

THE IOLA REGISTER

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Technology cements Monarch's future

By RICK DANLEY
The Iola Register

In 1931, H.F.G. Wulf returned from a trip to Germany with a large grandfather clock of elegant, Modernist design: the blonde-tinted wood; the matte luster of its heavy, fluctuating chimes; the stenciled brass face around which a family of hands advanced with ruthless monotony.

Wulf installed the piece in the small ivy-covered building at the edge of a quarry on grounds that comprised the recently incorporated Monarch Cement Company. Wulf had taken over the Humboldt plant in 1913, just five short years after Monarch took its

first bite out of the limestone shelf along Coal Creek.

In the fall of 1934, Wulf, who in the course of his 62 years managed to transform himself from a poor Teutonic farm boy into a square-jawed captain of American industry, was found dead of a heart attack at his desk in the company office.

A decade later, his son, Walter Wulf Sr., was named president of the company and assumed his father's habit of showing up to work until the day he died. In 1997, his son, Walter Wulf Jr., became Monarch's current president, and his son, Walter H. Wulf III,

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Executive vice president Kent Webber and office manager Karen Emerson are overseeing the latest expansion at the Monarch Cement Company in Humboldt. The expansion is expected to be completed by Dec. 1. REGISTER/RICK DANLEY

COUNTY

Wind farm application on its way

By BOB JOHNSON
The Iola Register

A one-sentence comment from County Counselor Alan Weber during Tuesday morning's commission meeting is likely to have far-reaching implications.



"Rorik Peterson called and said he is preparing an application," Weber announced.

Peterson is associate director of development for EDP Renewables. The application is for construction of a wind farm in the northeast part of the county.

EDP has been acquiring options on land — about 14,000 acres in hand at last notice — so it may erect more than 50 — perhaps close to 100 — windmills to generate electricity. The site is convenient for the company, being close to transmission lines along the east side of the county to transport power generated into the grid. Transportation access is an important aspect of wind-

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Former Iolan offers theater improv workshop



Emerald Catron performs for a show she produced at Annoyance Theater called "PowerPoint Tournament of Champions."

PHOTO COURTESY OF GIDEON VANRIETTE

By SHELLIE SMITLEY
The Iola Register

Iola High School graduate Emerald Catron is bringing her on-stage experiences home to Iola.

Catron will be returning to the area long enough to offer a series of long-form improvisational theater workshops. The classes will run from July 10 to 14, capped by a 20-minute public performance July 15 at the Iola Community Theatre.

Two classes will be available, both limited to 16 students. A class for teenagers will run from 1 to 4 p.m., and

a class for adults from 7 to 10 p.m. The cost of either is \$25.

Catron, Chicago, graduated from IHS in 2000. She went on to graduate from Bennington College in Vermont with a degree in music composition and sound design for video. Since then, she has completed programs at the Peoples Improv Theater in New York City and Annoyance Theater in Chicago. She has studied under Second City ETC director Jeff Michalski and performed at venues such as The Peoples Improv Theater, Magnet Theater and Joe's Pub off-broadway.

Improv classes of this type

would typically cost \$200 to \$300 in a larger city, Catron said.

"I really wanted to bring this back to Iola," she said. "I wanted to make it affordable so that (Iolans) could experience it, too."

Long-form improv expands on a scene by adding structures that connect multiple scenes. The result is an entire show deriving from an initial idea. Long-form performers create the conditions as the story unfolds.

The benefits of experienc-

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ACA replacement bill worries disabled Kansans

By JIM MCLEAN
Kansas News Service

Disability rights advocates are among the strongest opponents of the Obamacare replacement legislation that Republicans are attempting to push through Congress.

If anything resembling the bill that the U.S. House approved in May or the one the Senate is considering passes, they say it will roll back decades of progress.

Both bills propose Medicaid cuts approaching \$1 trillion over 10 years. Cuts of that magnitude, they say, would force reductions in

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Mike Oxford, director of the Topeka Independent Living Resource Center, speaks to disability advocates in Topeka after returning from Washington, D.C., where he was arrested during a protest of the new Senate health bill. KANSAS NEWS



Iola Municipal Band

— Since 1871 —

At the bandstand Jake Ard, director

Thursday, June 29, 2017 8 p.m.

PROGRAM

Star Spangled Banner.....	(arr. J.P. Sousa)
National Emblem	E.E. Bagley
Hymn to the Fallen.....	John Williams
The Klaxon.....	Henry Fillmore
Canadian Sunset	Haywood & Gimbel
My Fair Lady	Frederick Loewe
Invercargill	Alex Lithgow
Begin the Beguine.....	Cole Porter
A Child's Lullaby.....	James Swearingen
	John Philip Sousa

Rained out concerts will be rescheduled for Friday evening.





Quote of the day

"He has Van Gogh's ear for music."
— Billy Wilder, director (1906-2002)



Hi: 90 Lo: 71

Monarch: Technology expansion work continues

Continued from A1

"Trey," is currently on the board of directors.

Still, through whatever flux the company has endured over the decades, the metronomic presence of Wulf's European clock has remained a constant. It sits in the lobby at Monarch to this day, ticking away, chiming on the hour.

According to one of the receptionists, whose desk rests about five feet from the antique clock, which has now marked time at Monarch for nearly a century: "I'm scared to death to touch it."

MONARCH CEMENT is marking its 109th year with a 20,000-square-foot expansion, which, in its intentions to house the bulk of the company's information technology resources, signals the company's embrace of a new future.

"We're big on history here," observed office manager Karen Emerson, a Monarch employee for nearly two decades. "We respect it and remember it — but we're modern, too, and know that we have to move forward."

Earlier this month, Emerson, along with executive vice president Kent Webber, provided a tour of the new administrative wing, which comprises a richly outfitted basement level, ground floor addition and reconstructed sun-room.

"The purpose for this expansion was technology driven," said Webber. "Computers and technology and digital communication, that's where it is and that's where we're going to go. When I came to work here, there were two IT people. In five years, there are now seven. And we're creating a space for 10. That's our growth area."

WEBBER is a large, gregarious man in a Hawaiian shirt and transition lenses, who, as the former manager of a construction company himself, must be the only vice president in his industry capable of speaking to the technical details of a building-trades project with the degree of fluency that he musters.

For example: On a recent Friday, Webber mounted the stairs from the new basement level to the currently roofless, sun-baked ground floor addition. "Hola!" he called out to one of the workers from Wichita-based Dondlinger & Sons Construction. "Hola!" the man shouted back.

"Now, do you see this?" said Webber, returning his attention to the building and pointing to a half-completed structural wall. "These are called insulating concrete forms. What this is, realistically, is two pieces of Styrofoam with a six and a quarter core that has rebar tied into it. You pour it full of concrete and the Styrofoam stays on. Do you know anything about R-value? I mean, you've at least heard of it?"

"Oh sure, I've heard of it," I lied.

"Well, a 2x4 wall is an R-13 wall. That there is a 200-miles-per-hour wind-load wall that produces R-48. So, it's sound-proof, it's extremely strong and it's highly insulated. ... This is our exterior en-



The Monarch Cement Company in Humboldt is in the midst of its latest expansion. The new, southerly wing of the Monarch administrative offices will house the bulk of the company's information technology resources and include a section devoted to sales. According to executive vice president Kent Webber, "Monarch has spared no expense to stay at the top of the industry in terms of technology." REGISTER/RICK DANLEY

velope. This area here will be our sales wing. And that whole side over there? That's all IT."

Webber and Emerson drew attention to the large multipurpose room, which will contain a full multimedia center and the latest in video-conferencing technology. They pointed out the room — "a solid concrete envelope with a solid concrete lid," as Webber described it — that will protect the company's server. And they highlighted the enormous training room given over entirely to IT.

"You're serious about IT, then?" I asked.

"We're dead serious," said Webber. "Let me give you the scope here."

The three of us stood in our hardhats in a large puddle of water in the half-done basement.

"What you see when you're standing here is the Monarch Cement Company. You see a plant that produces powdered cement. What's behind that, in terms of vertical integration, are 30 ready-mix plants strewn over three states, three block plants, and a huge customer base. Now, all of those plants communicate with servers that are here. They're managing inventory, they're managing customer information, billing. So, all of the intercommunication has to be run and stored.

"This [expansion] is an indication of change. There's a technological revolution that's going on and there are companies that are currently ahead of us technologically. But when we're done here, the vast majority will be behind us."

FOR A COMPANY that started out hauling rock from the quarry in a bevy of mule-drawn carts, the move toward high-tech infrastructure, as expensive as it might be, is only the natural next step in staying competitive in an already supply-heavy industry.

"If you want to become a concrete contractor," said Webber, who, over the course of his career has gone from buying Monarch cement to selling it, "you go to Lowe's and you get yourself a pickup and you buy yourself some shovels and some come-alongs and some of this and that. If you want to be in the cement business, however, you've



got to be prepared to spend \$300-\$400 million to do it. It's not an easy entrance business."

But it's something that Monarch is committed to doing, said Webber, in order to deliver on its reputation for consistent, high-quality cement. "When our customers are pouring concrete that's born of Monarch Cement, it's very very consistent. That's been Monarch's key from the beginning," Webber smiled. "Hey, if you can't tell I love working out here, you're blind."

"It's true, there is no better place to work," said Emerson, whose day-to-day value to Monarch Cement would seem to exceed the usual associations of her work title. "Plus, there are very few families in Humboldt who don't have some sort of Monarch tie." Emerson herself has extended that bond with the current expansion by insisting, where possible, on employing local contractors and tradespeople.

"Monarch has been at the core of this community for all of these years," said Webber. "The Wulfs' love for this town, and their demand for quality and consistency in their product, goes back more than a hundred years." According to Webber, Monarch currently owns more than 4,000 acres in the Humboldt area and has a quarry reserve that will likely last the company another 100 years — or a billion more ticks of the old German clock in the lobby. "Basically," concluded Webber, "we're budgeting for a very bright future here at Monarch."

Improv

Continued from A1

ing an improv theatre workshop extend outside the acting realm, said Catron. Participants will develop teamwork and listening skills, self-confidence and interviewing and public speaking skills, Catron said. Added benefits include learning how to react to their scene partners, how to make strong character choices for themselves and the importance of committing themselves to a scene so they never have to walk away feeling like they could have done more.

"It's going to be a lot of fun," Catron said. Lawyers, bankers and people working in advertising can all benefit, she said. Basically anyone who engages in conversation.

Sign-up for the class is through the Iola Community Theatre Facebook page or by calling Catron's mother, Tracy Keagle, at 620-333-2477.

Carrier Delivery Deadlines

Mon.-Thur.

City Limits of Iola
5:30 p.m.

All Other Carrier Routes
6:30 p.m.

Saturday

All Carrier Routes
9:30 a.m.

If you have not received your paper by this time, please call your carrier. If you cannot reach your carrier, call the Register office at (620) 365-2111.

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