

# The Oskaloosa Herald

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## Pella breaks ground on \$35-million indoor rec center

DONALD A. PROMNITZ  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

PELLA — The City of Pella broke ground on the indoor recreation center Wednesday morning, marking the end of years of plans and proposals, and the beginning of its construction.

“It is for every age in this community from little kids to older people, there’s going to be some way they can use this facility between the pools and the walking track and all the gymnasiums,” DeWaard said. “So it

is a facility for all the community.”

The 78,000-square-foot facility, located northwest of Pella Sports Park, with an estimated price tag of \$35.1 million, was initially introduced as a concept in 2022 as part of a long-term facility plan, with the hopes that it could promote tourism and bring more people to Pella. It received heavy support and donations from Pella Corp., Vermeer Corp., Precision Pulley & Idler and members of the community, as well as commitments from Pella Community School District and Pella

Christian Schools.

However, concerns about funding the large project were met with opposition, and the rec center had to be temporarily shelved last year due to a lack of support from city council. The council approved moving forward in July 2024, provided a clear path for funding was in place, and construction was approved in April.

“This is a celebration of a project that has taken some time in coming,”

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Donald Promnitz | Herald

**Local leaders broke ground** on the Pella indoor rec center Wednesday morning, after three years of planning. The 78,000-square foot facility is estimated to cost \$35.1 million



Phil Sereg rides his tractor at the Men’s Health Event and Tractor Ride.

## Battling cancer, Phil Sereg rides his tractor for men’s health

DONALD A. PROMNITZ  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

OSKALOOSA — There isn’t much Phil Sereg won’t do for his grandson Preston Sereg. And not even the heat — or cancer — is going to change that.

Phil, 84, has become a fixture at Mahaska Health’s annual Men’s Health and Tractor Ride event at

the Southern Iowa Fairgrounds, leading the tractors on a two-hour, six-mile circuit. He took up the mantle again Saturday morning, braving temperatures that rose into the triple-digits.

“See a lot of the guys on our ride, they’re older,” Phil said. “So that’s just about the limit. It works out pretty good.”

Phil likes to come out to support

Preston, a family practice physician at Mahaska Health, who was instrumental in putting on the event. With Mahaska County being a rural community, men face challenges of availability to care, and health can sometimes fall by the wayside. However, the event offers things like cholesterol screenings, blood pressure checks, blood sugar tests and education, and Preston

said it’s continuing to grow.

“It just seems to keep growing every year, so it seems like we have more tractors and more people coming out every year, and more services and screening opportunities for folks in the community,” Preston said.

Beyond supporting family, Phil

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## Salary survey issues discussed for Marion County

DONALD A. PROMNITZ  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

KNOXVILLE — A salary survey for Marion County employees is on hold until a viable company to conduct the survey is found.

According to Chris Nesteby, facilities and maintenance director for Marion County, a request for proposal was sent out May 13 with two companies — Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. and Birches Group — responding. However, Nesteby said Gallagher’s proposal was not up to expectations and while Birches’ proposal was comprehensive, the company had no experience in county government.

“And this time prior to that RFP going out, we’re going to, you know, minimize that group of companies that does this,” Nesteby said. “We’re going to all take one, call those folks, have those conversations ahead of time, let them know the RFP is being released, see if we can spur a little bit more encouragement and engagement from those companies and hopefully present the board with not only proposals that reflect what the board’s seeking, but also more than two.”

Board Chair Kisha Jahner asked for a possible timeline, with Nesteby responding that he hopes the committee could review more proposals in August and have a survey done by the end of November, which would put them out for the 2025-26 budget cycle. However, supervisors said they were more interested in being thorough than fast.

“We need it done right,” said Supervisor Steve McCombs.

“I think putting it off sounds like a very good idea,” Supervisor Jim Mueller said remotely. “I think — as you pointed out — it’s far more important to get it right than get it fast.”

The board is seeking to have a salary survey done to compare both public and private entities to where current salaries are, along with benefits within the county structure. Nesteby said that Marion County has never had a salary survey done, and they’re hoping this will streamline the budgeting process and ensure salaries are in line with where they should be.

“And that’s a double-edged sword, because it could mean salaries are too high in areas, but it also could

See **SALARY** on A3

## US Supreme Court curbs judges’ reach, birthright citizenship in limbo

MARK SHERMAN  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A divided Supreme Court on Friday ruled that individual judges lack the authority to grant nationwide injunctions, but the decision left unclear the fate of President Donald Trump’s restric-

tions on birthright citizenship.

The outcome was a victory for the Republican president, who has complained about individual judges throwing up obstacles to his agenda.

But a conservative majority left open the possibility that the birthright citizenship changes could remain blocked nationwide. Trump’s

order would deny citizenship to U.S.-born children of people who are in the country illegally.

The cases now return to lower courts, where judges will have to decide how to tailor their orders to comply with the high court ruling, Justice Amy Barrett wrote in the majority opinion. Enforce-

ment of the policy can’t take place for another 30 days, Barrett wrote.

The justices agreed with the Trump administration, as well as President Joe Biden’s Democratic administration before it, that judges are overreaching by issuing orders

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### WEATHER

**Today:**  
▲ High of 92, ▼ Low of 72  
Sunny, becoming partly cloudy with a breeze.


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