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Recycled shingles put to the test

Material being applied to some county roads

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Lee County residents may have noticed a different kind of material being applied to some roads, alleys and streets.

That material is an example of recycling at its best – using discarded shingles as the main ingredient in a material designed to help control dust and add traction to surfaces.

In an attempt to duplicate a process used by other entities, such as Scott County, the Lee County Secondary Roads Department has been using material from recycled, ground shingles at some intersections and road sections in recent weeks. One of these areas is the intersection of Hilton and Valley Roads near Keokuk.

“We put it down in test strips,” Ben Hull of the roads department told Lee County



JOE BENEDICT/MISSISSIPPI VALLEY PUBLISHING

In an attempt to duplicate a process used by other entities, such as Scott County, the Lee County Secondary Roads Department has been using material from recycled, ground shingles at some intersections and road sections in recent weeks. One of these areas is this intersection at Hilton and Valley Roads near Keokuk.

Supervisors at their meeting Tuesday. “We hopefully can realize some safety and cost savings benefits.”

Hull added that crews are still experimenting with the ratio of the shingles material and binding ingredients.

A typical asphalt mix might include 6 percent petroleum, with aggregates like rock and sand. Adding ground-up, sand-like asphalt shingles into the brew reduces the need for new petroleum and therefore should eventually reduce road maintenance costs.

“With the asphalt shingles on Valley Road I’ve heard nothing but positive comments,” Supervisor Gary Folluo said. “People are asking why we don’t do the rest of the road. I tell them we are just testing, trying to find the right mix.”

Folluo said he hopes the use of the recycled shingles continues and increases because “It’s a great way to resolve the dust control issues.”

Lee County resident Mary VanPelt agreed, but asked why the intersection at Airport and Middle Roads had not been one of the areas tested with the new material.

“This is a drop off for Central Lee open enrollment students,” VanPelt said. “That should have been done before school starts.”

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THE DOCTOR IS IN

Dr. Chris Peters is the Republican candidate seeking the 2nd Congressional District seat, but that was hardly mentioned Tuesday to local Rotarians. Instead, he focused on healthcare.

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ARSON ARREST

A Hamilton, Ill., woman is charged with first degree arson after allegedly igniting clothing while visiting a friend.

P3



POTHOLES

City crews are out patching potholes.

INSIDE TODAY

NOTABLE



BRIAN STEFENSMEIER is appointed to an empty seat on the Fort Madison School Board. Full story on Page 2.

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Democratic chair is optimistic about November

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Now is the time.

That’s the message Iowa Democratic Chairman Troy Price and his workers are trying to convey to voters in preparation for the November elections.

“With kids heading back to school, it couldn’t be a more clear choice,” Price said Tuesday during his stop in Fort Madison. “Iowa used to pride itself at being number one in education. That’s no longer the case.”

Price said there was no increase in state aid to schools in 2011 and 2012 and that since there only a 1 to 2 percent increase has been granted.

“With inflation, you have to do a 3 percent increase just to keep up,” Price said.

He said the result in this lack of funding has forced school districts to make tough choice that have resulted in larger class sizes, consolidation of school districts, sharing staff and administrators, and “shutting noncore subjects like art and music.”

Community college and state universities have been hit as well, Price says, with the result being higher tuition costs and cuts in programs.

“The governor is out there talking about how she values education, but the rhetoric doesn’t match the reality,” he said.

In addition to education, Price says Iowans are fed up with much of the changes put in place by the Republican-controlled legislature and blessed by a Republican governor.

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SKYLER HOLTAMP/DAILY DEMOCRAT

The Elliott Test Kitchen hosted an Appreciation Luncheon for Fort Madison Middle School teachers. Pictured are (from left) Shar Upton, Brenda Sporkman and Dominique Akpore dishing up the BLT entree. Founder and owner of Elliott’s Test Kitchen, Kumar Wickramasingha, gave a speech during the meal during which he thanked the educators for their service.

FMMS teachers treated to lunch by chefs at Elliott test Kitchen

SKYLER HOLTAMP
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The Elliott Test Kitchen gave a hearty thank you to the Fort Madison Middle School educators Tuesday by doing what it does best – preparing a unique, tasty lunch.

The dinner, like many others held at the Test Kitchen, are always monitored by the founder and owner Kumar Wickramasingha, and the meals are typically cooked and served by the children that participate in his after-school program.

Test Kitchen founder Kumar Wickramasingha gave a speech on his appreciation for the educators in the area.

“My mission statement has always been to empower dedicated educators to serve area students,” said Wickramasingha. “I truly believe that it is important to bring professional educators into the community for a strong educational foundation.”

The goal of the foundation is to provide a safe environment



SKYLER HOLTAMP/DAILY DEMOCRAT

Ellie Huebner, 11, was one of many kids serving the Fort Madison Middle School teachers Tuesday at Elliott Test Kitchen. The teachers received a bountiful dinner, including a BLT and a cupcake from Kelly’s Cupcakes in Fort Madison.

and qualified assistance for students who need extra help with homework for required subjects, test preparation, and

advice about college entrance requirements.

SEE LUNCH, PAGE 5

ROADS: New material may extend landfill's life

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Supervisor Matt Plug agreed and said it should be made a priority.

There is not charge for depositing shingles at the Great River Regional Waste Authority (GRRWA) landfill.

Concerned that more shingle material is needed to do all the Lee County roads in need, District 3 Supervisor candidate Rich Harlow asked whether the grounded shingles could be purchased elsewhere.

"Can we just buy the material instead of grinding the shingles?" Harlow asked.

Hull said the shingles being used are waste and not new material.

"There's no cost for this material," Hull said.

Folluo said he doubted the material could be purchased elsewhere, even if the county wanted to pursue that option and pay the added cost.

"And, it extends the life of the landfill instead of burying those shingles," added Supervisor Ron Fedler. "That's a huge benefit. That landfill isn't going to last forever. Eventually, it's going to fill up."

PRICE: Past may work in the Democrats' favor

(Continued from Page 1)

"The reality is the legislature has put tax cuts in place that benefit wealthier Iowans by thousands of dollars, but for working class families it's a couple of hundred," Price said. "Or, moves like giving Apple \$20 million in state dollars to create 50 jobs like they did in Waukeez."

The privatization of Medicaid that Price says has created problems for 600,000 Iowans, and the overhaul of collective bargaining in the state are two more reasons he believes Democrats will capture the needed seats in the House and Senate, as well as the governor's office, in November.

"Cutting collective bargaining, which was created by Republicans, worked well for 40 years. Democrats were willing to talk and present their case on the subject, but Republicans shut the door and wouldn't discuss it," Price said.

He says Democrats need only retain their current seats and win six seats in the Senate and 10 in the House to become the majority party.

"We have 95 contested races in the House and 23 in the Senate," he added. "We also have the strongest ticket for the governor's race that we've had in years."

He says enthusiasm is greater this election cycle because of the drastic changes the GOP-controlled state lawmakers have made in recent years. This is evident, he says, by Democratic candidates raising more financial support than their GOP opponents "as of the last reporting period."

Price started his career as an intern for Gov. Tom Vilsack, and later for Gov. Chet Culver and Lt. Gov. Patty Judge. He is a longtime political operative and strategist, and headed up Iowa's largest LGBT advocacy group, One Iowa. He worked on Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign and for President Obama's re-election campaign. He was elected chairman of the Iowa Democratic Party in July of 2017.

LUNCH: Gallagher to be 'middle man' for teachers

(Continued from Page 1)

Wickramashingha also introduced Christy Gallagher as the new correspondent at the high school. Gallagher has been the 6th grade teacher at the Middle School for the past two years. She will be available at the middle school for any teachers looking for additional information on how they can participate.

"I will be letting teachers know what's going on at the Test Kitchen and will be kind of the middle man for Kumar," said Gallagher.

An open house was announced during the speech for next Tuesday. Students interested in taking a tour through the Test Kitchen can talk to Gallagher for additional information.

The Test Kitchen is funded through donations, fundraisers and local and state grants.

Food from Tuesday's meal was donated by Amy Diewold and cupcakes were donated by Kelly's Cupcakes.

GOVERNMENT

Lee County Supervisors will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 28, at the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

Planning & Zoning, Fort Madison, will meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 28, at City Hall.

Green Bay Levee & Drainage District will hold a regular meeting at 7 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 30, at Heartland Co-op, east of Wever.

Lee County Supervisors will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 4, at the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

LCEDG's funding request tabled

Varley says city can't afford what it once could with riverboat money

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A funding request from the Lee County Economic Development Group (LCEDG) was tabled after a lengthy and sometimes tense discussion at Tuesday night's meeting of the Fort Madison City Council.

The city has contributed to LCEDG in recent years – \$50,000 annually in 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 and \$25,000 for 2017-18.

In his report to the council, City Manager David Varley said the city made a 3-year commitment for funding and did so when the city was receiving \$300,000 annually from Catfish Bend Casinos. The riverboat pact and revenue died up, which Varley says prompted the council to reduce funding to \$25,000.

However, Joe Steil, CEO of the economic development group, said the city made a 5-year commitment, with the understanding that the \$50,000 amount could be adjusted as needed.

Varley told the council that in addition to the loss of riverboat revenue, city revenue is down

\$242,000 for a combined reduction in income of \$834,000. Further, he says the General Fund balance is at its lowest in years.

Varley said LCEDG's request was not included in the city budget because the group never made a request during the budget process. If a contribute is made to LCEDG this budget year, Varley said the amount will have to come from other department budgets.



Steil

LCEDG currently receives \$210,000

from the Lee County Supervisors, which is reviewed and budgeted for each year and funding from Fort Madison and Keokuk, in equal amounts (when Fort Madison reduced its contribution to \$25,000 last year, Keokuk officials did the same). The rest of its funding comes from private contributions from businesses, citizens and industries.

"We have departments and projects that would like to go back to the way things were (when the city had the \$300,000 per year from the riverboat casino). You don't think you should live within your means," Varley told Steil. "I'm offended that you want \$50,000 while we're down \$800,000."

Dennis Fraise, chief operating officer of LCEDG, said they are grateful for any level of funding the two cities can provide, but said LCEDG's efforts are needed

most now for existing businesses and for soliciting potential new ones.

Most council members agreed that economic development efforts – including workforce development – are important, but they wanted to review LCEDG's annual budget and to review regular progress reports like the supervisors do.



Varley

"Economic development is important, there is no doubt," said Mayor Brad Randolph. "They do many things on our behalf."

Councilman Chris Greenwald said the city also plays a role in funding by offering incentives to new businesses and on projects, in addition to any annual payment it may pledge.

"You say you're doing great and I do think economic development is important, but if you're doing such a great job, then my tax base should be growing and things are just fine," Greenwald said.

Greenwald suggested that LCEDG's funding requested be tabled until the next council meeting. Randolph said this would give city staff time to research whether the city's commitment was for 3 years or 5 years because deciding whether to make a contribution this year or pledge future funding.

FMPD stresses safety during back to school

While students and teachers return to school after summer break, there will be an increase of traffic consuming the roadways of Fort Madison. Students will be walking to their bus pick-up and drop-off points, riding their bikes or driving to and from school.

The Fort Madison Police Department is reminding parents and their children to refresh their knowledge on getting to and from school safely. Even if your kids have already walked out the door for the first day of classes, it's not too late – safety must be the first lesson of every new

school year. Parents who drop off and pick up students need to exercise compliance with parking regulations.

Along with this will be an increase of motor traffic on roadways. We want to also remind everyone to exercise extra caution during the morning hours and mid-afternoon hours now that school is in session. Have your foot covering the brake pedal and your eyes scanning the road when entering a marked school zone. When children are at hand, school zones require you to obey the posted 25 mph or slower speed limit, regard-

less of the day of week or time of day. For example, if it's a Friday night at 10 p.m. and you are in a school zone when kids are present (maybe a football game just ended), you are still required to adjust your speed to obey the slower school zone speed limit.

To combat end-of-summer alcohol related fatalities the Fort Madison Police Department will be vigilant watching for impaired drivers, texting drivers, and unbelted drivers.

We want to welcome everyone back to a safe and fun school year.

Tim Sittig, Chief of Police

Suspect leads officials to body of missing student Mollie Tibbetts

RYAN FOLEY
Associated Press

MONTEZUMA (AP) – A man from Mexico living in the U.S. illegally has confessed to kidnapping college student Mollie Tibbetts while she was running in her small Iowa hometown, killing her and dumping her body in a rural field, authorities said Tuesday.

Cristhian Bahena Rivera, 24, was arrested and charged with first-degree murder in the death of Tibbetts, whose July 18 disappearance set off a massive search involving state and federal authorities.

Rivera led investigators early Tuesday to a body believed to be Tibbetts in a cornfield about 12 miles (19 kilometers) southeast of Brooklyn, Iowa, where Tibbetts was last seen running, Division of Criminal Investigation special agent Rick Rahn said.

"I can't speak about the motive. I can just tell you that it seemed that he followed her, seemed to be drawn to her on that particular day, for whatever reason he chose to abduct her," Rahn told reporters at a news conference outside the sheriff's office in Montezuma, where Rivera was being jailed.

Investigators said they zeroed in on Rivera after obtaining footage from surveillance cameras in Brooklyn. The footage showed a Chevy Malibu connected to Rivera that was driving back and forth as Tibbetts was running in

the area, Rahn said.

An affidavit attached to the criminal complaint against Rivera alleged that he admitted to investigators he got out of his car and started running alongside Tibbetts.

Tibbetts grabbed her phone and said she was going to call the police. The affidavit says Rivera panicked and then said he blacked out. Rivera next remembers seeing her earphones on his lap, and taking her bloody body out of the trunk of his car, it said.

"The defendant further described during the interview that he dragged Tibbetts on foot from his vehicle to a secluded location in a cornfield," the affidavit said.

Investigators said they had earlier searched the area for Tibbetts but didn't find her, noting the body was covered by corn stalks.

Investigators believe that Rivera is from Mexico and had been living in the area from four to seven years, Rahn said. He said that investigators have interrogated him with the help of a translator.

Rahn said an autopsy would be performed on the body Wednesday by the state medical examiner's office. He said that the autopsy would assist investigators in understanding whether she had been assaulted or tried to fight him off.

A conviction on first-degree murder carries a mandatory sentence of life in prison without parole in Iowa, which doesn't

have the death penalty.

Tibbetts' disappearance set off a massive search involving dozens of officers from the FBI, as well as state and local agencies. They focused much of their efforts in and around Brooklyn, searching farm fields, ponds and homes. Investigators asked anyone who was around five locations, including a car wash, a truck stop and a farm south of town, to report if they saw anything suspicious on July 18.

Last week, Vice President Mike Pence met privately with the Tibbetts family during a visit to Iowa and told them that "you're on the hearts of every American."

At Brooklyn City Hall, city clerk Sheri Sharer said Tuesday was a sad day for the town.

"It never crossed our mind that she wouldn't come home safe," she said.

Willey's group has been publicizing a reward fund that raised around \$400,000 for any tip that led to Tibbetts' safe return. He said the fund, which included more than 220 donations from individuals, will now likely be used for any information that helps police catch anyone responsible for her death.

Tibbetts, a psychology major, would have started her junior year this week in Iowa City, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) east of Brooklyn. She was staying with her longtime boyfriend and working while home from school over the summer.