

WACO high school student killed in rollover

Southeast Iowa mourns the loss of a young man whose life had scarcely begun

By Marilyn Higgins

TRENTON - On Feb. 13, Kyler Rugg, a WACO Community School District student, lost his life in an automobile accident.

According to a crash report from the Iowa State Patrol, Rugg was traveling southbound on Franklin Avenue, just south of Trenton. Losing control on a curve, his Nissan Altima rolled over "multiple times." Rugg was thrown from the vehicle, sustaining mortal wounds. After transportation to the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics in Iowa City, Rugg was declared dead.

Spencer Lueders, Superintendent of the WACO Community School District, issued a statement to the public, mourning the loss of this young man. On

a post made by the District's Facebook page, Lueders declared that Feb. 16 would see additional counseling services deployed across the District, to help the students process this terrible occurrence.

"We ask our community to keep Kyler's family in your thoughts and prayers as they navigate this unimaginable loss," Lueders said. "We will share additional updates as they become available. Until then, we as a school community wrap our arms around Kyler's family — and around one another."

Neighboring school districts used their social media accounts to extend their condolences to Rugg's family, and to encourage their own student bodies to wear WACO's

school colors of blue and white on Tuesday, Feb. 17.

Rugg was a member of WACO's FFA chapter, and had previously

played on the football team.

Call Marilyn Higgins at 319-368-8895 or email her at marilyn.higgins@southeastiowaunion.com



WACO's Kyler Rugg, then dressed in his football uniform, shows off a booth for photo ops in Wayland when RAGBRAI came through town in 2024. Rugg lost his life in an automobile accident on Feb. 13, 2026. (Union archive photo)

Ornamental and Turfgrass Pest Control Course March 4

Preregister before Feb. 25 for fall commercial pesticide applicator training recertification

Submitted By Andy Miller

Washington — Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Washington County will host an Ornamental and Turfgrass Pest Control Continuing Instruction Course (CIC) for commercial pesticide applicators Wednesday, March 4, 2026. The program provided by the ISU Extension and Outreach Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) can be seen at office locations across Iowa.

The local attendance site is the Washington County Extension and Outreach Building, 2223 250th St. Preregistration is required. Walk-ins are not guaranteed admission. The course runs from 9 to 11:30 a.m.

The registration fee is \$45 on or before Feb. 25 and \$60 after February 25. To register or to obtain additional information about the CIC, contact Holly Beinhart at the ISU Extension and Outreach Washington County office at 319-653-4811 or go to <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/xhvaeb9>

The course will provide continuing instructional credit for commercial pesticide applicators certified in categories 3O, 3T, and 3OT. The IDALS-required topics to be covered are personal protective equipment and safe handling; professionalism, storage of pesticides, including chemical security; and pests, pest management; and pesticides.

Our Yesterdays

1971

Roy's Upholstery which is operated by Steve R. (Roy) Rusk has moved from the Morgan farm near Rubio to the east half of the Greeson building on the south side of the square in Richland.

Wilford Cox has taken over the school bus route formerly driven by Louie Egbert who resigned. Mr. Egbert will work for Camper Supply and Distributors out of Ottumwa. His territory includes Eastern Iowa and northeast Missouri.

A Davenport man was killed when a North Western freight train rammed his car broadside at a railroad crossing just north of the Bernard Mottet farm on Highway 1.

Jack Schreiner, Ollie, produced a documented yield of 144.5 bushels per acre of corn. We are proud of this outstanding yield because it is a good indication of the kind of corn performance Funk can produce in this area.

1946

Gaylord Yule arrived home with his Army discharge after serving four years and four months in the service with time spent in New Caledonia, Bougainville and in the Philippines.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Hiatt

celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Some of the ads were a Closing Out Sale by Mrs. Etta Jones. Announcement ad of the purchase of the Produce and Feed business by W.R. Davis and Son from Harold E. Greeson

1951

A meeting was held at Farson to form a basketball league. There were four schools represented; Farson, Hedrick, Ollie, and Batavia. It was decided to form a basketball league for next year consisting of the four schools mentioned and Agency.

The Pekin, Iowa Post Office closed. The patrons of that office will be served by the Packwood rural route, carried by Walter Clark. There are eleven patrons.

The following excerpts are from an article written by Dora Halferty Chacey in the Richland Clarion, March 1, 1951, entitled 'The Park and Business Houses Around the Square.'

Back in the seventies, I remember that captain Leslie Bassett had a small store, where Dr. Irwin's dental office stands now, the home of our editors. He kept a sort of notion or variety store. Captain Bassett

was our postmaster for a long time. Going east on the south side, was the Bryfogle Harness shop, the Coleman's General Store, the Robert Isreal store and home attached; then the Logan residence, Andy Logan did all the mason work in our home. The Logan home later became a hotel. Where the Isreal's were so long, they at last sold to Al Goodwin, who became a well-liked and successful businessman. On east was the Swayze store and residence, last building on the south side. The Masonic Hall occupied the third floor of the Swayze building.

Across on the outside corner, was the Charlton and Stalker Bank. Then across on the east side, it seems rather uncertain as to business houses for I don't recall any before the Mart Bristow Store. On north, I remember the Morgan Jones residence, then the corner room where the Schreiner Drug Store was located, but both these places were some years later than the ones mentioned before. Then across the corner still stands the Thompson hotel. I was sure it had been built prior to the time that James Brown came with his bride from Ohio in late August, 1856.

A name perpetuated by a district

The town of Pekin is located only a short distance northwest of Linby in Polk Township and was served by the Burlington Western, the first railroad that passed through the area in 1882, but it didn't enjoy the rapid growth of that enjoyed by Linby.

That is probably because the second railroad that served Linby and caused its rapid growth didn't serve Pekin.

Pekin straddles the Jefferson-Keokuk County line. It is possible for a person to walk only a few steps from one county to the other and still be in Pekin.

While the town has dwindled to only a few homes and a going elevator business, its name will be perpetuated for many years to come because of the Pekin Community School District named after the little community.

The area was once an auxiliary landing field for the Ottumwa Naval Air Base during World War II. The U.S. Government purchased 36 acres in 1943 and concrete runways were built.

Following the war the Pekin Community School District purchased 90 acres of the government land for one dollar.

Perhaps the community's only claim to fame is the fact it was the home

of the McCreery Family male quartet. It was composed of James, Fred and Harry McCreery and their father, Roy McCreery. Roy's wife served as accompanist.

The Pekin post office was established December 7, 1903. The hardware store across the street south was owned by Will Eckley. Later Ralph Hayes had a garage in connection with the store. A mill was located a short distance west. The bank was located on the north side of the street west of the general store.

The original railroad that passed through the area was sold to the CB&Q Railroad shortly after the turn of the century and its depot at Pekin was a lively place. There were a number of daily freight and passenger trains each way. Area farmers shipped large numbers of hogs and cattle from the Pekin stockyards.

It was also stated the new town was first named South Ioka after a small community that was already in existence a short distance away in Keokuk County.

A number of acres were laid out in lots and streets as early residents expected the town to grow. But that growth didn't materialize.

A history of the Pekin

Church states the first meeting of the group was held March 2, 1889, at Ioka Station, later named Pekin. Peter Eckley was named chairman. It was reported \$787.85 had been raised and labor promised for the church building. There were 105 subscribers. A suitable location was needed for the building. Among a number of sites offered, a site donated by A. Flint in Pekin was decided upon.

George Herman signed a contract to erect the building 28 x 36 feet and 14 foot high posts with arched ceiling and alcove at the rear, for \$725 except for the rock foundation. The rock was donated by Alex Patterson quarried from his farm located four miles northwest of the site. The quarrying and hauling was done by volunteer labor.

The church was originally non-denominational with no one group allowed to use the building without consent of the trustees and not more than once a month.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized during the winter of 1893 and 1894. This congregation gained permission to use the building two weeks each month and later services every week.

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JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' PROCEEDINGS

February 9, 2026
At 8:30 A.M., Chair Drish called the meeting of the Board of Supervisors to order. The meeting was held in the first-floor meeting room of the Jefferson County Courthouse.

Board members present were: Susie Drish, Chairman; Joe Ledger, Vice-Chairman; Lee Dimmitt, Supervisor. It was moved by Dimmitt, seconded by Ledger that the minutes for the February 2nd, 2026 meeting be acknowledged. All "Aye". Motion carried.

It was motioned by Drish, seconded by Ledger to authorize Dimmitt to be the point of contact for an employee's workman's comp claim. All "Aye". Motion carried. Supervisors met with the County Engineer.

It was moved by Dimmitt, seconded by Drish to approve a modified posting for Bridge # 201590, Buckeye Avenue from: 20 Tons all traffic to: 1 Truck 40 tons for combination vehicles, 28 tons Tandem straight truck. All "Aye". Motion carried.

Ledger motioned, Dimmitt seconded to approve the 2026 contract rock proposal. All "Aye". Motion carried. It was motioned by Dimmitt, seconded by Drish that the following resolution be approved:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Jefferson, Iowa:

Approve the final plat and cause its approval to be entered on the plat. PASSED AND APPROVED this 9th day of February, 2026.

AYES: Susie Drish, Lee Dimmitt, Joe Ledger, ATTEST: Christy L. Conner

It was motioned by Ledger, seconded by Drish to approve the following resolution:

RESOLUTION WHEREAS, the final plat for the Aurora Farm Subdivision is found to conform to the applicable ordinances and standards of the County, and WHEREAS, the final plat for the Aurora Farm Subdivision substantially conforms to the preliminary plat, and WHEREAS, it appears that approval will not be in conflict with the purposes of the Subdivision ordinance.

IT IS MOTIONED BY DIMMITT, seconded by Ledger to approve the following

resolution:

RESOLUTION IN THE JEFFERSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

WHEREAS, Iowa Code section 331.903 states that the number of deputies, assistants, and clerks for each office shall be determined by the board and the number and approval of each appointment shall be adopted by a resolution recorded in the minutes of the board, and

WHEREAS, Jefferson County Sheriff desires to step increase one Correctional Officer salary to full pay, therefore, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of Jefferson County, Iowa, that the Jefferson County Sheriff is authorized to step increase the salary to full pay for Correctional Officer, Addison Knaak.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of Jefferson County, Iowa, that Addison Knaak's salary, step increases from \$47,245.65 to full pay of \$52,495.16 per year, effective March 1st, 2026.

Passed and approved this 9th day of February, 2026.

AYES: Lee Dimmitt, Susie Drish, Joe Ledger, ATTEST: Christy Conner

project. Ledger seconded. All "Aye". Motion carried.

It was moved by Dimmitt and seconded by Drish to table variance request of subdivision ordinance from Marcus Clark with French Reneker. All "Aye". Motion carried.

Committee Reports: Drish attended Farm Bureau meeting. Dimmitt reported on McElhinney House Foundation Board meeting, Farm Bureau, and Jefferson County Progressive Housing Corp. Ledger met with Farm Bureau Women, Pathfinders, and attended Farm Bureau meeting.

Public Comment: None. All "Aye". Motion carried. Ledger left the meeting. It was moved by Dimmitt to adjourn. All "Aye". Motion carried.

ATTEST: Christy L. Conner County Auditor

Susie Drish, Chairman Board of Supervisors

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