

# Plane

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the tail, with digits that matched his plane exactly.

Rud has seen the film, and remarked that the plane does more than merely appear in the film, but actually factors into one of the most thrilling action scenes near the end.

“Tom Cruise walks on the wing of the airplane,” Rud said. “For the action scenes, and we verified this, none of it is CGI. [Cruise] did all of his own stunts.”

The three men acquired this plane in 2009 when they purchased it from a widow in Rochelle, Illinois. Rud said the Boeing Stearmans had become military surplus by the late 1940s or early 1950s, and a lot of them were purchased by military aviators who were leaving the military and using them for crop-dusting. This particular plane ended up in the hands of Clarence Staton, who Rud said was a war hero who flew P-47 Thunderbolts over Europe during



Tom Thompson and Pete Nelson are seen standing in front of Nelson's 1942 Boeing Stearman airplane at the Fairfield Municipal Airport. (Photo courtesy of Pete Nelson)

WWII. Rud and Staton had a mutual friend, and the friend encouraged Rud to purchase the plane after Staton's passing in 2006.

Nelson is an experienced aviator, having flown for over 50 years. He has piloted 68 different airplanes, landing them in 350 airports in 40 states plus Canada and the Bahamas. Rud, whose mother Patricia

(Murphy) Rud is the sister of Pete's wife Sue, has fond memories of Nelson flying into Sandwich to visit him and his family when he was a boy. Rud was interested in airplanes from a young age, and this led to participating in an aviation program in high school, studying aircraft maintenance in college, and all the way to his current occupation as a pilot for



Fairfield resident Pete Nelson is pictured here with his 1942 Boeing-Stearman airplane. The plane was white and blue when Nelson owned it with his nephew Jay Rud and Rud's friend Brent Bish, and was later painted yellow and black before being featured in the film "Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning." (Photo courtesy of Pete Nelson)

American Airlines, capturing 787s out of Chicago O'Hare Airport.

Rud said these 1940s Boeing Stearman planes played an important role in American history. They were used to train pilots during WWII, and one of the largest aviation training bases was in Ottumwa.

“They taught the greatest generation how to fly,” he said.

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## Celebrate Independence Day across Henry County

Parades, fireworks, food, and family fun light up the Fourth of July

**By AnnaMarie Kruse,**  
Southeast Iowa Union

HENRY COUNTY — Communities across Henry County are gearing up for a festive and family-friendly Fourth of July, with Mt. Pleasant taking center stage for a full evening of celebration in McMillan Park.

The annual Mt. Pleasant Community Fourth of July Celebration kicks off at 5 p.m. with a vibrant parade that travels past the Wright Family Pavilion and behind the grandstands in McMillan Park. Parade participants will begin lining up at 4:30 p.m. near the Carousel Building.

Immediately following the parade, visitors will have the chance to meet their local heroes, including first respond-

ers and public safety officials.

From 5:30 p.m. until dusk, families can enjoy free activities throughout the park. Attractions will include trolley rides, carousel rides, bouncy houses, and face painting.

Food options will be available under the Wright Family Pavilion, featuring meals by the Henry County Cattlemen and snacks provided by the Southeast Dance Competition Team. Those celebrating Independence Day at McMillan Park also will find Dole Whip among the offerings.

The evening will conclude with a fireworks display at dark, organized and executed by the Mt. Pleasant Fire Department.

In addition to the McMillan Park festivities, Mt. Pleasant Golf and

Country Club will host a community event starting at 5 p.m. This celebration is open to the public and will include live music by Linc & the Drifters, food trucks, and additional kids and family fun.

Just outside of Mt. Pleasant in New London, festivities begin earlier in the day.

At 10 a.m., the VFW Post 7641 Auxiliary will sponsor a Fourth of July Parade under the theme “Honoring Our Quilts of Valor.” Quilt of Valor recipients will serve as parade grand marshals.

Wayland also will celebrate throughout the day. The Lions Club will serve breakfast starting at 6:30 a.m. The splashpad will be open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and the WACO basketball teams will serve lunch from 11



Mt. Pleasant Fire Department show off their new ladder truck at the Meet Your Local Heroes Fourth of July event last year and will happily greet the community again this year. (Photo Courtesy of Dave Schneider)

a.m. to 1 p.m. The day will conclude with a fireworks show at dusk.

With community parades, patriotic tributes, delicious food, and dazzling fireworks, Henry County is ready to celebrate Independence Day in grand style. Whether you spend the day in Mt. Pleasant or visit neighboring towns, there's something for everyone to enjoy this Fourth of July.

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## Washington County, again, preps EMS levy ballot measure

Supervisors hope to put issue on November ballot, after last two attempts fell through

**By Kalen McCain,** Southeast Iowa Union

WASHINGTON — Washington County Supervisors have once again taken early steps to prepare a ballot measure that would establish an Emergency Medical Services levy. Officials have long said the property tax could help fund area ambulances and rapid-response volunteer groups amid rising training and equipment costs.

The county hopes the third try's a charm, after previous efforts to put the property tax question on a ballot in March of this year and November of 2024 fell through.

In a vote Tuesday morning, elected officials approved the language for that ballot measure. The question posed to voters would ask for approval to impose a property tax at a rate “not to exceed” 75

cents per \$1,000 of valuation, bringing in no more than \$1.584 million a year.

The levy, however, would not necessarily be set at that maximum. It would start at 50 cents, according to the ballot language, and would fluctuate from one year to the next as needed, at the discretion of the board of supervisors under advisement from the county's EMS council, according to County Supervisor Jack Seward Jr.

“We'll have the authority to do 75 cents if we need it, the first year is only going to be 50 cents, the following years are going to be, basically, just what we need,” Seward said. “The best due diligence that (the EMS Advisory Council) had, was that 50 cents was needed. We think that they're underestimating that, so we want the authority to

do 75 cents in the future, if we need it, but we're only going to do what we need.”

Previous attempts to put the question on ballots fell through, once because supervisors declined to approve under-75-cent ballot language, and once because the county fell short of state-imposed deadlines to prepare and publicize ballot measures. County Auditor Tammy Stewart said the language approved Tuesday morning had already been sent to public notice outlet for publication.

The proposed measure would give voters a chance to declare ambulances and volunteer quick-response groups an “essential service,” one that local governments are obligated to provide in much the same way that state law requires certain law

enforcement and fire department coverage to every resident.

If it passes with at least 60% approval, the measure would authorize a new countywide property tax levy to pay for those services, as well as local emergency communication infrastructure. Advocates say the money is essential to keep the system running effectively as costs for training and equipment rise.

“The days of having to flip pancakes so you can make a difference in the outcome of somebody's medical condition (are) past,” said Washington County EMS Association President Toby Hancock, also a higher-up at Riverside's emergency response service, in an interview last summer. “It's not feasible for ... volunteers who get out of bed in the middle of the night to have to rely

on donations to have the equipment they need.”

It's not yet clear how much support the proposed ballot language will get from those emergency medical response groups, however.

Members of the Washington County EMS Advisory Board — established in 2021 to help guide development of the proposed ballot issue — recommended a levy of 50 cents per \$1,000 of valuation back in August, saying it would bring \$740,000 to emergency response assets across the county, and strike a balance between tax savings and needed funding.

Advocates have previously worried ballot language allowing up to 75-cent levies, as the supervisors continue to pursue, might prove unpersuasive to voters. Some townships in Washington County

already tax residents with a levy of up to 54 cents to pay for bundled fire protection and EMS services.

EMS Advisory Council Chair Jim Lester said in a meeting last year that those residents, under any new levy exceeding 54 cents, would pay more than double for services they already help finance.

“If you're all of a sudden asking taxpayers to pay more than they're paying now, for a service they're already getting, we have to be conservative and go slow in that approach,” Lester said. “We don't want to just go, ‘The code says we can get 75 cents per thousand, so we're going to get 75 cents per thousand.’”

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