

Room to grow in ISU secondary Sports, 1B



Dad pays tribute

Father says memories of time with daughter shot, killed precious Iowa Today, 2A

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## Two families lose sons in tragic I-80 crash

Children were returning from a birthday party

By Lee Hermiston, The Gazette

OXFORD — What was supposed to be a weekend of fun ended in fatal tragedy for three Cedar Rapids boys. Braden Brown, 12, Oneimus Quarterman, 11, and KaDaess Adams, 12, all of Cedar Rapids,

were killed Sunday when the sport utility vehicle they were riding in turned in front of a semi near Oxford on Interstate 80, authorities said. Braden Brown's brother, Mason, 11, and grandfather, Terrance J. Edwards, 62, of Cedar Rapids, were injured. Edwards was driving. Laura and Steve Brown, Braden and Mason's parents, said in an interview Monday they spent the weekend at

the Wasserbahn Waterpark in Williamsburg, celebrating a cousin's birthday. Their sons invited Oneimus and KaDaess, two of the boys' closest friends. "They're like brothers," Laura Brown said. After spending the night Saturday, the group got up Sunday morning, had breakfast and swam before leaving Williamsburg. Laura and Steve didn't have room in

their Suburban, so the four boys were set to ride back with Edwards. "They were all loaded up and started leaving," Steve Brown said. "I yelled at them, 'Put on your seat belts.'" The Browns said Edwards forgot a sweatshirt, so he turned the SUV around to retrieve it. While driving back toward Williamsburg, west on Interstate 80, Edwards learned someone already had picked

up his sweatshirt. So he went to turn back around. Edwards was in the right lane when he decided to use a median crossover and head back east toward Cedar Rapids, authorities said. But when he moved into the left lane, Edwards was struck by a semi headed in the same direction and driven by Slawomir Nowakowski, 52, of Anaheim, ▶ CRASH, PAGE 9A

## Reynolds: New laws help Iowans seeking 'way up'



Gov. Kim Reynolds signs a bill Monday as state Rep. Ashley Hinson, R-Marion, watches at the Educational Leadership and Support Center in Cedar Rapids. Hinson introduced legislation that became House File 637, which among other things requires school districts to make a report to the Board of Educational Examiners within 30 days of taking disciplinary action against a certified employee.

### Governor debating whether to sign sports betting bill

By James Q. Lynch, Gazette Des Moines Bureau

CEDAR RAPIDS — It's difficult for Gov. Kim Reynolds to name one "most significant" accomplishment of the 2019 Iowa legislative session that ended late last month because "so

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many of the things we worked on are so intertwined." Many of her priorities going into the session — the Future Ready Iowa workforce initiative, establishing a children's mental health program, passing a second-chance employment law and

addressing K-12 school funding — were ways to "help Iowans who are looking for a way up."

"The legislation we passed this year, I think, moves in that direction," she said Monday while visiting Cedar Rapids. "The biggest winners were students and families and small businesses and farmers."

Now the focus must shift to ▶ REYNOLDS, PAGE 11A

## UI study finds wind turbines viable in Linn County

But few rural residents want them, report says

By Mitchell Schmidt, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — A University of Iowa report has found that a good portion of Linn County could provide a viable home for utility-scale wind turbines, but public opinions on such developments might be lukewarm at best. Graduate students Luke Foelsch, Gia DeBartolo, Michael Delp and Zhi Chen completed the feasibility analysis of wind turbines in Linn County, which was presented Monday to the Linn County Board of Supervisors. The county began working last fall with the students on the feasibility study.

Despite wind energy's reputation as a source more suitable for western Iowa, the report found several large swaths of Linn County — primarily in the northern, rural portions — could provide a suitable home to wind turbines.

Years ago, turbine height and the location of major transmission lines confined most wind turbine production to Iowa's western counties.

"There is a viable future for utility-scale wind development in Linn County. We hope that all of these put together will provide a good foundation for the future of Linn County," Foelsch said during the board's Monday meeting.

The report surveyed all of Linn County on its feasibility for wind turbines — focusing on regulatory restrictions, suitability of the site for turbines and compatibility of wind development with the area.

Among the takeaways in the report:

• In terms of current regulations, more than 116,000 acres, or about one-quarter of Linn County, could allow for turbine development.

• More than 50 percent of the county has a high suitability for turbines. Another 40 percent has medium suitability.

• More than 60 percent of the county has a high compatibility for large-scale solar energy.

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## Going, going ... 1 million species on the brink

Amid U.N. report, Trump aims to weaken protections for endangered species

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — Humans have pushed about 1 million varieties of plants and animals to the brink of extinction, according to a new United Nations Report that arrives as congressional

Republicans and the Trump administration try to diminish endangered species protections in the United States.

Many of the species identified in the report could be extinct within decades, it says, amid a "mass extinction event" caused by humans putting more flora and fauna on the edge of eradication than ever before in their history. By transforming land and waterways, exploiting

organisms, polluting, shifting species' habitats and fueling climate change, humanity has eroded nature dramatically since the Industrial Revolution, according to the authors.

The report, written by 145 researchers from 50 countries in the past three years, is the most thorough piece of research to date on the collapse of biodiversity on Earth, which is unfolding

at an "unprecedented rate," and the repercussions of human actions.

"Biodiversity and nature's contributions to people are our common heritage and humanity's most important life-supporting 'safety net,'" Sandra Diaz, a co-chairwoman of the report, said in a statement. "But our safety net is stretched almost to

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# Species/Scientists push for dramatic action

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breaking point.” While heat-trapping emissions climb and ecosystems are threatened by elimination, President Donald Trump’s administration wants to rewrite the Endangered Species Act, the 1970s law considered the gold standard for species protection globally, and Congress has yet to take up any robust legislation to address biodiversity.

Supporters of the changes argue that current rules usurp the power of states to devise their own strategies to protect their plant and animal life, and inhibit economic development, especially in western states.

Trump’s former interior secretary, Ryan Zinke, proposed three rules last year to significantly weaken the Endangered Species Act. One proposal would water down the protection for species “threatened” under the law, while another would not consider incremental harms to habitat unless they directly hurt species.

Those regulations are expected to be finalized within weeks.

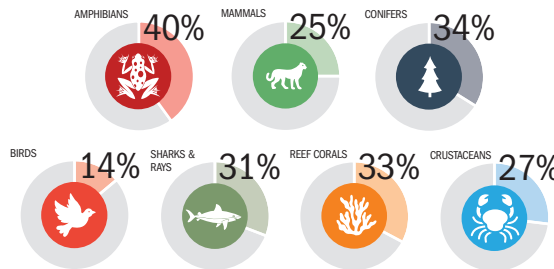
“Even in the face of an extinction crisis that could burn through a million species, Trump seems intent on pouring more gasoline on the fire,” Noah Greenwald, endangered species program director at the Center for Biological Diversity, which has sued the Trump administration more than 100 times, said in a statement about the U.N. report.

“His administration is kneecapping the Endangered Species Act and giving pollut-

## Historic loss of species

More than 1 million species of plants and animals are threatened with extinction by humans, according to a biodiversity report released by the United Nations.

### Species at risk for extinction



Source: AP International Union for Conservation of Nature

THS graphic

ers free rein at the worst possible time, when our planet’s wildlife is already headed for disaster,” he said.

### BROAD LEGISLATION

Separately, the administration is working to roll back protection for species in the United States to the benefit of oil-and-gas drilling and exploration where vulnerable animals live.

Under Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, the federal government, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in March moved to remove the grey wolf from protections under the Endangered Species Act. Also in March, the

Bureau of Land Management shrank protection for the sage grouse in seven western states, following requests from GOP governors and oil companies to do so. And the administration has moved forward with plans to drill in the Arctic Ocean, off Alaska’s northern coast, where caribou migrate to give birth.

In an emailed statement, Jacob Malcom, director of the Center for Conservation Innovation at the Defenders of Wildlife, said broad policy decisions are particularly threatening.

“The most damaging actions for biodiversity from the Trump administration are not

necessarily species-specific,” Malcom said. “They are big national policy changes, such as long-lasting damage to the Endangered Species Act programs through budgetary cuts, as well their revisions of the ESA regulations and roll-backs of protections on federal lands and waters.”

### GOING ‘AGAINST THE SCIENCE’

With Earth’s human population expected to hit 9 billion in 2050, dramatic and aggressive steps are needed to stabilize species populations, scientists say.

Since 1900, native species in “most major” land habitats have decreased in population

by at least 20 percent. More than 40 percent of amphibians, more than 33 percent of “reef forming corals,” and more than one-third of marine mammals are at risk of extinction.

“Ecosystems, species, wild populations, local varieties and breeds of domesticated plants and animals are shrinking, deteriorating or vanishing,” Josef Settele, another co-chair of the study, said. “The essential, interconnected web of life on Earth is getting smaller and increasingly frayed.”

In an interview, Greenwald said the U.S. government is making species conservation more difficult.

“They make it harder for species to gain protection,” Greenwald said. “They really just go against the science.”

Officials at FWS announced last week the agency was removing the American burying beetle from Endangered Species Act protections. The beetle, like other elements of nature, provides a service for society that can go unnoticed: It cleans up carrion by burying carcasses in which it lays eggs that will hatch into larvae that feed off the body.

In the U.N. study, the authors underscore how plants and animals pollinate crops, purify air and water, create natural medicines and food stocks, and grid against flooding and natural disasters.

As Greenwald put it, they recognize the value of what ecosystems naturally do and protect. “A clean river has value for all of us, but you can’t sell it,” he said.



Jim Stroschek/The Gazette

A worker waits to take off a lifting strap fixed around a turbine blade as it is secured to the hub at Alliant Energy’s English Farms Wind Farm near Deep River in Potosi County. The farm with 69 wind turbines is expected to produce about 170 megawatts of electricity, enough to power about 60,000 houses.

## Turbines/Report provides guideline

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In addition to surveying the land, UI students also compiled public opinions on wind development from about 250 residents in a public survey — consisting of about 40 percent rural residents and 60 percent residents of urban or incorporated areas.

The survey found that about 72 percent of respondents were favorable to wind projects, yet about 86 percent of rural residents said they were unlikely to want to host a wind farm on their property.

Primary concerns included the visual impact, noise associated with turbines and shadow flicker — when rotating blades cast intermittent shadows — or ice throw.

“I think the developer has their work cut out for them in terms of addressing public attitudes toward large-scale wind,” said Les Beck, director of Linn County Planning and Development.

Beck said there are no wind turbine applications before the county government, but said the feasibility report should provide a guideline for future

discussion should an application be received. If a wind turbine application is received, public input would be provided at two levels during the conditional-use permit process — at the planning and zoning commission and at the board of adjustment.

Officials said public education meetings might help answer questions on wind turbines and raise the public’s opinion, similar to the Solar Power Hour meetings held during the Solarize Linn County effort in 2017. That program aimed to boost residential solar development across the county.

As wind development continues to push east, Delp said it’s possible Linn County could see project applications in the next few years.

About a third of Iowa’s energy generation — more than 7,300 megawatts — comes from wind. The Iowa Environmental Council estimated last year that 2,600 megawatts worth of wind turbines were under construction and another roughly 1,800 megawatts were in advanced development.

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## Reynolds/Discusses felon rights

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implementing those policies, she said. For the moment, Reynolds is spending much of her time reviewing — and signing into law — legislation lawmakers sent her.

She was in Cedar Rapids to sign House File 637, which establishes a timeline for reporting misconduct by certified school employees to the Board of Educational Examiners.

It requires schools to report misconduct or allegations of soliciting or consummating a sexual relationship with a student, falsifying grades or test scores, use of public property for personal use and being at school or school events under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The bill stemmed from allegations of a middle school teacher’s sexual abuse of a Linn County student, according to Rep. Ashley Hinson, R-Marion, who introduced legislation that became HF 637. Although there were three years of complaints and disciplinary action against the teacher, he

eventually was allowed to resign and keep his teaching license.

School districts were required to report those incidents, but there was no deadline for doing so, Hinson said. The new bill sets a 30-day deadline for reporting to the Board of Educational Examiners.

One bill Reynolds said she hasn’t decided whether to sign would regulate and tax sports betting, Reynolds, who has spoken about her own struggles with alcohol, has expressed concern about other addictions as well.

“It’s happening right now with no oversight,” she said of sports wagering. If sports betting becomes legal, the casinos that operate it would have “mechanisms” to identify people who are potentially addicted.

“So that’s a component I’m looking at,” she said. “I continue to hear from people on both sides of the issue.” The governor hasn’t given up on one of her priorities that didn’t win legislative approval this year — her call for a constitutional amendment to restore

“I believe Iowans believe in redemption and they will move in that direction.”

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds

felon voting rights after prison.

It passed the House 95-2, but stalled in the Senate Judiciary Committee over questions about what types of criminals would be eligible to get voting rights back and what they would have to do to become eligible.

“This is something I feel very strongly about,” Reynolds said. “I remind legislators all of the time that they’re not really voting on this. They’re allowing Iowans to weigh in.”

She’s asking legislators to put the issue on the ballot for Iowa voters to ratify or reject.

“I believe Iowans believe in redemption and they will move in that direction,” Reynolds said.

She’s encouraging lawmakers to use House File 650 as a starting point. It shields employers that hire people with criminal convictions from lawsuits. However, there are exceptions including murder, sexually violent offenses and if a dangerous weapon was used or exhibited.

Those exemptions would be a good place to start in writing a felon voting rights eligibility policy, according to Reynolds.

But she rejected some lawmakers’ suggestions that felons complete restitution before being eligible to have their voting rights restored. That is not required now under the process where the governor weighs each request individually.

“I don’t want to go down that route,” Reynolds said. “I don’t want to have their voting rights restored should be making progress on a restitution plan, she said, but “I don’t want to make it more difficult than what we have in place.”

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## ‘Logan’s Law’ honors late Charles City teen

Measure allows new ways to register as organ donor

By Thomas Nelson, Waterloo Courier

CHARLES CITY — Almost two years ago, Charles City lost a child with promise. On Monday, that child’s memory was engrained in history.

Logan’s Law, named for Logan Luft, 15, who died after an ATV crash in July 2017, was signed by Gov. Kim Reynolds at the Charles City Middle School Gymnasium. The law allows Iowa hunting and fishing licenses to have a spot designated for individuals to register their pledge to be an organ donor.

After his death, Logan’s tissue and bone donations went to 21 people in more than seven states.

“He saved lives,” said his mother, Wendy Luft. “He didn’t save just one life, he saved five. He gave the gift of life to five different people.”

Reynolds signed the law with Rep. Todd Prichard, D-Charles City. Sen. Waylon Brown, R-St. Ansgar, Logan Luft’s family and Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg nearby.

The middle school gymnasium was full of classmates, students and residents, along with many city officials including police Chief Hugh Anderson and Mayor Dean Andrews. After Reynolds signed the law, the crowd gave a standing ovation.

“This past two years, you have loved, uplifted and encouraged us in our journey. Today is Logan Luft day, a day we honor and celebrate a 15-year-old boy from Charles City, Iowa, who has officially changed the world,” Wendy Luft said. “We will share the importance of saving a life for the 600-plus Iowans who are currently waiting for an organ today.”

Logan’s Law allows young people a chance to register themselves as donors, said Suzanne Conrad, chief executive of the Iowa Donor Network.

“It’s less likely for a 14-year-old to be in front of a registry bureau, but through a hunting and fishing license you can.”