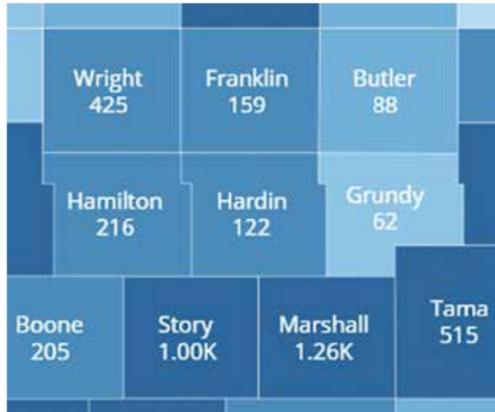


SATURDAY | 7.25.2020



CORONAVIRUS.IOWA.GOV

As of noon on Friday, the state's coronavirus website, which tracks COVID-19 cases in real time, was reporting 122 cases in Hardin County since March. Of those, at least 63 have recovered.

COVID is 'definitely still in our community'

New cases push county total to 122 since March

BY SARA KONRAD BARANOWSKI | skonrad@iafalls.com

Hardin County has six new cases of COVID-19, according to an update of the state's coronavirus website. The cases were reported between Thursday morning and noon on Friday. The new cases increase the county's cumulative case total to 122 since testing began in March. At least 63 of those 122 people have recovered, which means there are currently 59 people still infected with the disease.

Earlier this week Greenbelt Home Care/Hardin County Public Health announced it would no longer distribute daily case number updates. Since March, it has announced new cases - and those patients' ages - through press releases and posts on the agency's Facebook page. Now, updates will be distributed weekly on Mondays. Public Health Coordinator Rocky Reents said the change is being made to eliminate redundancy of information.

COVID-19 ... P2



SARA KONRAD BARANOWSKI / TIMES CITIZEN

Pineview Elementary, built in 1935, is the oldest of the Iowa Falls School District's buildings. The school board and a facilities committee are discussing whether to update the district's buildings or build new.

WOULD YOU SUPPORT A SCHOOL BOND?

Iowa Falls district mulls its options for buildings' future

BY SARA KONRAD BARANOWSKI
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A committee of volunteers is pushing toward its goal of making a recommendation to the Iowa Falls School Board on the future of its school buildings, but two key questions stick out. Would residents of the school district support a major construction project? And if the answer is yes, how much more are they willing to pay in property taxes to make it happen?

The Facilities Committee has been meeting this summer to discuss building needs in the district. The group was formed this spring, after the school board received a report on the condition of its buildings. The 36 pages of bulleted lists and color-coded tables - which was produced by Denovo and KCL Engineering - lays out the immediate and longterm needs of the district's four school buildings. Representatives of the two companies walked through the buildings and built a list of necessary upgrades and replacements, from failing heating systems and worn out flooring, to sagging ceiling tiles and ineffective

“Am I excited to have taxes go up? No, never. But I do understand that that's part of progress.”

TODD BICKNESE
Iowa Falls School Board President

lighting. The group also noted the lack of air conditioning in the buildings. The rough cost to make those fixes was estimated at \$29 million.

Discussion turned to new construction. Would it make more sense to spend that kind of money to build a new school or a school addition? That's where the Facilities Committee came in - to

review the engineers' report, look at the buildings and make recommendations. But as the committee gets further into its discussions, school board member Chris Stauffer, who has attended the committee's meetings, said the board needs to be more specific in its instructions and requests for recommendations. "As we go through this we'll find out that there's some things that as a board we need to provide direction to that committee, of what we're looking for from them," Stauffer said during discussion at the school board's July 13 meeting.

But the school board, too, is in need of some direction. If the district moves forward with any kind of major renovations or construction of a new school it would need to bond for the money to do the work, and a bond requires 60 percent approval from voters. Without that approval, the district would be significantly limited in what it could accomplish.

"The people I hear from are older people and they want something built here," said board member Dawn Parker, a retired teacher. "They don't even have children here, but they're community people who want something built."

"What are other people hearing?" she asked, repeating a question she posed to the Facilities Committee at its July 13 meeting. "If we have big opposition to building anything, we're just kind of wasting our time. But if [committee members] come back and say 'Yes, we have a lot of support,' I feel better about this."

Dave Moore, who previously helped with a school bond referendum in Independence, Iowa, shared his experience there.

"You're not going to hear the negatives of [the proposal] until you decide to go ahead and go forward," he said.

With so many options laid out before the district and so little input from the public, it's been difficult to find a clear answer.

SCHOOL BOND ... P2

Wind ordinance amendment process back to square one

Setback distance changed again

BY JUSTIN ITES | ites@iafalls.com

The Hardin County Board of Supervisors threw a curve ball into the adoption of a new county wind ordinance amendment - a process that began last year - when it changed language in the almost-adopted amendment on Thursday morning.

Thursday's special meeting was called to approve the third and final reading of amendments to ordinance No. 29, which governs the construction of commercial windmills in the county.

Supervisor BJ Hoffman made the motion to revise the setback distance between windmills and dwellings. The amendment that was being considered would have required the manufacturer's setback, or a half mile, whichever is greater. But the new language approved Thursday struck the half-mile distance and replaced it with "three times the total height" of the windmill. Changing the language of the proposed amendment means the county has to start its adoption process all over again. That starts with a public hearing and three readings (and approvals) of the ordinance.

The county zoning board has originally recommended the ordinance require a setback of three times the total height of a windmill, but the supervisors decided in May to increase it to one half mile. Following Thursday's brief meeting, Board Chairman Lance Granzow - who



MATTHEW REZAB / TIMES CITIZEN

Under the changes approved Thursday, windmills would have to be built three times their height from the closest dwelling.

“You are never going to make everyone happy, but we have to have something that's viable.”

LANCE GRANZOW
Hardin County Supervisor

"Honestly, I have been pushing that (three times the setback) from the beginning. There was a closed session meeting yesterday and I don't know if that changed someone's opinion or not, but it must have," Granzow said. "I would have brought it up one more time today, but I didn't have to. The motion was there, and we voted on it."

WIND ORDINANCE ... P2



SARA KONRAD BARANOWSKI / TIMES CITIZEN

Elk Run Bridge on River Road in Iowa Falls is slated for replacement in 2022. The bridge, built by the Welden Brothers, is also known as the Lake Foster Bridge. It's named in honor of the late Dr. John Foster.

Century-old 'Lake Foster Bridge' will be replaced

Iowa DOT funding will provide up to \$1M

BY SARA KONRAD BARANOWSKI
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An outdated, deteriorating Iowa Falls bridge that's scheduled for replacement won't be as big a burden on the city's taxpayers thanks to funding from the Iowa Department of Transportation.

The city learned this month that its application for federal aid-swap funding through the DOT's City Department Program has been approved. It will be used to pay for construction costs to replace a bridge along River Road.

The bridge in question is referred to

by city officials as the Elk Run Bridge because it crosses Elk Run Creek. But a plaque on the bridge, which was built by the local Welden Brothers in 1920, names it the "Lake Foster Bridge" and notes that it was named in honor of "Doc Foster" and his wife, Abbie Foster. Dr. John Hunt Foster was a physician in Iowa Falls from 1855 to 1894.

But the bridge, which can only accommodate one vehicle going one direction at a time, has been classified as "structurally deficient." A report prepared by engineer Steve Kunz of Shuck Britson in Des Moines, notes that the superstructure and substructure of the 42-foot single-span arch bridge are in poor condition with advanced deterioration.

BRIDGE REPLACEMENT ... P2

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