

The Paper

Our Town, Our Paper!



Laurens, Iowa



Vol. 19 No. 32

www.thepapernow.com

May 7, 2025

Local News

Let's Get Growing! Community Garden Planting Day Set for May 8 in Pocahontas

Iowa State Extension and Outreach asks community members to roll up their sleeves and help plant the Upper Des Moines Opportunity Food Pantry Community Garden during a special Community Garden Planting Day on Thursday, May 8, from 3:30 to 5:00 PM, at the UDMO-Food Pantry, 406 NW 7th Street in Pocahontas.

This event is a great opportunity for residents of all ages to come together, dig in the dirt, and contribute to a garden that will provide fresh, healthy produce to families in need throughout the growing season.

"No gardening experience is necessary," says organizer Erica. "Just bring your enthusiasm! We'll provide the tools, gloves, and even refreshments."

Volunteers will help plant tomatoes, peppers, green beans, and more — all destined to support local food pantry clients. The community garden is a collaborative effort to promote food security, encourage hands-on learning, and build stronger neighborhood connections.

"This is a fun, feel-good way to make a difference," adds Tiffany, co-organizer. "Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just want to help out, you're welcome to join us."

All ages are encouraged to attend. Children, families, and individuals can all enjoy the fresh air while helping build a more sustainable and supportive community.

For more information, contact Erica at (712) 335-3103 or Tiffany at (712) 335-3335.

Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc.

LET'S GET GROWING!
JOIN US FOR COMMUNITY GARDEN PLANTING DAY

Come dig in the dirt, connect with neighbors, and help grow food for our community!

Date: Thursday, May 8
Time: 3:30-5
Location: UDMO-Food Pantry
406 NW 7th St Pocahontas

No gardening experience needed — just bring your enthusiasm! Tools, gloves, and refreshments will be provided. Together, we'll plant tomatoes, peppers, green beans, and more. Let's build something beautiful and bountiful — for everyone!

For more info, contact:
Erica at 335-3103 or Tiffany at 335-3335

All ages welcome! Let's grow together!

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. For the full non-discrimination statement or accommodation inquiries, go to www.extension.iastate.edu/legal.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

Lessons of the Holocaust

The atmosphere was electric while Brad Wilkening was speaking about the Lessons of Holocaust at the Laurens Public Library. He emphasized that we as individuals need to make time on a daily basis to improve ourselves in all aspects - mentally, spiritually, and physically.

Speaking to a crowd with so many familiar faces seemed to bring out the best in Brad. (Mr. Wilkening was a MS History teacher at L-M for 24 years)

Other important messages from his program include:

- Don't let hate win. Don't let it divide us. We can disagree without being disagreeable. We need to find a way to meet in the middle.
- Learning history often makes us uncomfortable. That is good, because then we learn the lesson not to repeat it.



The graphic features a green background with white flowers and butterflies. The word "Spring" is written in a large, cursive font. Below it, "INTO THE" is in small letters, followed by "DONOR CHAIR" in large blue letters, "LAURENS COMMUNITY" in smaller blue letters, and "BLOOD DRIVE" in large red letters. The LifeServe logo is in the top right corner.

United Methodist Church

Thursday, May 22, 2025

1:00 PM - 6:00 PM (Extended Hours)

201 West Main Street | Laurens



APPOINTMENTS ARE ENCOURAGED

Text: LIFESERVE to 999-777 | Call: 800.287.4903 | Visit: lifeservebloodcenter.org



The LifeServe logo is on the left, featuring a stylized 'S' in red and blue. To its right is the slogan "YOUR BLOOD. YOUR HOSPITAL. YOUR NEIGHBORS." in blue and red text.

80th Birthday!

Bonnie Newgard will be celebrating her 80th birthday on May 22!

Bonnie was a part of many of our important moments in life through her work at Town & Country Floral. Let's make her day special with birthday wishes.

Cards can reach Bonnie at: 303 Oak St, Laurens, IA 50554

4-H Animal Identification Deadline

The Pocahontas County Fair will be held from July 17 to July 21. All 4-H members intending to exhibit animals must identify their animals in their 4H Online account by May 15. Please note that missing this deadline will result in being unable to show at the fair.

For any questions or assistance, please reach out to Ashlie at the ISU Extension and Outreach Pocahontas County at 712-335-3103.

Laurens Women's Club to Meet

The Laurens Women's Club will meet for a May Breakfast on Friday, May 9 at 9:30 a.m. at Bethany Lutheran Church.

Vani Ahlers will present the program about "Dumpster Divas". The ladies of Bethany Lutheran Church will be serving the breakfast.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and the National Council for Skin Cancer Prevention

To encourage everyone to take small steps for sun safety, the Pocahontas County Extension Office has partnered with the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention and its broad coalition of member organizations to designate the Friday before Memorial Day as "Don't Fry Day". This campaign stresses the importance of skin cancer awareness and reminds everyone to protect their skin while enjoying the outdoors.

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the nation, with almost 5.5 million cases diagnosed in Americans each year – more than breast, colon, lung and prostate cancers combined. In fact, 1 out of every 5 Americans will be diagnosed with some form of skin cancer in their lifetime.

"Don't Fry Day is the perfect way to jump start the summer holiday," says Erica Svuba, Marketing and Program Coordinator. "We are proud to partner with the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention and the other esteemed coalition members to get this life-saving message front and center."

Skin cancer is highly preventable. Over 90% of all skin cancer is caused by exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun or indoor tanning devices. Americans can dramatically reduce their risk of skin cancer by:

- Avoiding sunburns and tanning – no tan is a safe tan,
- Generously applying sunscreen (and remembering to reapply every two hours),
- Wearing sun-protective clothing,
- Seeking shade during peak times of the day (typically 10am-4pm), and
- Using extra caution near water, snow, sand, and other reflective surfaces.

About Don't Fry Day: "Don't Fry Day," is a public awareness campaign that aims to reduce the number of new skin cancer diagnoses by promoting sun safety and encouraging people to protect their skin while enjoying the outdoors. National Council members represent the nation's premiere physicians, researchers, clinicians and advocates for skin cancer prevention.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach builds a strong Iowa by engaging all Iowans in research, education, and extension experiences to address current and emerging real-life challenges. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Erica Svuba, esvuba@iastate.edu or 712-335-3103

At the Library
with Glenda Mulder
May 7, 2025

Only two more Tot Times left in this cycle. They are tonight, Wednesday, May 7 and Monday May 19 at 5:30 p.m. Grab a little and join the fun of songs, stories, a craft and bubbles which are all geared for our youngest of patrons. After these dates we will take a break from evening Tot Times to gear up for our Summer Reading!

May Book Club Choice is *The Book of Lost Friends* by Lisa Wingate. We have read books from this author before and really enjoyed them. Our catalog describes the book this way, "A modern-day teacher discovers the story of three Reconstruction-era young women--freed slave Hannie, impoverished plantation heiress Lavinia, and Lavinia's Creole half-sister Juneau Jane--traveling from Louisiana to Texas in 1875, and how it connects to her own students' lives." Book Club will be a week earlier than normal because of the Memorial Day holiday. Pick up a copy and plan to join us Monday, May 19 at 7 p.m.

I've been working on a fun new project. Joyce Rigby's daughter Leigh contacted the Library Foundation about a memorial for her mother. Joyce was the assistant director at our library from 1978-2006. Her infectious laugh and love of reading brightened all the days of those 28 years. We've chosen the circular garden to the south of the library as the perfect spot for a sculpture. "Summer Reading" is cast bronze by the Randolph Rose Collection. It features two children sitting on a log sharing a book. It is scheduled to be delivered late summer, and the City has pledged to install it. If you'd like to donate to this memorial, it can be done through the Library Foundation. Stop by the Library – I'd love to share a picture of it!

New novels recently include: *Tough Luck* by Sandra Dallas, *South of Nowhere* by Jeffery Deaver, *One Golden Summer* by Carley Fortune, *Mothers and Sons* by Adam Haslett and *The Names* by Florence Knapp.

Mark Your Calendar

May 7 & 19 @ 5:30 p.m. - Evening Tot Time

May 19 @ 7p.m. - Book Club *The Book of Lost Friends* by Lisa Wingat



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

Website:
www.thepapernow.com

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Publisher:
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*This Week at
Bethany Lutheran*

Pastor David E. Klappenbach

Wednesday: May 7, 2025

7:00 PM ~ Confirmation

Sunday: May 11, 2025

Fourth Sunday of Easter

9:15 AM ~ Adult SS & Youth SS

9:30 AM ~ Coffee Fellowship

10:30 AM ~ Worship w/SS Spring Program, NOISY Offering

6:00 PM ~ Bethany Prayer Group

Tuesday: May 13, 2025

8:30 AM ~ Prayer Group

9:30 AM ~ Tuesday coffee at Bethany

Wednesday: May 14, 2025

7:00 PM ~ Confirmation

7:00 PM ~ Council Mtg.

Thursday: May 15, 2025

2:00 PM ~ Circle Group

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



*This Week at
Laurens United
Methodist Church*

Pastor Deb Parkison

Sunday, May 11

Sunday School from 9:15-10:05 AM

Last day of Sunday School until Fall

Fellowship Coffee @ 9:30 AM

Worship Service 10:30 AM

Graduation Reception @ 9:30 AM & Recognition @ 10:30 AM

Sunday School Attendance Awards

Sunday School Teacher Recognition

Mother's Day-CWS Blankets



*This Week at
First Christian*

Pastor Rev. Rita Cordell

Wednesday, May 7

11:30 a.m. - Ladies Lunch followed by C.W.F. at the church

Thursday, May 8

2-5 p.m. - Clothes Closet Open

Sunday, May 11

9:30 a.m. - Elder's Meeting

10:30 a.m. - Worship



*Resurrection
of Our Lord
Catholic Church*

**Pocahontas, IA -- Priest:
Father Paul Nguyen**

MASS TIMES:

Daily Mass as scheduled in the weekly bulletin

Saturday at 5:00 PM and Sunday at 10:30 AM

Confessions: Saturday 4:15 pm at Resurrection

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Van Alstyne Brings a Wealth of Experience to Food Systems Team

Restaurant owner, R&D laboratory developer, equipment salesperson, food consultant, agricultural mechanic, and over-the-road trucker are just a few of the vocations that Alex Van Alstyne, food business extension specialist with Farm, Food and Enterprise Development at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach lays claim to. His wide-ranging experience makes him particularly well-suited to supporting communities in building strong local and regional food systems across Iowa.

"We are excited to have Alex as part of our team working with food businesses," said Christa Hartsook, program manager and Iowa Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education coordinator for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. "His experience brings great perspective to entrepreneurs facing similar challenges."

"I've had a lot of different experiences in my life and career, which have helped me every step of the way for this role," says Van Alstyne. "What I do now for the FFED team is focus on market feasibility, which includes looking at the market, understanding how it's acting and reacting to a changing population, other businesses, and products that are in that market."

Van Alstyne and his team provide training, online and in person, on many challenges that producers face, with plans to soon offer education and resources related to:

- Labeling requirements for farmers market sales and commercially available products
- How to start and scale a food business
- Shared spaces to package, market or manage supply chain logistics
- Creating value-added products and services to help expand markets

Van Alstyne emphasizes that if he can't find the answer, his industry and academic connections, as well as other members of the FFED team are always willing to step in to help. "We've got a great group. I strongly believe in working as a team to find the resources or answers needed," says Van Alstyne. Van Alstyne can be reached at alexv@iastate.edu.



Time to Check and Treat Your Herd for Ticks

Temperatures are warmer, grass is greening up nicely, and yes, it's time for ticks. But are ticks on cattle a concern? Absolutely, said Iowa Beef Center program specialist Beth Reynolds, because of disease transmission opportunities.

For example, anaplasmosis is a tickborne disease with an estimated U.S. beef industry impact over \$300 million per year. The cost is realized in poor performance, abortions and death loss.

"For infected cattle that recover without medication, these animals remain carriers for life without showing clinical signs, which increases the likelihood for the disease to spread within the herd," she said. "Anaplasmosis is in Iowa with cases trending higher in recent years."

There are various methods available to control tick populations on livestock, with use dependent on individual circumstances.

"Treating with chemical acaricides, like a pour-on, is the most common strategy," Reynolds said. "To prevent ticks from developing resistance, rotate the class of chemical used annually. When treating, treat all animals in the herd at the same time, and reapply product according to label directions for best results."

Burning pastures in the spring can reduce tick populations in that pasture, although she cautions farmers to be aware of brush areas, etc., that can serve as tick refuges.

She said a recent BEEF magazine article titled "Dangerous hitchhikers" does a great job of describing and explaining cattle health threats caused by ticks, and encourages producers to take a look at it.

The three most common species encountered in Iowa are the blacklegged (deer) tick, American dog (wood) tick, and the lone star tick. All three are effective vectors for different diseases and pose a risk to humans as well as livestock and pets. In addition, lone star tick bites pose the risk of alpha-gal syndrome (red meat allergy). Awareness and prevention are crucial in keeping yourself and your livestock healthy.

For more information, check out this Iowa State resource available online, Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases PM 2036.

June Virtual Teacher License Renewal Course Dives into Iowa Core 21st Century Skills Finance Topics

Register by May 29 for ‘Small Change: Building Financial Security for Educators’

Iowa educators wanting to do a deep dive into finance topics but needing flexibility have until May 29 to register for “Small Change: Building Financial Security for Educators.” This Iowa State University Extension and Outreach blended course starts Thursday, June 5, with an introductory session from 4:30-6:30 p.m., followed by a four-week, self-paced, facilitator-led online learning experience that ends July 3. The self-paced certification course provides both teacher license renewal credit and audit options so educators can participate at their own pace.

The course content is embedded in the financial literacy standards connecting participants with curricula, resources and school-based programs for elementary, middle and high school levels, said course instructor Carol Ehlers, a health and human sciences educator with ISU Extension and Outreach. Educators can earn one Iowa License renewal credit. Registration is required by 5 p.m. Thursday, May 29, at the Iowa State Education Association website. Once the participant cap is filled, registration will no longer be available.

The “Small Change: Building Financial Security” course features vetted curriculum and resources. It has been accepted as an Iowa Board of Educational Examiners Endorsement Class for Financial Literacy and Business Teachers. Participants explore gamified lessons that are timely and relevant to themselves personally and to their classroom. The course is designed to help K-12 educators make more informed decisions about financial management and build greater confidence. The course topics are:

- Finance Fundamentals — getting organized, smart borrowing, estate planning
- Insurance — life, health, disability, long-term care, auto, home, liability coverage
- Investing — risk tolerance, investment choices, funding long-term goals
- Retirement — preparing for retirement, building a nest egg, Social Security, IPERS

The course format requires participants to:

- Participate in a live, virtual two-hour introductory workshop on Thursday, June 5, from 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- Complete at least four of 12 gamified online lessons covering financial topics over the next four weeks.
- Complete assignments to promote financial literacy and connect with resources.

The course fee is \$30 to Iowa State Education Association members and non-members. Those who do not need license renewal credit may register and audit the course for a \$15 fee.

Register online by May 29. Space is limited to 25 participants.

For more information, contact Ehlers at 712-732-5056 or xehlers@iastate.edu or visit the Health and Human Sciences Extension and Outreach website.

Transitioning to Pastures

The last week or two has been refreshing with warmer temperatures and pastures beginning to green up. As that green flush appears, it can be tempting to turn animals out too early. However, many pastures across the state have taken a hit in recent years due to drought and/or flooding. As of October 28, 2024, much of the state was still experiencing drought conditions, with soil moisture deficits extending from the surface down to 1.5 feet (Figure 1). In fact, many producers began supplementing with hay as early as September due to limited pasture regrowth.

While much of the state has started to recover from these moisture deficits (Figure 1), pasture recovery this spring may still be slow. Waiting until pastures are truly ready is important for long-term stand health and recovery. Starting the grazing season off right sets the tone for productivity the rest of the year.

Figure 1: Soil moisture levels 0-1.5 ft from October 28, 2024 to Apr. 15, 2025. Graphs are from: <https://facts.extension.iastate.edu/soil-moisture-45cm>.

So, when should we release animals to pasture?

If using continuous stocking, it's recommended to wait until pastures are at least 8 to 10 inches tall. This helps avoid overgrazing and supports root health and regrowth.

For rotational grazing, you can start earlier—at 4 to 6 inches—

if you're moving animals very frequently (at least daily). Waiting until 8 to 10 inches in a rotational system may mean grasses are entering the exponential growth phase, making it difficult to keep up and resulting in overly mature forage by the time you reach every paddock. Early, frequent moves help keep the grass in a vegetative state and can reduce pugging during wet periods.

Additionally, as you start transitioning animals to pasture, do so strategically. A gradual transition by continuing to supplement with high-quality dry hay, can help animals adjust from a dry forage diet to one high in moisture (Figure 2). Spring pasture growth tends to be low in effective fiber, and rumen microbes need time to adjust. A sudden shift to this lush forage can lead to digestive issues like diarrhea.

Lastly, be mindful of nitrogen (N) and potassium (K) applications to avoid grass tetany, which is caused by low magnesium absorption. High levels of N and K can interfere with magnesium uptake, so balanced fertilization is key. Lime, phosphorus (P), and potassium applications should ideally be completed in the fall and guided by soil test results.

As for nitrogen: split applications of 30–60 lbs N per acre are ideal, timed with plant growth for best uptake. Applying N before first grazing is usually unnecessary, as spring growth is already vigorous. Adding N at this time can result in excessive forage that's difficult to manage unless you plan to harvest it for stored feed. Instead, consider applying after the first and second

grazings and again in the fall to better distribute growth throughout the season.

Also, remember: if your pastures contain more than 30% legumes (on a dry matter basis), N applications are typically not cost-effective. Legumes naturally fix nitrogen, which can meet much of the grass component's needs.

Overall, let's start the season off right:

- Delay turnout until pastures are ready to support grazing.
- Ensure animals have a balanced diet during the transition period.
- Be intentional with your fertilization strategy to support forage growth and animal health.

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Stateline Dairy and Ag Outlook Seminar Set for June 17: Understanding a Changing Industry

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach's annual Stateline Dairy and Ag Outlook Seminar will be held on Tuesday, June 17, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Empty Nest Winery, 1352 Apple Road, Waukon. The seminar aims to assist ag lenders and farm financial advisers in helping farmers manage risk and understand market outlooks.

"Price risk management continues to be a major variable for profitability in many commodity enterprises," said Jennifer Bentley, dairy field specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach. "Understanding the ag markets and strategies to allow the next generation to continue farming is a necessary part of lender portfolio management."

Seminar topics include:

- Dairy Market Outlook: Matt Tranel, commodity broker/agent at Ever.Ag
- Farm Transition Strategies: Nathan Hulinsky, extension educator – agriculture and business management, University of Minnesota Extension
- Climate Outlook: Madelynn Wuestenberg, agriculture climatology specialist, ISU Extension and Outreach
- Ag Market Outlook: Joseph Lensing, farm management specialist, ISU Extension and Outreach
- Iowa Dairy Survey: Jennifer Bentley, dairy field specialist, ISU Extension and Outreach

The cost to attend is \$75 for agricultural lenders and service providers and \$25 for dairy and ag producers and students. Ag lenders and financial advisers are encouraged to invite and support their producers to attend the seminar. Pre-registration is required.

For more information, contact Jennifer Bentley or Allie McIntyre at the ISU Extension and Outreach Winneshiek County Office at 563-382-2949 or jbentley@iastate.edu or alliemc@iastate.edu.

Sorghum Forage: A Resilient Option with Smart Management

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach has published a new resource for livestock producers, "Management Strategies of Prussic Acid Toxicity in Sorghum." Sorghum is a fast-growing and reliable forage crop for livestock.

"As weather extremes challenge consistent forage production, sorghum offers livestock producers a reliable, high-yielding alternative — especially during drought or delayed planting," said Shelby Gruss, assistant professor and extension forage specialist at Iowa State University.

While sorghum presents several benefits, prussic acid toxicity (hydrogen cyanide) in sorghum is a serious concern, particularly after frost or when plants are young or over fertilizing, said Gruss. According to the publication, cattle death can occur within two hours of ingesting prussic acid poisoned sorghum.

Strategies for managing prussic acid through different feeding options include proper grazing, silage and baleage.

"Silage and baleage production offer the safest choice for sorghum forage with high dhurrin accumulation. Dhurrin content can be reduced by 50% or more through chopping and fermentation," said Gruss.

Key takeaways from the publication include:

- Avoid grazing young plants under 18 inches and monitor regrowth.
- Remove livestock from fields for at least one week after frost.
- Avoid over-fertilization with nitrogen.
- Test forage when in doubt to ensure safe feeding.

Livestock producers are encouraged to download the full resource, available at no cost, through the Extension Store.

If you have further questions about prussic acid toxicity in sorghum, contact Shelby Gruss at sgruss@iastate.edu.