our full menu!
Serving begins at
5 p.m. Bring a friend
and enjoy a great
meal with us!**



The Laurens Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the following businesses for sponsoring the Saturday evening band:

- * NAPA * Positech * Bottom Line * Richardson's Service * The Paper
- * Laurens Plumbing * Highway 10 Hardware * Cuts to Dye For
- * Pengo * West Iowa Bank * Fisher Hydraulics * Woodley Insurance
- * Laurens Food Pride * Laurens Lounge and Lanes * Ahlers Enterprises

Plus a HUGE THANK YOU to all the volunteers who made the Summer Celebration a big success!



**Midwest Chow
Wagon Food Truck**

Monday-Friday
11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Hwy 10 Hardware Lot
Find our daily specials
on Facebook or on
Channel 2!

Bridal Shower

Bridal Shower honoring Jessica Hubbell, fiancé of Jessie Koenig, Saturday, August 6 at 10 AM at the Shores at Five Island Iowa Trust and Savings Bank Community Center, 14 N Lawler St., Emmetsburg, IA 50536. The couple is registered at Target and Amazon.com.



Laurens 712-841-4930
Spirit Lake 712-336-9111
Toll Free 877-849-1756

A Lesson in Back-to-School Savings during Iowa's Tax-free Weekend

Iowans have a once-a-year opportunity Aug. 5-6 to expand student wardrobes without paying state and local sales tax. This means consumers will save at least \$6 on every \$100 they spend for clothing and shoes.

“With the average family spending \$600 on back-to-school items, that’s almost as much as people spend for the winter holidays,” says Carol Ehlers, a human sciences specialist in family finance with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. “Many households set aside money year round to help cover their holiday expenses, but back-to-school time always seems to sneak up on us – and adds up quickly.”

Iowa's annual sales tax holiday kicks off at 12:01 a.m. Friday, Aug. 5 and runs through midnight Saturday, Aug. 6. Although the two-day event falls during the back-to-school shopping season, the exemption applies only to certain apparel and footwear priced less than \$100.

Waived on such items are the state sales tax of 6 percent and any local option sales tax. Many municipalities have a separate 1 percent sales taxes for the city and school district. During the sales tax holiday, a shopper could save up to 7 percent,

or approximately \$7 on an item that is less than \$100, Ehlers explained. The tax-exempt savings applies only to clothing items priced under \$100 and shoes priced under \$100. Items that are exempt from Iowa's tax free weekend include jewelry, watches and watchbands, umbrellas, and sports equipment such as skis, swim fins, roller blades and skates. Clothing or footwear designed specifically for athletic use also is exempt.

Smart Shopping Tips for Iowa's Tax Free Weekend. Back-to-school shopping can be a great beginning to an exciting new school year for students. With good planning, families can purchase what they need without breaking the bank. Ehlers suggests that Iowans take full advantage of Iowa's tax free weekend by applying the following tips:

1. Plan Ahead. Plan ahead for major clothing and shoe purchases during Iowa's state tax free weekend event. The tax-free exemption only applies to purchasing clothing and shoes during that first weekend of August.

“Giving each student a chance to inventory what they can start school with and share their expectations, allows family members to better plan,” said Ehlers. “Everyone may not get exactly what they want, but talking about it in advance will help set a positive tone.” Ehlers also suggests discussing what the family can realistically afford. Parents should decide how much the family can set aside for school shopping. Consider using the tax-free holiday time to

purchase not just what is needed right now, but items that children will need over the next several months.

“In addition, avoid the temptation to use credit cards unless you are able to pay them off in full each month,” Ehlers said.

2. Set a Budget and Stick To It. Be careful not to overspend just because the tax free weekend is occurring. According to the National Retail Federation, the average family with students in kindergarten through 12th grade will spend \$630.36 on electronics, apparel and other school items. Ehlers suggests that Iowans review what they spent last year for clothing and shoes to create their own spending plan.

“Let students make decisions within the amount of money they are allotted. If they have more ‘wants’ than the family budget can afford, they may need to use some of their own money or earn money from odd jobs to make up the difference,” explained Ehlers. “Allowing students to be a part of these decisions gives them a chance to learn to manage money wisely.”

3. Compare Prices. “Use the sales circulars from your newspaper to compare prices on the items you wish to buy. Visit websites of several stores where you usually shop. If you tend to buy your kids' jeans or sneakers at national retail outlets, visit their websites during tax free week to find out which store is offering the better deal,” Ehlers says. “Some stores may be willing to match the price offered

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in a competitor's advertisement. Be sure to keep your receipts in case you need to return something or until the warranty expires for more expensive items."

4. Know the Rules and Expect a Busy Shopping Weekend. The Iowa Legislature approved the tax holiday in 2000 to help boost the economy and give consumers a break. Previous tax-free holidays have been shown to pump up sales for everyone from big-box retailers to mom-and-pop shops. Some merchants report double-digit increases in sales, compared to a typical August weekend.

"Stores have been stocking back-to-school items for nearly a month, but this tax exempt weekend will be the busiest. Know the rules to make the most of your purchase decisions," Ehlers said.

- No sales tax, including local option sales tax, will be collected on sales of an article of clothing or footwear having a selling price less than \$100.00.

- The exemption does not apply in any way to the price of an item selling for \$100.00 or more.

- The exemption applies to each article priced under \$100.00 regardless of how many items are sold on the same invoice to a customer.

- For more information and a complete list of what's included in the tax holiday, visit the state's website at <https://tax.iowa.gov/iowas-annual-sales-tax-holiday>.

- Get a free booklet: "Planning to \$tay Ahead" <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/5523>.

Senator Chuck Grassley Visits Positech

Senator Chuck Grassley recently visited Positech Corporation of Laurens. Pictured is Mike Olson of Positech with Senator Grassley and Rod Johnson, Mayor of Laurens with Sention Grassley.



The Paper

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

Phone:
(712) 841-2684

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(712) 841-4662

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www.thepapernow.com

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When the heat index tops 100 degrees, the Laurens Parks and Rec Board says that means the pool is open for everyone free of charge. With the heat wave last week, the pool offered free swimming Wednesday through Friday.

Many families took advantage of the pool to cool off. Attendance on Wednesday was 119 swimmers and Thursday 100 swimmers. Can you imagine a day with 100+ degree temperatures and nowhere to cool off? Please help keep a splash in Laurens!

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

**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, July 27

1:00 p.m. - Willing Workers

Thursday, July 28

2:00 p.m. - Coffee with Pastor

Friday, July 29

7:00 - p.m. AA

Sunday, July 31

9:30 a.m. -Worship

10:30 a.m. - Coffee Fellowship: Hosts:
Bonnie and Rich Newgard

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**This Week
at Bethany
Lutheran**

Sunday: July 31, 2016

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

9:00 AM ~ Worship

Special Congregational Mtg. immediately
after worship

10:00 AM ~ Coffee Fellowship

Tuesday: August 2, 2016

10:00 AM ~ Coffee Time

5:00 PM ~ W/M Mtg.

7:00 PM ~ Hand Bell Rehearsal

*Worship, Love, Accept- Together in
Christ's Name*



**This Week at
Laurens United
Methodist Church**

Fri., July 29th

Men's Bible Study @ 7 a.m.

Sun., July 31st

Adult Sunday School @ 8:30 a.m.

Worship @ 9:30 a.m.

Fellowship Coffee @ 10:30 a.m.

Mon., Aug. 1st

Quilt Club meet here at LUMC @ 7 p.m.

Fri., Aug. 5th

Men's Bible Study @ 7 a.m.

Sat., Aug. 6th

United Methodist Men's meeting @ 7 a.m.



Sacred Heart Church Laurens

Pastor ~ Father Francis Makwinja

Weekday Mass : Friday, 8:00 AM

Weekend Mass: Sunday, 8:30 AM (July - October)

Cluster Parishes

St. Joseph Catholic Church, Sioux Rapids

Weekday Mass: (Monday&Wednesday), 8:00 AM

Weekend Mass: Saturday, 5:00 PM (July – October)

St. Louis Catholic Church, Royal

Weekday Mass: (Tuesday & Thursday), 8:00 AM

Weekend Mass: Sunday, 10:30 AM (July-October)



Farm Grain Truck Clinic

ISU Extension and Outreach Pocahontas County will be holding a Farm Grain Truck Clinic on August 2, 2016 at the Pocahontas Fairground. Grain Truck Maintenance and regulations will be discussed during the clinic. To register, please call the Pocahontas County Extension and Outreach Office at 712-335-3103 or email hfrerk@iastate.edu.

2016 Pocahontas County Fair Beef Carcass Meeting

All 4-H and FFA members, families and anyone interested in the results of the beef carcass contest are encouraged to attend this supper meeting Tuesday, August 2, 6:30 p.m. at the ISU Extension and Outreach Pocahontas County Office. This is a free event, but we do ask that you register no later than August 1 by calling 712-335-3103.

Add Family Meetings to Weekly Routine

As August arrives, families start to think about “back to school” routines. Dr. David Brown, an Iowa State University Extension and Outreach human sciences specialist, suggests making family meetings a routine all year long.

Weekly family meetings can help busy families keep communication lines open, said Brown who specializes in family life issues and is a Licensed Marital and Family Therapist.

“As children get older, their schedules get more complicated. They juggle school, sports, afterschool activities and sometimes a part time job. Both children and parents benefit from family meetings where they can review all their schedules and reflect on their school or work successes,” Brown said.

Schedule the family meeting at a time when all family members are available and not tired or otherwise distracted. Keep the meeting brief and begin with family compliments or praise for each and every member of the family. Celebrating family successes is important for building continued self-confidence.

The family meeting also is a place to learn problem solving skills. According to Dr. Brown, problem solving is a protective factor that can be an asset in school or work settings. Listening, taking turns talking and sharing, and hearing other family members’ opinions are additional benefits of planned family meetings.

Family meetings also are a time to plan for fun. “Spend some time discussing everyone’s ideas for spending quality time together or even planning the next family vacation. Take turns letting each person select an activity. If a suggested activity has a financial cost, discuss the family budget and make a group decision based on your family finances,” Brown said.

Use the month of August to schedule your weekly family meetings and begin this new school year with success, fun and open communication.

Farmland Leasing Meetings Provide Valuable Information

***Meetings help tenants and
land owners understand
current market conditions and
make informed decisions***

With over half of Iowa's farmland under some form of lease agreement, leasing is a key issue for the state's tenants and landowners to understand. Because of this prominence, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach has made leasing a key component to its educational efforts.

After a peak in the statewide average for cash rents on cropland acres of \$270 in 2013, cash rents have been slowly declining. Even with prices down, an estimated \$3.6 billion changed hands through rental agreements in 2015.

The decline in cash rent prices has not decreased to the same degree as agricultural revenues. Because of this there is increased pressure on farm operations with a large portion of their acres under a rental agreement. ISU Extension and Outreach farm management specialists provide an unbiased look at the current farm situation for all parties involved in farmland lease agreements.

ISU Extension and Outreach will hold 2016 Farmland Leasing Meeting sessions during the months

of July and August across Iowa. This year's meetings will focus on land values and cash rent trends, cost of production, methods for determining a rental rate, legislative updates regarding leases and communicating with tenants or landlords.

The 2.5 to 3-hour workshop is designed to assist landowners, farm tenants and other agri-business professionals with current issues related to farmland ownership, management and leasing arrangements. Attendees will gain a better understanding of factors driving next year's rents such as market trends and input costs.

A 100-page workbook is provided for the programs, with resources regarding land leasing agreements such as surveys, sample written lease agreements and termination forms along with many other publications.

The leasing meetings being held across Iowa are facilitated by farm management specialists with ISU Extension and Outreach. A listing of county extension offices hosting the meetings is available on the following website: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/info/meetings.html>

For registration information, contact local ISU Extension and Outreach county offices. Pre-registration is encouraged as an additional \$5 fee may be added if registering less than two calendar days before the meeting date.

The Ag Decision Maker leasing section also provides useful materials for negotiating leases, information on various types of leases, lease forms, and newly updated Decision Tools.

Because of leasing's importance in the ag economy, ISU Extension

and Outreach held over 80 meetings focused on farm leasing during the summer of 2015 and will do so again over the coming weeks. Over 1,800 people participated in the meetings last year. ISU Extension and Outreach online resources were also extensively used, with the ISU Cash Rent Survey having 164,234 downloads and example cash lease forms being downloaded 138,820 times.

Six months after the 2015 meetings concluded, attendees were surveyed in an effort to gain additional insight into rental markets and trends. The farm management team found that 21 percent of attendees participated to gain information for communicating with other parties involved in the rental agreement. Additionally, 95 percent said they were happy with the effectiveness of the leasing programing being done by ISU Extension and Outreach.

The data collected showed on-going satisfaction with 61 percent of respondents having attended a farmland leasing meeting in a prior year, with 44 percent attending multiple times in the past.

The survey asked for changes attendees planned to make in their lease agreements. Nearly one third – 30 percent – of respondents said they planned to decrease rent. Nine percent decided to move from an oral lease to a written lease agreement while nine percent also pledged to implement new conservation strategies.

LAURENS-MARATHON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ~ 2016-2017 ~ SCHOOL SUPPLIES

L-M PRESCHOOL

- (1) Pair of Velcro Shoes for gym
 - (1) Full-sized Book Bag
 - (1) Extra set of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, & socks)
- PLEASE MARK EACH INDIVIDUAL ITEM WITH CHILD'S NAME
(CLOTHING ALSO)

KINDERGARTEN

- (1) Pair of P.E. Tennis Shoes
 - (10) #2 Pencils (NO mechanical pencils)
 - (2) Large Erasers
 - (3) Boxes of Kleenex (200 count)
 - (2) Fine point dry erase markers
 - (1) Highlighter
 - (1) Bottle of glue
 - (1) Box of Crayons (No more than 24 count)
 - (1) Pencil box
- Book Bag
Scissors
- PLEASE MARK EACH INDIVIDUAL ITEM WITH CHILD'S NAME
(CLOTHING ALSO)

FIRST GRADE

- Pencil Box (No bigger than about 6" x 9")
 - (3) Double-Pocket Folders (with NO fasteners and NO plastic folders)
 - (20) #2 Pencils (NO mechanical pencils)
 - (6) Large Erasers
 - (2) Large Boxes of Kleenex (200 Count)
 - (2) Glue Sticks
 - (2) - 8 oz. Bottles School White Glue
 - (1) - 7.5" x 10" Canvas Zipper Bag with Clear Front
 - (1) Pair of Tennis Shoes for P.E.
 - (4) Dry erase markers
 - (1) Box quart size Ziploc bags
 - (2) Wide-lined Spiral Notebooks
- Crayons - any size
Markers
Book Bag
Scissors
- PLEASE MARK EACH INDIVIDUAL ITEM WITH CHILD'S NAME
(CLOTHING ALSO)

SECOND GRADE

- (20) #2 Pencils
 - (4) Medium or Large Erasers
 - (2) Bottles of White Glue
 - (4) Glue Sticks
 - (4) Dry Erase markers & 1 SOCK (To use as an eraser and store the dry
 - (3) Double Pocket Folders
 - (3) Large Boxes Kleenex
 - 1 pair of tennis shoes for P.E.
 - (1) Box of quart-sized Ziploc bags
- Wide-Lines spiral notebooks
Supply Box (No bigger than about 6"x9")
- (2) Pack of Crayons (24 Count)
- Scissors
(1-2) Markers "Basic/Normal Colors"
Book Bag (Bring Daily)
- PLEASE MARK ALL ITEMS WITH CHILD'S NAME
(CLOTHING ALSO)

THIRD GRADE

- (1) Backpack
- (1) Box of gallon size ziplock baggies
- (2) Pink erasers

- (1) Ruler
 - (1) Pack of 4 Glue Sticks
 - (3) Boxes of 12 count pencils
 - (4) Wide-lined spiral notebooks
 - (1) Scissors
 - (6) Double pocket folders
 - (3) Large boxes of tissues (200 count)
 - (1) Pencil case or box
 - (2) Boxes of 24 count crayons
 - (1) Pair of tennis shoes for PE
 - (1) Box of markers
 - (1) Four pack of dry-erase markers
 - (1) Pair of headphones or earbuds for iPads*must have!
 - (1) Composition Notebook*must have!
 - (1) 1.5 inch three ring binder
- PLEASE MARK EACH INDIVIDUAL ITEM WITH CHILD'S NAME
(CLOTHING ALSO)

FOURTH GRADE

- (20) #2 Pencils (not mechanical)
 - (1) Large Eraser
 - (4) Dry erase markers
- Zipper Case for Pencils
Box of Colors (24 count)
- (4) Spiral Notebooks (wide-lined)
 - (6) Double-Pocket Folders (no fasteners)
or 1 Expandable Folder and (2) Pocket Folders
 - (1) Bottle Glue or (2) Glue Sticks
 - (2-3) Large Boxes of Kleenex
 - (1) Pair of Tennis Shoes for P.E.
- Scissors
Markers (optional)
Colored Pencils (optional)
Assignment Notebook (\$2.00 Purchased at Registration)
Students must have this one!
**NO Trapper Keepers Please!
- PLEASE MARK ALL ITEMS WITH CHILD'S NAME (CLOTHING ALSO)

FIFTH GRADE

- (2) 3-Ring Binder for Iowa History (1.5 inches)
 - (25) Plastic sleeves to put inside an Iowa History binder
 - (1) Composition Notebook
 - (5) Spiral Notebooks (red, blue, green, yellow, purple)
 - (4) Highlighters (4 different colors)
 - (4) Dry erase markers & 1 SOCK (To use as an eraser and to store the dry erase markers
 - (3) Large Box of Kleenex
 - (1) 1 box of quart-sized Zip-loc baggies
 - (5) Double-Pocket Folders w/brads (colors: r, b, gr, y, p)
 - (1) Bottle of White Glue or Glue Stick
 - (1) 12" Ruler
 - (1) Correcting Pen (any color)
 - (1) Box of Crayons (no larger than 24 count)
 - (1) Set of Markers
- Colored Pencils (optional)
Scissors
(20) #2 Pencils (and/or mechanical pencils)
Zipper Case for Pencils
Large Eraser
- (1) Pair of Tennis Shoes for P.E.
 - (1) container of disinfecting wipes
- Assignment Notebook (\$2.00 Purchased at Registration)
Students must have this one!
**No Trapper Keepers
- PLEASE MARK ALL ITEMS WITH CHILD'S NAME (CLOTHING ALSO)

City Council Minutes

The Laurens City Council met in regular session at the Municipal Building at 5:00 pm, July 18, 2016. Mayor Rod Johnson called the meeting to order. Present were Council Members Jean Swanson, Julie Potter, Ken Kunickis and Rich Newgard; City Manager, Barbara Smith; Public Works Director, Julian Johnsen; City Attorney, Ann Beneke; and Police Chief, Chris Toner. Council member Sid Enockson was absent.

Kunickis motioned to approve the consent agenda consisting of the agenda, minutes from the July 5, 2016, meeting and the list of claims; seconded by Swanson. Ayes all; motion carried.

CLAIMS	07-18-16		
ACCO		CHEMICALS	4,429.50
AFLAC		INSURANCE	633.70
AIRGAS		SUPPLIES	29.20
ARAMARK		SUPPLIES	335.46
FIDELITY		INSURANCE	173.04
BARB SMITH		MILEAGE	166.21
CHRIS TONER		POSTAGE	7.57
CONNECTIONS		INSURANCE	45.22
DELTA DENTAL		INSURANCE	804.00
ECHO GROUP		AUTO DIALER	35.65
FIRST COOP		CHEMICALS	212.55
FUCHS CONSTRUCTION		STREET REPAIRS	9,965.00
GRAHAM TIRE		TIRES	131.00
IDNR		DUES	148.44
INSIGHT		IT	306.28
IRS		TAXES	5,991.09
IA ONE CALL		LOCATES	14.00
JCL SOLUTIONS		SUPPLIES	173.60
JERRY DEAN		NUISANCE MOWING	350.00
JOHN DEERE		PARTS	373.72
JULIE POTTER		MILEAGE	17.28
LAURENS COUNTRY CLUB		CONCESSIONS	76.16
LAURENS EQUIPMENT		PARTS	363.66
LAURENS FOOD PRIDE		SUPPLIES	278.48
LAURENS HOUSE OF PRINT		PAPER	95.00
LAURENS PLUMBING		REPAIRS	474.46
LAURENS STATE BANK		TRUCK PAYMENT	1,525.42
LAURENS SUN		PUBLICATIONS	193.45
MET		TESTING	105.00
MARTIN PEST CONTROL		MOSQUITO CONTROL	530.00
MIDAS COUNCIL OF GOVT		DUES	1,120.75
MIKE WORKMAN		REFUND	45.00
NEWGARD AUTO		PARTS	94.49
POC CO PHYS RECRUIT		RECRUITMENT	4,250.00
POC CO RECORDER		WELTY PROPERTY	22.00
POC CO SOLID WASTE		LANDFILL FEES	5,415.35
PRIME BENEFITS		INSURANCE	96.25
PRO COOP		FUEL	3,696.42
R B LUMBER		SUPPLIES	122.73
SANTANDER LEASING		STREET SWEEPER	3,390.81
SHAMROCK RECYCLE		RECYCLING	1,606.81
THE MACHINE SHOP		R V PARK POST	93.01
VERIZON WIRELESS		COMMUNICATIONS	551.31
WELLMARK		INSURANCE	7,451.53
WEX BANKS		FUEL	474.20
WIGEN WATER		EQUIP MAINT	110.63
WOODLEY INSURANCE		INSURANCE	3,605.50
WRITTEN IN STONE		MEMORY LANE	180.00
		TOTAL	<u>60,310.93</u>
	PAYROLL		7/5/2016
	001	GENERAL	10,557.31
	210	ROAD USE TAX	1,500.15
	600	WATER	2,282.27
	610	SEWER	1,888.56
	670	GARBAGE	2,177.12
		TOTAL	<u>18,405.41</u>
			7/6/2016
	001	GENERAL	<u>3,101.85</u>
		PAID TOTAL	<u>81,818.19</u>

BY FUND		
001	GENERAL	35,433.85
110	ROAD USE TAX	3,369.72
112	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	4,759.68
171	SISTER CITY	25.00
175	MEMORY LANE	180.00
176	HOMETOWN PRIDE	19.05
200	DEBT SERVICE	3,390.81
600	WATER	10,173.73
610	SEWER	5,652.98
670	GARBAGE	13,843.37
745	STORM WATER	4,970.00
TOTAL BY FUND		<u>81,818.19</u>

Mayor Johnson opened the public hearing on the sale of properties located at 202 S 4th Street and 416 Nelson Street at 5:01 pm. There being no written or oral objections to the sale of these properties, Mayor Johnson closed the public hearing at 5:02 pm.

Newgard motioned to approve Resolution 28-16, Sale of Real Estate (202 S 4th Street) to Larry and Lois White for the sum of \$500; seconded by Kunickis. Roll call vote: ayes all; motion carried.

Swanson motioned to approve Resolution 29-16, Transfer of Funds for FY 16; seconded by Kunickis. Roll call vote: ayes all; motion carried.

Potter motioned to approve Resolution 30-16, Sale of Real Estate (416 Nelson Street) to Ben and Holly Storms for the sum of \$1; seconded by Swanson. Roll call vote: ayes all; motion carried.

The council indicated that the letter notifying solid waste customers that corrugated cardboard would no longer be picked up as solid waste as of September 1 was fine. This letter is to be included with utility bills that go out in July.

During city staff reports, discussion took place about allowing ATVs and golf carts on the streets of Laurens. This item is on the agenda for the August 1 meeting.

Potter motioned to adjourn at 5:20 pm; seconded by Kunickis. Ayes all; motion carried.

Rod Johnson, Mayor

Barbara Smith, City Clerk