

DEMOCRAT

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Council gives \$500,000 for Rec Plex

Joe Benedict
Staff Writer

The Fort Madison City Council was impressed enough with the idea of a rec plex in Fort Madison that it committed \$500,000 from the city to aid the construction of the proposed facility.

Matt Morris laid out the plan for the city council as he had done earlier Tuesday at the Lee County Board of Supervisors meeting.

The council had several questions about the complex, including some concerns about the distance from the parking lot to the three soccer fields. Morris said there may be some space

to add a parking lot closer to those fields later.

Councilor Bob Chesnut said he has been on the council for 12 years and the city hasn't done anything major in the way of recreation and parks. He said there has been some new playground equipment, but nothing on this scale.

"We only get a chance like this once in awhile," Chesnut said.

Councilor Brad Randolph said this seemed like a group to fund.

"You had me from hello, just about," he said.

The money is going to come out of

the city's grant opportunity fund at \$250,000 over the next two years. City Manager Byron Smith said he feels comfortable the city would be able to afford that.

One other concern was operating expenses. The council asked Morris how the facility would pay for operation. It didn't want the facility managers coming back and asking for more money.

Morris said \$300,000 of the estimated \$3.4 million to build the facility is going to be put in the bank for operation.

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Scott and Amy Hasenclever brought their three children and made attending the first Fort Madison Day at Carver Hawkeye Arena a family outing last year. This year, the second annual Fort Madison Day will be held Feb. 19. Tickets go on sale next Wednesday, Dec. 14, at the Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce, located at 614 Ninth St, Fort Madison.

2012 Fort Madison Day at Carver Hawkeye Arena announced

The 2nd Annual Fort Madison Day at Carver Hawkeye Arena will be February 19, 2012. "We are very fortunate that this year, Fort Madison Day coincides with a Big Ten Game," says event chair Jason Samples. "We will be in the stands, cheering, as Iowa takes on Indiana University in a nationally-televised game." Three stations have the option to broadcast the game, and the broadcasting station will be announced 2-3 weeks in advance of game day.

On Wednesday, Dec. 14, at 10 a.m., tickets go on sale at the Fort Madison Area Chamber of Commerce located at 614 9th Street. Once again, FMConnect, the Chamber's networking and professional development group has worked with University of Iowa Athletics to secure premium seating for the Fort Madison group.

Additionally, numerous sponsors have stepped forward, which has allowed FMConnect to offer a limited quantity of discounted tickets. The first 300 tickets will be available for \$10 each. After the initial 300 are gone, tickets are available for \$20 each. Sponsorship opportunities are still available. This year's sponsors, so far, include: Fort Madison Bank and Trust, Johnson Trucking, Lee County Bank and Trust, Building Materials, King-Lynk Funeral Homes, Re/Max and Associates, Ameriprise Josh Denning, Huffman Welding and Machine, Seither and Cherry, Two Rivers Insurance in Fort Madison, and MidAmerican Energy.

All ticket purchases come with a
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Last chance

(At left) Area residents and visitors have one last chance to catch "A Little Christmas Spirit" as the Old Fort Players community theater group gives its final three performances of the two-act holiday play. Here, the three Latimer children (played by Patrick Ickes, Reyna Lampe and Brandy Helt) enjoy Christmas morning and find that the adults in the family have recovered their Christmas Spirit — with a little help. The family-friendly play will be presented Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Dec. 8-10, at 7:30 p.m., at the Old Fort Players Playhouse at 725 Ave. G, Fort Madison.

Uprising made lasting impact

Former ISP administrators recall prison revolt of 1981.

Chris Faulkner
Staff Writer

A handful of offenders at the Iowa State Penitentiary wanted changes in their living conditions. They used force to state their case.

Changes were made, but not from the offenders' requests. A new warden came in and did an extreme makeover long before the popular reality television show.

Long before. As in 30 years ago. Not much has been made over the years to recognize the event that shook Fort Madison briefly back on Sept. 2, 1981. But Ron Welder, then correctional services manager, brought correctional services more than 30 years later to point out to newer residents of this community the positive changes that came about from a negative situation. Those will be highlighted in the second part.

But first, retired deputy warden Paul Hedgepeth provided his memories of the event, in which 12 employees were taken hostage, one inmate — Gary Eugene Tyson, 31 — was fatally stabbed, and more than \$1 million in property damage was done.

Although the incident was first believed to be spontaneous, it was later reported that "the initial hostage seizure on Sept. 2 was the result of a plan conceived and executed by a handful of inmates."

That was then ...

Hedgepeth has always been interested in antiques and took some vacation time off in early September to sell some antiques with his broth-



File photo/Don Hrabal/Daily Democrat

Two of the first hostages released in the Iowa State Penitentiary inmate uprising 30 years ago were Security Director James Menke (foreground) and Assistant Security Director Larry Moline (partially hidden). Correctional officer Cecil Cole closed the gate behind them, with one of the offenders in the background. The conflict happened on Sept. 2, 1981. The two men were released in exchange for the offenders being allowed to talk to the news media about prisoner grievances.

er, William.

But he was not expecting the Fort Madison police to show up, and they weren't customers.

"They said, 'The warden wants you back (at ISP). They have a riot, and (the inmates) have hostages,'" Hedgepeth recalled.

Several inmates started the uprising by taking four hostages. Later, eight newly-hired employees at ISP were also taken hostage and forced to trade clothes with the offenders. "I went to (warden) David Scurr's office, and we put a plan together," Hedgepeth said. "The highway

patrol and state troopers were coming from all over the place." The FMPD immediately sealed off the roads going to the prison and most of the off-duty prison employees were called in.

The original uprising spokesman, 21-year-old Kenneth Sheffey — serving life in prison for first-degree murder — made numerous demands, including getting to speak with selected members of the media to air some of the inmates' grievances.

Even after that, however, some
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FM Day

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complimentary T-shirt, which attendees are encouraged to wear to the game. "Last year, the sea of Fort Madison shirts in the Arena was just awesome," said Sarah Cantrell, Chamber Coordinator. "We'll have a new design this year, and we're sure that all of those Fort Madison shirts will look great on TV!"

In 2011, 431 people purchased tickets through FMConnect and attended the inaugural Fort Madison Day.

"This year, we fully expect to sell at least 500 tickets," says Justin Pieper, an FMConnect steering committee member. "We wanted to make sure that our ticket on-sale date was earlier this year to accommodate those who would like to give tickets as Christmas gifts or holiday bonuses to their employees."

While the physical tickets will not be available until early February, a gift certificate will be available at the Chamber office so that friends and family have something to open when they exchange Christmas gifts.

Samples said, "It is such an honor for Fort Madison to be recognized, as a community, at an Iowa basketball game. Having 500 people from our area enjoy a game together, be recognized for the amazing community that we are, and root on Ryan Bowen and the Iowa team; those are memories that just don't get made every day. And it's inevitable that at least one person from our community is going to be seen on TV in their Fort Madison

shirt." Ryan Bowen, Fort Madison native and former NBA player, is currently on the Iowa Basketball staff.

This year, there are a few new perks that are being afforded by the University Athletics and Marketing teams:

- Students in sixth grade or younger will be entered, at the time of ticket purchase, to win an opportunity to be on the floor with the band and university students to high-five the basketball team prior to the start of the game. On Dec. 23, Santa will call the 20 children whose names are drawn and give them an early Christmas present! This opportunity is only available for tickets purchased at the Chamber office by Dec. 22.

- Five students, sixth grade and under, will be recognized at center court during a television timeout. There will be one student representative from each of the following elementary schools: Central Lee, Holy Trinity, Denmark, Lincoln, and Richardson. Each school will name its own representative, and the students' names will be announced the week of Dec 19.

- Additionally, there will once again be opportunities to have pictures with Herky.

- Allen Chapman, Choral Director at Holy Trinity Jr./Sr. High School will sing the National Anthem at center court at the beginning of the game. Last year, Matt Morris sang the National Anthem, and his performance can be viewed from the Fort Madison

Area Chamber of Commerce's Facebook page.

- Several other perks are being negotiated with University of Iowa Athletics, and updates will be announced as game day approaches.

- For an additional \$5 per person, a partial tour of Kinnick Stadium is available. There are 300 spots available for people interested in the tour, which are available on a first come, first served basis. In addition to the tour, there will be snacks in a private hospital room with views of the field, and meet-and-greet opportunities.

- Parking at Kinnick Stadium is free to the public and is a five-minute walk to Carver Hawkeye Arena.

To ensure prompt ticket and T-shirt delivery, opportunity to purchase tickets through FMConnect runs from Dec. 14, at 10 a.m. through Jan. 13, at 5 p.m. Ticket orders after January 13 will need to be processed through the Hawkeye Box Office.

FMConnect is the Fort Madison Area Chamber of Commerce's networking group designed to connect people in the Fort Madison area through professional development and social opportunities.

The group offers numerous opportunities throughout the year, with Fort Madison Day at Carver Hawkeye Arena being their signature event. For more details regarding FMConnect, you may contact Sarah Cantrell at the Fort Madison Area Chamber of Commerce.

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of the inmates began wrecking property.

"They usually destroy stuff that you have to fix up right away," Hedgepeth said, referring to the kitchen as one location that suffered extensive property damage.

"There was a tractor inside, and the inmates were using that to pull the door off of Cellhouse 20," Hedgepeth said. But by the time the offenders had broken in, law enforcement personnel had cut the bars out of the cell house, removed the employees who had been hiding there and rewelded the bars back shut. A forklift from the Prison Industries facility was taken in an attempt to break into Cellhouse 17 West, which held protective custody inmates.

But no prisoners escaped, and Hedgepeth said outside emergency and law enforcement personnel worked well with prison officials to help prevent even more damage. He said the fire department, Lee County Sheriff's staff and the Lee County Ambulance crew were standing by.

"It's an extremely good work relationship we had," Hedgepeth said. "Not every prison has that."

As for the offenders' grievances, "a year later, they realized they didn't accomplish much for themselves or anybody else," Hedgepeth said. "If you talk to inmates who have been in riots, it's a thing you don't really win much at. The state is going to take it back."

Next: Part 2, the aftermath and a new warden.

Synopsis of events

A synopsis of the chronology of events of the Sept. 2 uprising at the Iowa State Penitentiary: This was originally published in the Daily Democrat after the riot as part of the report on estimated damage because of the uprising. Social Services Commissioner Michael Reagen compiled the report.

At 10:20 a.m. on Sept. 2, 1981, Security Director James Menke, Assistant Security Director Larry Moline, Assistant Security Director George Harry and Supervisor Eldon McKinley were taken hostage by four inmates in the dining hall at the Iowa State Penitentiary. The inmates who seized the employees were Kenneth Sheffey, Michael Gavin, Michael McVay and Rodney Palmer.

Initial investigations revealed that the inmates were armed with one knife and three home-made shotguns loaded with commercial .410 caliber shells.

After taking the employees hostage, Sheffey acted as chief spokesman for the inmates. Several other inmates in the dining hall assisted those who had initially seized the hostages.

After preliminary telephone contact, prison officials established regular telephone communications with the inmates from the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) office at the penitentiary. The discussions were conducted primarily by Training Officer Jerry Burt and DCI Special Agent Ronald Mower.

Approximately one hour after these discussions began, hostage George Harry was released.

At 2:20 p.m., eight newly-hired correctional officers in building No. 51, the security office, were also taken hostage. Inmate Everett "Pecos" Wagner was primarily responsible for taking these hostages. They were identified as Richard Barlow, Gary Grisham, Daniel Henson, Charles Lake Sr., Guy Warner, John Wittich, Gary Wright and Kevin Young.

This second group of hostages was soon removed from building No. 51 and later robbed by inmates of their personal belongings. They were also forced to exchange clothing with their captors.

Approximately 2:50 p.m., inmate Sheffey released Eldon McKinley from the first group of hostages and allowed him to leave the yard through the turnkey. Soon after, correctional officer Lake was released from the second group of hostages being held in the kitchen area.

After further discussions between Training Officer Burt, Warden David Scurr and inmate Sheffey, Sheffey was allowed to meet with certain news media representatives at the wagon gate area of the penitentiary. When this meeting concluded at 6:45 p.m., Security Director Menke and Assistant Security Director Moline were released through the wagon gate.

Soon after the release of Menke and Moline, inmates began inflicting serious damage to several areas of the prison, including the dining area, security office and Cellhouse 20.

Approximately 7:30 p.m., hostages Warner and Barlow were released wearing prison clothing. After continuing efforts by Training Officer Burt and Warden Scurr, the remaining five hostages were released about 9:15 p.m. Soon after, inmates were told to return to their cells, and penitentiary officers and Iowa State Patrol troopers entered the prison to secure the facility.

Approximately 10:30 p.m., officers in the dining area discovered the body of an inmate, later identified as Gary Eugene Tyson, who had been fatally stabbed.

At approximately 3:15 a.m. on Sept. 3, the penitentiary was fully secured and all inmates accounted for.

Council

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ing capital.

Two developers also spoke with the council on Tuesday about some plans for refurbishing some downtown buildings.

Tom France and Jim Hobart of France-Hobart out of Cedar Rapids is looking at four different historical buildings in Fort Madison to restore and add upper level housing.

Hobart first mentioned the old Lee County Bank building at Eighth Street and Avenue G. He said the bottom floor has the restaurant already, but the two upper levels would have 12 to 16 housing units, each with new HVAC and the building would get a new roof.

The old Metropolitan Hotel building at Sixth and E also would see a restoration. The balcony and facade would be restored and his company would put up new garages for 18 higher income units. Three handicap units would be accessible from the neighboring courtyard, which also would get some refurbishing.

The building occupied by Sears also would get a facelift. Hobart said the green tile would be removed and the window space would be opened back up. In the upper story, there would be about 10 one or two bedroom apartments.

The last building would be a smaller project at the Gathering Place. That would be finishing two apartments there.

The two are looking at historical grants, state

incentives and local incentives to begin these projects.

France said his company isn't one that buys properties to flip. France-Hobart owns about \$250 million worth of property.

The council did not give money to this project on Tuesday.

The council also heard about the plans to refurbish the Cattermole Library building.

The first priority is to get the heat working in the building and repair the roof so the building remains usable.

After grants, the renovation comes up about \$50,000 short. The city is applying with Fort Madison SIRRC for a grant to help cover the rest. It also is working with the state to try to modify a grant to allow money to be used for the heating and roofing projects.

The second floor of the building would be used by the Fort Madison Partners as offices and they would pay between \$500 and \$1,000 a month for rent. The city gives money to the partners every year and it was asked whether or not charging rent could count towards that. Mary Ottoson with Fort Madison Main Street said the state would have to answer that question.

The council gave Fort Madison Main Street support and authority to apply for historic tax credits that also could bring in some funding for building upkeep.

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