



ARTS@STPAUL'S presents A Candlelight Christmas, a musical celebration of this holiday season. This fifth annual concert will be held at 7 p.m. on Dec. 18 in the acoustically magic, candle-lit sanctuary of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 201 E. Church St., Marshalltown, and include a variety

Produced by Resident Artist, Hudson Lourenco-Feld, it will include stirring pieces on the church organ. The Marshalltown High School Holiday Singers will perform a program of carols under the direction of Amy Ose. The recently acquired grand piano will be put to good use by local teacher and pianist Amber Smither-

Refreshments will be served following the concert. This event is presented free of charge at 7 p.m. on Dec. 18.

Sigma Master Chapter met for lunch at El Portal on Dec. 10 with seven members present and two absent. Dorothy Perry opened the meeting thanking Bonnie Speas for hosting. Roll call was taken with the question: "What are your plans for Christ-

Health reports were given with progress made for some, and more surgery required. Alice Nicholson read the minutes of the November meeting with thanks to the Times Republican for printing the picture of Ginny Bumsted's 100 birthday picture. It was approved as read. Barb

Christmas cards were signed and will be sent to Joyce Roddon, Romaine Mackaman, Liz Wood and Ginny Bumsted as they are

The meeting closed announcing the next meeting will be at Legends American Grill at 11 a.m. on Jan. 13 with Caralee Hutchens hosting.

stretch of road, and I feel certain (that) without a reduction in speed limit as part of the RCI intersection, a two-vehicle collision with a commercial motor vehicle in the turnaround and an eastbound vehicle is only a matter of time."

"The Department of Transportation engineers have assured me that by their calculations and formulas, there's enough sight distance that they're comfortable with it. I'm not," he said. "People are on their phones. They're distracted. They're eating their lunch. People are gonna pop that

mill, and they're gonna have problems. And so my frustration is that I was willing to go along with the intersection design if there was a reduction in speed to 55 (miles per hour) from basically the Rhodes corner out to the golf course, but the DOT has advised me that we don't meet the criteria (and that) lowering the speed limit is not even being entertained. Well, then I don't support the intersection because I have a lot of concerns about what that would look like."

He also showed DOT officials myriad social comments outlining either skepticism or outright opposition to the plans, and although the state ultimately has jurisdiction and authority over the highway, Thomas doesn't feel that the current proposal is a "done deal."

"I really have been given feedback that they really do care what we think, and they are considering not doing the intersection. I just go back to the root of the problem, whether it's the near misses that get reported or the actual accidents that we've covered. In almost every case, the speed wasn't necessarily an issue, and in most cases it wasn't people turning into town. It was people leaving town."

He then referenced the “shadowing effect,” which means that cars turning into town are creating an unintentional blindness of other cars traveling on the road, so the turning traffic needs an offset turn lane like the one at the intersection of Highway 30 and Hart Avenue near State Center to allow cars leaving town to see around them. The public, Thomas said, feels strongly about both turning lanes and a reduction in speed, but he isn’t as concerned about the speed as long as drivers aren’t making the J-turns.

"I can't attribute excessive speed as a contributing factor to any of the crashes we've had. It wasn't like a car was going 100 and it came out of nowhere. In almost every case, a car pulled out from the stop sign and ran into another car going east or westbound on 30 because they didn't see it," he said. "The person leaving the stop sign or leaving town didn't see it."

There was one fatality crash where a driver turned left in front of a pickup truck, but Thomas described it as an outlier. Previously, construction on this project was set for the spring of 2026, but the chief wasn't sure how rethinking the intersection would impact that.

He doesn't anticipate another public meeting given the "abundant" feedback already received, but now, it's just a matter of how the DOT will proceed. State Center Mayor Craig Pfantz called the J-turn proposal an "unintended consequence" of the concerns citizens had raised, but he did feel that the addition of flashing lights has helped to some degree.

“We have a problem with that intersection when people turn into State Center there. You kind of get caught in the middle when you’ve got traffic coming from the west turning in and you want to pull out and turn to Marshalltown. That is an issue that the speed limit reduction would not solve,” Pfantz said. “I just wish there was more of a median there because it’s so narrow that when you pull out in there and there’s car traffic coming from the west, somebody’s got to stop. That’s an issue that I just don’t know how we can solve. Now, the J-turn deal, it did solve that. We just could not figure out how semis could turn around on that J-turn if they were coming out of State Center and wanting to go back to Marshalltown because there’s just not a lot of room there to turn.”

Currently, there is only one other active J-turn RCI intersection in Iowa, which is located along Highway 20 near Fort Dodge, and Pfantz said the people he has spoken to who have used it weren't happy with the design. His preference, like Thomas's, is to reduce the speed limit from 65 to 55 through town, implement offset turning lanes and utilize the flashing lights.

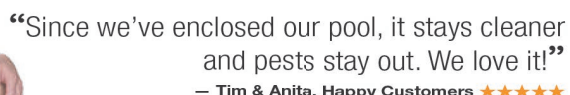
"If that doesn't help any, if we continue to have issues down there with accidents, then maybe the J-turn would be something down the road. It's a last resort in my mind, and I'm sure the citizens feel the same way too," he said.

At presstime, attempts to reach Smyth for comment had not been successful. According to information previously reported in the T-R, there were 28 reported

crashes at the intersection between Jan. 1, 2014, and March 17, 2025, including one fatality, three with major injuries, and three with minor injuries — with a total of 26 individuals involved. Smythe noted that 18 of the 28 crashes were attributed to failure to yield or failure to obey right-of-way laws

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