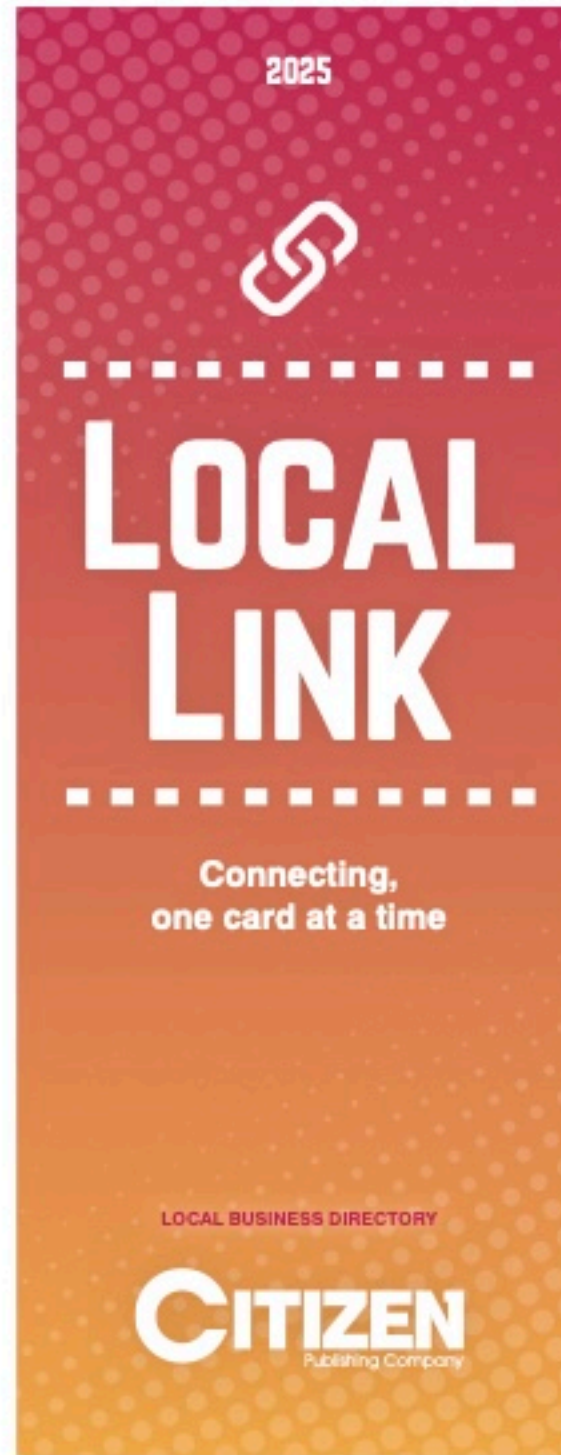


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Photo by Tyler Dorn

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**George Washington**

**1st President**

Born: Feb. 22, 1732  
Birthplace: Westmoreland Co., VA  
Died: Dec. 14, 1799  
Burial Site: Mount Vernon, VA  
Spouse: Martha Custis  
Occupation: Planter, soldier  
Political Party: Federalist  
Term: 1789-1797  
Vice President: John Adams

George Washington called the "Father of His Country." was a general, politician, lawyer, diplomat and commander of the Continental Army. Born on Feb. 22, 1732, in Westmoreland County, Virginia, he grew up on a plantation, and was an avid hunter. In 1753, he was appointed to lead a military expedition to the Ohio River valley. He was a member of the House of Burgesses, the Virginia legislative assembly. He was a member of the Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence. He was the first President of the United States, serving from 1789 to 1797.

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**John Adams**

**2nd President**

Born: Oct. 30, 1735  
Birthplace: Quincy, MA  
Died: July 4, 1826  
Burial Site: Quincy, MA  
Spouse: Abigail Adams  
Occupation: Lawyer, diplomat  
Political Party: Federalist  
Term: 1797-1801  
Vice President: Thomas Jefferson

John Adams, a patriot, lawyer, and diplomat, was one of the early political and social reformers. He was a member of the Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence. He was the second President of the United States, serving from 1797 to 1801.

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**Thomas Jefferson**

**3rd President**

Born: April 13, 1743  
Birthplace: Shadwell, VA  
Died: July 4, 1826  
Burial Site: Monticello, VA  
Spouse: Martha Wayles  
Occupation: Lawyer, farmer  
Political Party: Democratic-Republican  
Term: 1801-1809  
Vice President: Aaron Burr, George Clinton

Thomas Jefferson was the author of the Declaration of Independence and the author of the Bill of Rights. He was the third President of the United States, serving from 1801 to 1809.

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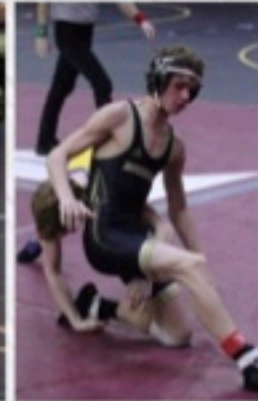
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An Exploration of Latino Cuisine  
CITYVIEW | Johnston, IA



**THE BUSINESSES BELOW HAVE DONATED TO BREAST CANCER AWARENESS RESEARCH**

## Shared Battle With Breast Cancer Brings Friends Even Closer

By Hannah Wingert

Vicki Muel and Heather Barth paths first crossed when Heather signed her daughter Sydney up for a Just for Kix dance class that Vicki was teaching. Then, both Sydney and Vicki's daughter Leena ended up in the Fillmore County 4-H Horse Project, and Vicki and Heather found themselves spending a lot of time together.

Last year, Heather and Vicki's friendship deepened in an unexpected way. A biopsy revealed that Vicki had breast cancer at the end of August. Just over a month later, Heather found out that she also had breast cancer.

Vicki's biopsy took place in mid-August at Olmsted Medical Center and two weeks later, she received the news that it was cancer. She was then seen at Mayo Clinic where she underwent additional testing to determine what type of cancer she had. She explained how she spent a full day at Mayo meeting with all of her doctors to plan her treatment and then went straight from there to the annual 4-H horse show. Overwhelmed with all of the information and reeling from the news, she remembers wondering if she would even be there the next year for the show. "And now I have," she said. "We just finished doing the horse show again."

Heather had an idea that something was wrong, but put it off because of how busy she was with 4-H. "First it was the county fair, then the state fair, then the horse show," she said. After those were done, a friend got stern with her to get checked out so she finally called Olmsted. After Heather's biopsy and mammogram, she was immediately referred to Mayo, just like Vicki had been. "Then it was a whirlwind," she said. On October 10th, 2024, her daughter's birthday, she found out that she had breast cancer.

To determine which type of breast cancer patients have, doctors test the cancer cells for estrogen receptors or ER, progesterone receptors or PR, and human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 or HER2. Vicki had triple positive lobular breast cancer, an aggressive form of cancer. Heather's news wasn't any better. She was diagnosed with triple negative, invasive ductal carcinoma with inflammatory skin involvement. "We had completely opposite cancers," Heather said. Yet, their shared experiences brought them closer together. "It was cool to have someone to talk to at the 4-H events we were at," Heather continued.

In addition to the triple posi-

ve lobular cancer in one breast, Vicki also had ductal carcinoma in situ in the other breast. After six rounds of chemo which started in September 2024, she had a double mastectomy and expanders placed in February followed by 15 rounds of radiation. A test showed that 99% of the cancer had been eradicated, but anything less than 100% means continued treatment so Vicki is currently doing immunotherapy. Unfortunately, that lowers her immunity, making her high risk for infections. Several weeks ago, one of her expanders had to be surgically removed due to an unexpected infection. Once Vicki is done with the immunotherapy, she will have reconstructive surgery.

Heather's treatment was similar with two sets of chemotherapy, followed by a single mastectomy in March and then 25 rounds of proton radiation. Her treatment plan had to be changed when she developed a terrible rash all over her body. "I looked like I had third degree burns," she said. A biopsy revealed that she was allergic to her immunotherapy, which had to be stopped immediately. She is currently taking oral chemotherapy until the end of this year which will aid in preventing a recurrence as she also did not have a full response to chemotherapy treatment before surgery.

Both women were able to work

through their cancer treatments for the most part. When Vicki received her diagnosis, she was working full time from home as a clinical analyst, part-time at the Branding Iron in Preston, and was on-call as an EMT for the Preston ambulance service. Due to not knowing how she would feel from day to day, she had to drop her job at the Branding Iron and was no longer able to go on ambulance calls. She's still part of the ambulance crew and hopes to be able to return to full service at some point. Heather, who works as an office support specialist for the Fillmore County Veterans Service Office and the U of M Extension Office in Preston, ended up having to work from home half days during part of her chemotherapy, but was still able to keep up with her work.

Heather and Vicki both were supported by their families and friends as they went through cancer treatment. Heather's niece and mom went to almost all of her appointments and her daughter was also able to come to a few. Vicki is originally from Virginia and that's where her family still lives. It's been hard for her to be so far away from them, but they have supported her from afar and her in-laws in Minnesota have been with her every step of the way. Vicki credits her faith with getting her through her treatment. "My faith has

been hugely helpful and more prevalent since this happened," she said, adding that she appreciates being able to listen to her favorite christian music during radiation.

Both Heather and Vicki received support from the community. In January, the FCLMC Wolves hosted a Takedown Cancer game with proceeds going to help Heather with treatment costs and she also has a donation account set up at First Southeast Bank of Harmony. Brenda Eickhoff, owner of the Sweet Stop and Sandwich Shoppe, organized a fundraiser with B&B Olympic Bowl and the Branding Iron for Vicki who has also received help from the First Baptist Church in Preston and Root River Community Church in Rushford. The Fill-



From dance class to 4-H to cancer treatment, Vicki Muel and Heather Barth have been friends through it all. Photo by Hannah Wingert

more Central football team also hosted Tackle Cancer on October 9 with proceeds going to Vicki and several other fighting cancer. Vicki has a donation account set up at F&M Community Bank in Preston.

Breast Cancer Awareness  
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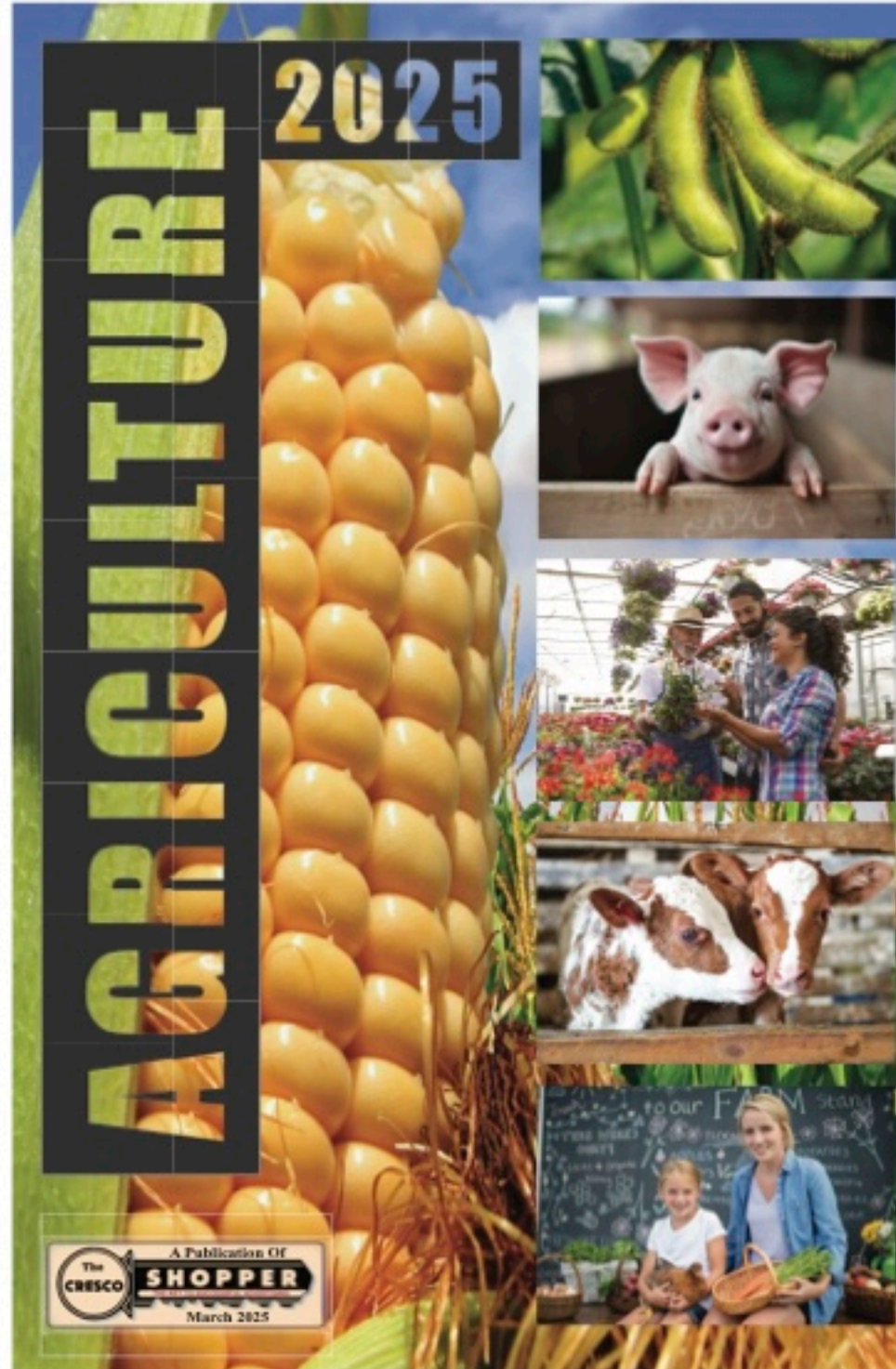
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Back to School  
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A special supplement to **THE LAKES NEWS SHOPPER**

Tuesday, November 4, 2025



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Ag Outlook  
Northwest Iowa Shopper | Spencer, IA



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Photo by T Peg Photography

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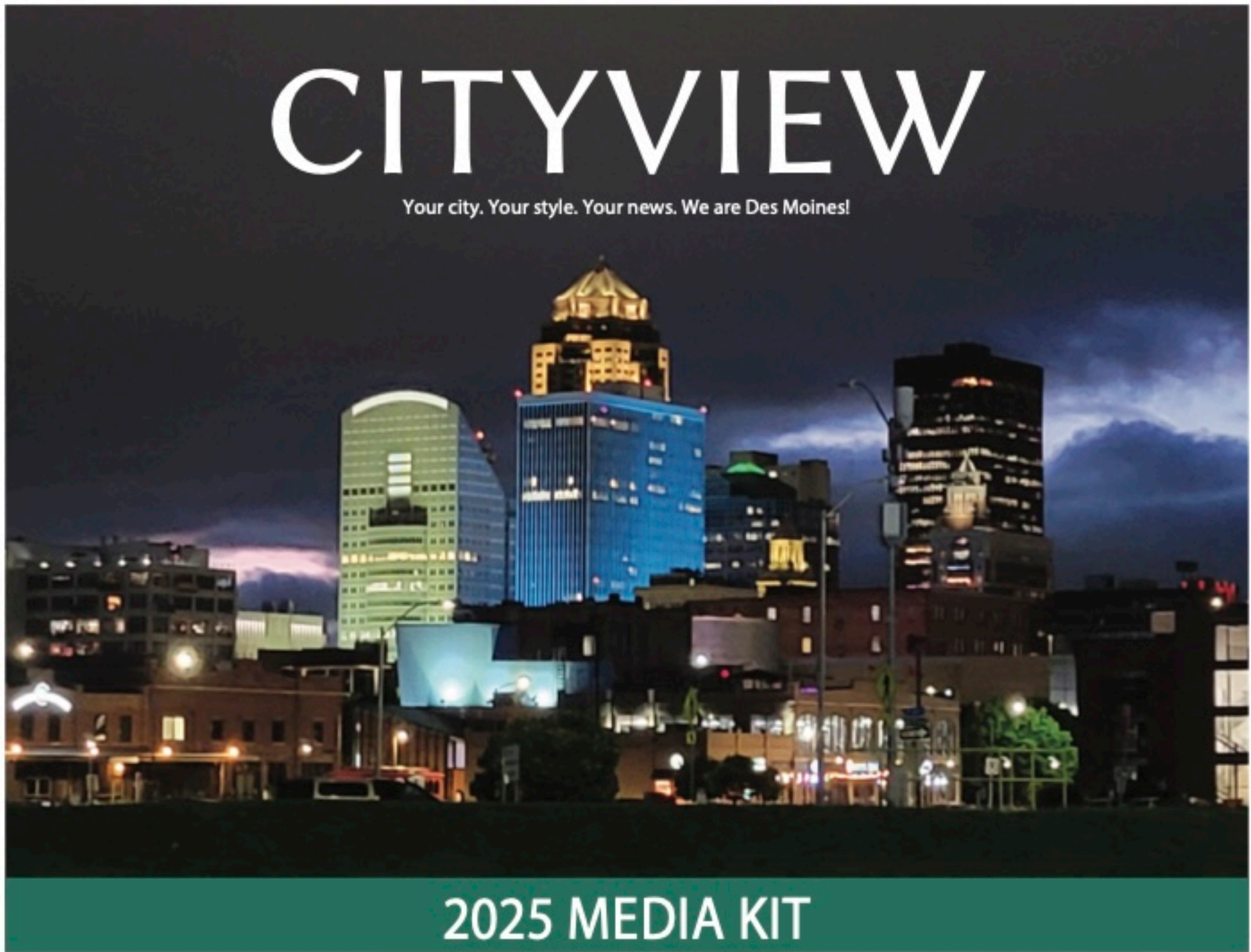
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Fillmore County Journal  
Preston, IA



Farm Safety Week

INSIDE TODAY'S JOURNAL

# FILLMORE COUNTY JOURNAL

"Where Local News Comes First"

Kingsland School Board Talks Construction and Numbers

PAGE 4

Peering at the Past: The Blacksmith and the Passenger

PAGE 11

St. Johns Lutheran School Celebrates 150 Years

PAGE 21

First Renovation Designs Unveiled at M-C Meeting

PAGE 31

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POSTAL PATRON

Weekly Edition

Monday, September 22, 2025

Volume 41 Issue 2

## Looney Valley Lutheran Church Celebrates 150 Years

BY WANDA HANSON  
w.hanson@fillmorecountyjournal.com

On Sunday, September 28, Looney Valley Lutheran Church will join together to celebrate a century and a half of its existence. Using a theme of "Yesterday we remember, today we celebrate, tomorrow we await," the church will host a coffee hour at 9:15 a.m., followed by a special church service at 10 a.m., a noon meal of meatballs and turkey and a program at 1:30 p.m.

Three of the former pastors will be speaking during the celebration: John Wheelock, Chris Fabey, and Jan King. Arlan Henderson, the church historian will be speaking on its history as well.

The long history of Looney Valley Church began when a group of Norwegian settlers first moved to Looney Valley in 1852 from Dane County, Wis. The first organized religious society, the Looney Valley Baptist Society, served the area at the time, holding meetings in homes. In 1857 the congregation began gathering with a circuit pastor leading services. The group was affiliated with Trinity Lutheran Church of La Crosse.

Around 1871, this group of Lutherans who had come from Norway began to organize a Lutheran church in Looney Valley. By that time, the Baptist Society had ceased to exist; the Norwegian Lutherans wanted to have their own church services presented in the Norwegian language.

In 1875, the 58 souls officially established their church, naming it Looney Valley Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran

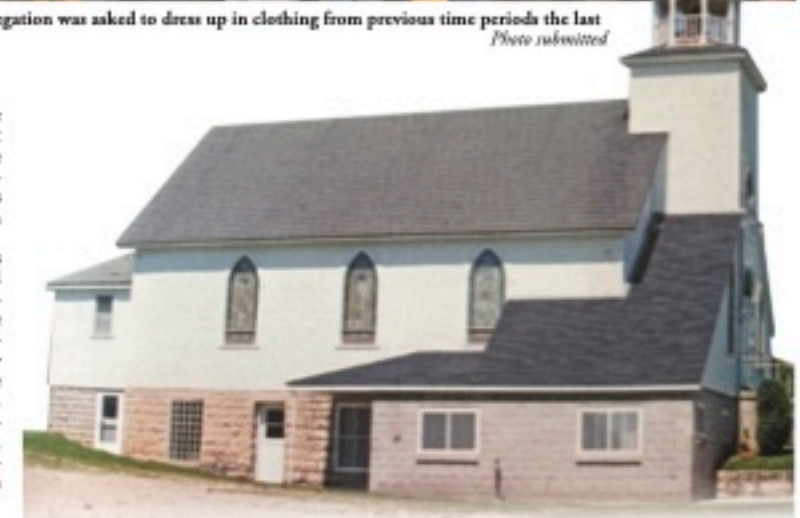


One recent Sunday, the congregation was asked to dress up in clothing from previous time periods the last 150 years. Photo submitted

Church. Probably one of the most unusual things about the church was its name. The church was named after entrepreneur John Looney who was attempting to establish a town nearby.

Services were held in homes and a log school house located 85 rods southwest of the current church. This school house was later moved to the Leonard Tostenson farm. Early officers of the church were Andreas Sather, Knud Sorum, Peter Wagner, Even Halverson, Mark Christopherson, John Traff and Ben Peterson—family names that can still be found at the church.

See LOONEY VALLEY Page 6 >



Looney Valley Lutheran Church as it stands today. Photo submitted

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OCTOBER 2025

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# Halloween

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### FOOD DUDE

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### NEIGHBORS

Tom Perrine says volunteering at Tallgrass Theater Company provides "a feel-good tired."



Fillmore County Journal  
Preston, IA



Fall Harvest

INSIDE TODAY'S PAPER

# FILLMORE COUNTY JOURNAL

"Where Local News Comes First"

Houston Co. Hold Scheduled Commission Meeting PAGE 8	Preston Falls Council Vacancy PAGE 9	Solberg Welding Going Strong After 40 Years PAGE 20	Never Shake Hands with a Great Horned Owl PAGE 27
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POSTAL PATRON

Weekly Edition Monday, October 27, 2025 Volume 41 Issue 7

## MN Fall Beef Classic Held in Preston



Lauren Chase of Mabel, Minn., assisted by Cora Mayer of Peterson, Minn. Photo by Dawn Hange

**BY WANDA HANSON**  
wanda@fillmorecountyjournal.com

The Fillmore County Fairgrounds was a bustling place October 16-19 as the MN Fall Beef Classic was held in Preston. Usually, this show is held at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds; this year, due to construction, a new site needed to be found.

Enter a committee that decided to take on the event and hold it at

the Fillmore County Fairgrounds. Amanda Bodtke, Amanda Feine, Colby Lind, Doug Lind, Fair Board President Mike Fenske, Lakyn Lind and Paul Barnh were the hard-working committee members.

Paul Barnh and Lakyn Lind, founders of MN North Star Point Series which is separate from the expo, wanted to ensure the show continued since it has been traditionally both the ending point for

the series in 2025 and the beginning point of the 2026 series. In the MN North Star Point Series, kids go to several cattle shows throughout Minnesota. Later, at a banquet, they are recognized and rewarded for their efforts.

The successful show brought 368 head of cattle to the fairgrounds along with their young handlers, parents, grandparents,

**See MN BEEF CLASSIC Page 2 >**

## Judge Sentences Samantha Petersen to Four Years in Fatal Crash

**BY ZECH SINDY**  
zech@fillmorecountyjournal.com

Judge Jeremy Clinesfelter sentenced Samantha Jo Petersen, 37, to four years in prison for criminal vehicular homicide and 23 months for criminal vehicular operation causing great bodily harm.

He issued the sentence on October 16 after nearly two years of hearings that followed a September 2023 crash that killed two Amish children and injured two others in Fillmore County.

The courtroom filled with emotion as members of the pub-

lic, reporters, and family members quietly listened. Residents from across the county attended, drawn by the gravity of a case that had weighed on the community since the tragedy.

Investigators determined that Petersen drove under the influence of methamphetamine when her vehicle struck a horse-drawn buggy carrying four of Menno and Sarah Miller's children. The crash killed Irma and Wilma Miller, ages seven and 11, and seriously injured Allan and Rose, their siblings. The crash happened on Fillmore County Road 1 north of Spring Valley.

Toxicology tests confirmed methamphetamine in Petersen's system. The Fillmore County Sheriff's Office led the investigation, and the County Attorney's

**See PETERSEN Page 6 >**



Samantha Jo Petersen

## Spring Grove Focuses on Police and Childcare

**BY KAITLIN LONGHAUSER**  
kath@fillmorecountyjournal.com

Spring Grove City Council members met October 21 at 168 West Main Street in rooms #100. Council members present included Wilhelmson, Eric Ostens, Trent Turner, Mike Hagen and Megan Backlund. City Clerk/Administrator Jana Elton was also in attendance.

The Agenda and Contract Agenda received unanimous approval.

**Old Business**

A Houston County Sheriff's Contract was presented to

the council. Councillor Hagen asked about the cost. Wilhelmson answered that the city would need to pay \$393,000 for next year, \$411,000 for 2027, and \$433,000 for 2028. Hagen commented that \$393,000 is too much money. Wilhelmson moved to not accept the contract, and to work with the Houston County Commissioners and the Houston County Sheriff's Department to find a contract that fits \$218,000 a year with a 6% budget increase per year. Hagen seconded Wilhelmson's motion.

**See SPRING GROVE Page 7 >**

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# DAIRY STAR

Volume 27, No. 11 "All dairy, all the time" July 26, 2025

## Gruber girls gather for chores

MARK KAPPAH/DAIRY STAR  
Kaylie Gruber and her daughters, Avery (left) and Macy, take a break from chores in the freestall barn July 16 on Gruber Dairy near Pierz, Minnesota. Oftentimes, the trio milks together in their double-9 rapid flow flat parlor. Kaylie and her husband, Bob, milk 260 cows and farm 500 acres. During milking, Bob put sand down in their freestall barn. The Grubers also have two younger sons, Brock and Nolan.

You may notice a difference in this issue of Dairy Star. You will find all our regular columnists, classifieds, crop and weather reports, and calendar of events, but our coverage of the region has been replaced by photos. These photos illuminate the activities dairy producers carry out on and off their farms.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

**Category 16 – Division 1**  
**Best News/Editorial**  
**Original News Story**



Almost Crushed  
Dairy Star | Sauk Centre, MN



Ribbons of Solidarity  
Southwest Connector |  
Minneapolis, MN



Simmons Family Keeps Lighting Tradition Alive  
Guthrie County Times | Johnston, IA

**Category 16 – Division 2**  
**BEST NEWS/EDITORIAL**  
**ORIGINAL FEATURE STORY**





A remarkable spread  
Dairy Star | Sauk Centre, MN



Pour me a glass  
CITYVIEW | Johnston, IA



April's legacy revitalizes faith  
Dairy Star | Sauk Centre, MN

**Category 16 –Division 3**  
**BEST NEWS/EDITORIAL**  
**ORIGINAL SPORTS STORY**





Enduring trying  
times  
Sauk Rapids  
Herald | Sauk  
Rapids, MN



From the sidelines to  
center court  
Fillmore County  
Journal | Preston, MN



Hanging up the skates  
Sauk Rapids Herald | Sauk Rapids, MN

**Category 16 – Division 4**  
**BEST NEWS/EDITORIAL –**  
**ORIGINAL EDITORIAL**





One moment, please.... Missing out  
Fillmore County Journal | Preston, MN



One moment, please.... Ads you can trust  
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View from the Bench –  
This country needs Jesus and sports  
Lakes News Shopper | Milford, IA



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The Land | Mankato, MN



# **Category 17 – BEST ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHY EDITORIAL PHOTO**

This week's **Back Roads** is the work of The Land Managing Editor Laura Cole.

# A living sanctuary

**I**n many cases, sure, rain can put a damper on an event. But not for farmers when it's needed, and not, as it happened, some light precipitation at The Arboretum at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn. Throughout the grounds on a recent afternoon, birdsong seemed to welcome the rainfall; the very earth giving thanks through petrichor.

Founded in 1973, Gustavus professor Charles Mason and his wife, Harriet, were leaders in the Arboretum's beginnings. Its mission includes the statement that the Arboretum "provides the College and community a living sanctuary of plants for education, environmental stewardship, reflection, and recreation."

Currently, the Arboretum consists of roughly 130 acres with three miles of marked trails and over 100 species of trees and shrubs.

Because it's on a college campus, director and naturalist of the Arboretum Scott Moeller stated it's a bit of a hidden gem. It is available to the public every day of the week, during daylight hours. There is no admission fee, though donations are appreciated.

"What we love about it is there's just a variety of things for people to enjoy in the Arboretum," Moeller stated.

Upon entry, there is a kiosk with various informational pamphlets including a self-guided tour. Following the 21 numbered posts, visitors will stroll by perennial gardens, a Swedish Labyrinth, an oak grove, tallgrass prairie, deciduous woods, coniferous forest, and truly, so much more.

The fragrant Lilac Walk was created in honor of the



First Ladies of Gustavus Adolphus College. The Borgesen Family Log Cabin was originally built in 1866, and provides an example of Swedish-American folk architecture.

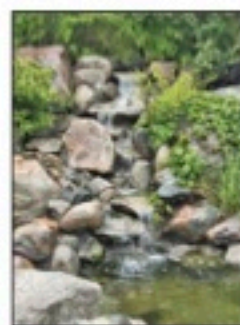
Moeller stated a favorite feature is the New Student Tulip Meadow that was started in 2017. He explained every student in each incoming class at Gustavus plants a tulip bulb — a different variety for every year. "That's become a real attraction for not only the Gustavus students, but the general public, as well," Moeller stated.

The Hosta Garden is filled with many varieties with names such as Fire and Ice, Cathedral Windows, Fried Bananas, and Curly Fries. There is a meditation area with seating among trees. A marker states, "Sit, be silent, and know who you are."

Benches — many with markers honoring loved ones — are placed throughout the grounds. Moeller explained the Arboretum is wheelchair accessible to a degree. The main pathway is asphalt. He noted the majority of the trails are gravel, which have some small rocks. The prairie trail can be bumpy.

Reservations are needed for certain instances: renting the space for outdoor receptions or the Lind Interpretive Center, and using the fire pit, which was created recently through a gift from one of the graduating senior classes at Gustavus. "As long as people use it responsibly and they reserve a spot, that's available for people to use," Moeller stated.

Visitors are required to abide by the campus policies of no smoking and no pets. For additional information, including membership opportunities, visit [gustavus.edu/arboretum/](http://gustavus.edu/arboretum/).



A Living Sanctuary  
The Land | Mankato, MN



Aubry Boldt  
Fillmore County Journal | Preston, MN

# Southwest Voices



**3** Paid Leave provides time off for illness, new baby and care-giving

**6** How did Troubadour creatively survive road construction?

**8** Lakefield Apartments hopeful sign for affordable housing

**8** Eight years in the making: futsal courts in Whittier



Ward 7 Councilmember Katie Cashman and Ward 10 Councilmember Aisha Chughtai give each other a high five following the ribbon-cutting along Hennepin Avenue on Oct. 31, 2025. "I'm really excited to be here today, to celebrate this generational investment in this community. This project is about a decade in the making," Chughtai said. She added, "We know more people coming to Uptown is going to breathe life into Uptown." Cashman stated, "We are also seeing truly creative industries moving into Uptown. I am really excited for what's to come for Uptown." [▶ Read more about the project, and zoom in on two businesses that weathered the two-year street project on pages 6-7.](#) (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)



Hennepin Ave reopens  
Southwest Connector | Minneapolis, MN

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**FEATURED**

**Walsh/Gatzke Family Wraps Up Christmas Dinner Tradition**  
January 4, 2024 By Hannah Wiegert - Leave a Comment  
It all started with Elen Schoewel, Jo Fitzgerald, and Lois Berlow. The three friends talked about the idea of hosting a...

**Local Food Shelves Busy During Holiday Season**  
January 4, 2024 By Hannah Wiegert - Leave a Comment  
It's the biggest time of year for many charities and other helping organizations as the holiday spirit encourages giving...

**A Lifeline for Seniors in Fillmore and Houston Counties**  
December 31, 2024 By Fillmore County Journal - Leave a Comment  
Rolling Hills Transit (RHT), a program of the non-profit organization Seneca, is an important public bus service...

**NEWS**

**Rushford Expresses Administrator Concerns**  
January 4, 2024 By Kristin Duffner

**Local Students to Showcase Artistic Talents**  
January 4, 2024 By Beth Jeffrey

**Do You Know an Outstanding Business Person?**  
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Wednesday, January 7, 2026

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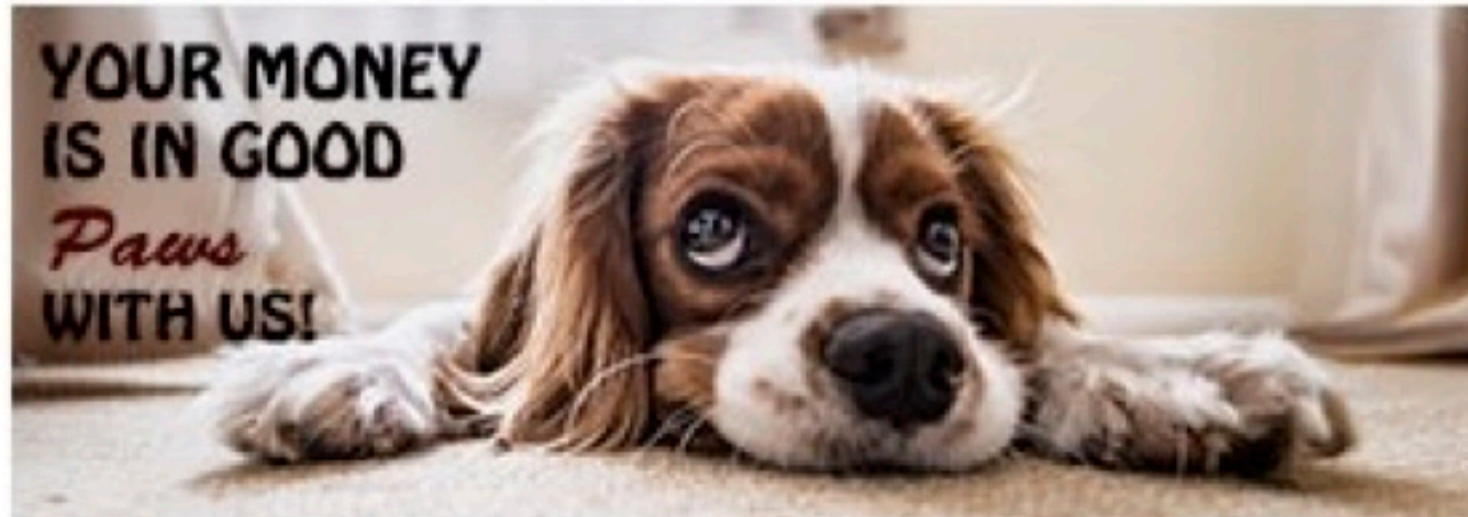
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8 PAGES  
NUMBER 13  
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# THE Extra



## CALMING BARKS - and - COLLECTING STRAYS

Community Service Officer Henry Blom holds Cleo, the rescued cat now up for adoption at City Code Shelter in Fargo. (Photo/John Brown)

**Nancy Edwards Kanan**  
The gray tabby cat was meowing, hungry and bleeding from bites around its neck when it passed through a neighbor's patio door on the coldest night of February. Her cat, who passed from the comfort of the house while she napped up the nearby lake, was found. Dubbing him Little Tommy, she sheltered him in her heated garage with a bowl of kibble and another of water. Then she did as so many Moorhead animal lovers do when a stray needs saving: She called the Moor-



Little Tom, aka Cleo, was rescued from a patio by Community Service Officer Greg Schwab as one of the volunteer rescuers. He was freezing, hungry and suffering from severe bite wounds. (Photo/John Brown)

## Keeping Your Pet Legal

Moorhead ordinances set out rules for keeping pets - and neighbors - safe and happy. From licensing to lost-and-found support, the city provides resources and education to ensure every pet receives the care it deserves. Animal control rules is set out on the city's new website, moorheadmn.gov, in the section titled "Animal Control."

All dogs and cats over 6 months old must be licensed annually by no later than February 15 of each year. Licensing your dog or cat is important and will help us locate you if your dog or cat is found. If you don't license your animal and it is found, a no license fee will be charged. The cost is \$5.

All animals found running at large may be apprehended and impounded by authorized City of Moorhead personnel. All animals will be impounded for at least 10 regular business days. At the end of the 10 day period, if no requests for animals have been filed with the City by any licensed instructions, all animals which remain unclaimed may be destroyed at the discretion of the City. The animal's owner can retrieve the animal if they pay the impound and boarding fees.

Leashed pets are prohibited in most city parks. Pets, whether leashed or unleashed, may not be brought onto the premises of Mattson Field and Centennial Athletic Complex. They can be walked through Southside Regional Park, but only on walking paths. Animal waste should not be allowed to accumulate in yards or elsewhere. No one shall allow their dog or cat to defecate animal waste in city parks, on public property or on anyone else's property. No one should keep an animal that habitually barks, yowls, or howls, as they are considered a public nuisance.

No one may keep, harbor or own more than three dogs or more than three cats over 6 months of age in any dwelling within the city limits. People may request a permit from the Police Department to keep or harbor up to two dogs or two cats, but not both, as part of a qualified home used by organizations for rescue or rehoming of abandoned or lost animals.

## MPD Detective Hanson Promoted to Sergeant

Mayor Shelly Carlson announced the promotion of MPD Sgt. Jonathan Hanson to sergeant at the City Council meeting Monday. Sgt. Jonathan Hanson, a veteran of 11 years in the department, has been a detective in criminal investigations.

A graduate of Fairbury, Minnesota, and graduate of Redwood-Brainerd Area High School, he earned degrees in law enforcement from Minnesota Technical College and in criminal justice from Minnesota State Moorhead. He served in the U.S. Navy.

Mayor Shelly Carlson announces the sale of officer to MPD Sgt. Jonathan Hanson. (Photo/John Brown)



## Cobber Austin Fellman receives March MoorHeart Award

Austin Fellman, a Concordia College student, has been honored with the city's MoorHeart Award for March. Mayor Shelly Carlson presented the award at Monday's meeting of the City Council.

Cobber Austin Fellman is the recipient and president of the college's Special Olympics Club. Austin Carlson presented the award at MoorHeart on Page 3.

## KLJ, City of Moorhead open to 1st Avenue North Corridor ideas

**Bar Hugdon**  
In an effort to involve the public in the planning process of Moorhead's First Avenue North Corridor, a sort of open house of ideas was held at Judysand Brewing Co. all day Tuesday. KLJ Engineering and the City of Moorhead sponsored the open house to gather ideas, mostly for questions and ready with answers, along with plan maps and an online project overview with a QR code. The project is a multi-step and ongoing plan for redevelopment, revitalization and deteriorating pavement conditions along the First Avenue North corridor in Moorhead. It has prompted the need for a study to evaluate conditions along the route. The project's goal is to evaluate the current and future conditions on the avenue from 13th Street to Center Avenue at the intersection of Highway 10.

And for Wade Kline, a project planner for KLJ Engineering, the ideas and project objectives are still in flux as more input is infused.

The initial phase of the study will focus on gathering stakeholder and the public's input. "At this point in the planning phase we're thinking of budget scenarios between \$7 million and \$8 million for the nine-block corridor," Kline said.

Kline said that for the public, the website provides a forum.



The public participated in a meeting and gave input into Moorhead's First Avenue North Corridor open house at Judysand Brewing all day Tuesday. (Photo/John Brown)

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Community Calendar	2	Stamp Service	3	Area Brief	4	Building Permits	5
From the Kitchen	2	Distractions	4	Community Calendar	5	Talking Plants	6
Moorhead Public Schools	2	Neenan's Corner	4	Area Records	5	Ask a Trooper	6

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The Extra | Moorhead, MN



Benton County Herald | Sauk Rapids, MN



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## Foley volunteers share assistance stories

*Time spent helping others creates strong community*

BY TIM HENNAGH | STAFF WRITER

Small commission offers offer a range of volunteer opportunities across environmental, social, cultural and community-focused organizations, a need that consistently requires many skills.

Volunteer experiences with local organizations align an individual's time, capacity and expertise.

April is officially recognized as National Volunteer Month in the United States. Each week during this month, the Benton County Herald will showcase volunteers serving the newspaper's publication area.

Volunteers of all ages represent the heart of Foley's Community Action Respecting Elders.

Jan Kapka, CARE executive director, joined volunteers for Kapka with a bag when he walked through the nonprofit organization's doors for an April 7 visit and volunteer discussion.

Kapka said CARE's organizational needs alone Kapka started as a volunteer in 2004.

Volunteers page 4

### Electric line workers offer timely safety message



Nathan Papp, an East Central Energy line technician and Foley resident, and Austin Zaparka, an ECE line technician who lives in Rice, prepare to start work April 6 at the ECE Office Operations Center in Milaca. Severe Weather Awareness Week in Minnesota returns April 13-17, and along with it, important messages from area member-owned electric cooperatives and investor-owned electric utilities.

**Severe Weather Awareness Week returns April 13-17**

BY TIM HENNAGH | STAFF WRITER

Minnesota's electric line workers have a critical, ongoing role in preventing the need for safety.

Severe Weather Awareness Week in Minnesota returns April 13-17, and along with it, important messages from area member-owned electric cooperatives and investor-owned electric utilities.

"Stay away from any downed electrical power line you encounter, because you never know if it's energized or not," said Austin Zaparka, an East Central Energy line technician who lives in Rice.

Avoiding damaged electrical equipment is important because if a home or property owner does not see a downed power line, the encounter can be dangerous and life-threatening, said Nathan Papp, another ECE line technician who is a Foley resident and works with Zaparka in Milaca.

"Sometimes, a customer may think severe storm damage is a lot worse than it really is, and it's nice explaining to them we should have them power on pretty quickly," Papp said. "Explaining safety precautions that we take is another important part of our job as technicians."

Awareness page 3

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### Ruby's Pantry closure challenges Foley organizers

Food shelf directors meet, provide local update

BY TIM HENNAGH | STAFF WRITER

Foley-based Ruby's Pantry pop-up food shelf organizers are working with little background regarding a surprise announcement from the nonprofit organization regarding its current status.

Nick Benson, lead pastor at New Life Church of Foley, provided a Ruby's Pantry update April 7.

"The First Presbyterian Church of Foley has the Ruby's Pantry closure," Benson said.

"Our church provided the physical space. We worked together to make the Ruby's Pantry site happen. I was just as surprised as anyone when we heard the news last week that they were closing down."

Church representatives learned Ruby's Pantry was ceasing operations via a March 31 Facebook post on the nonprofit organization's home page. An evening message stated that Ruby's Pantry was analyzing its work, structure and focus and would end operations effective immediately.

The Benton County Herald attempted to contact Rhea-Ann Sabe, Ruby's Pantry executive director, April 9 for comment. An automated reply from Sabe's email account stated the following:

"Thank you for your message," Sabe's evening email reply stated. "Please note that Ruby's Pantry is no longer in operation. I am also no longer employed with the organization and am unable to assist with inquiries. Writing you all the best, and God's blessings in the days ahead."

Ruby's Pantry page 7

**PUBLIC NOTICES**

- Bergstrom/Johnson (2) pg. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
- Larson/Klein pg. 11, 12, 13
- Nelson/Klein pg. 11, 12, 13
- Nelson/Klein pg. 11, 12, 13
- Nelson/Klein pg. 11, 12, 13
- Nelson/Klein pg. 11, 12, 13
- Nelson/Klein pg. 11, 12, 13
- Nelson/Klein pg. 11, 12, 13

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# DAIRY STAR

Volume 27, No. 3

"All dairy, all the time!"

March 22, 2025

## Education, collaboration, promotion

2024 checkoff discussed at Midwest Dairy meetings

By Amy Kylo  
amy.k@star-pub.com

DENNISON, Minn. — Dairy consumption in 2025 is doing well and is also outpacing alternatives in every product group.

"In a lot of the categories, we've got record highs," said Scott Gilray, vice president, business unit operations—north with Midwest Dairy.

There is a lot of consumption of dairy. Cheese is at a new record high, butter is at its highest since 1965, and in yogurt, business is rebuilding.

Gilray said fluid dairy milk sales are nine times higher than alternatives, dairy cheese is 174 times higher and dairy yogurt is 61 times higher.

Gilray presented this information and more alongside Shannon Watrin, farmer relations staff member for Midwest Dairy, Feb. 13 in Denison at one of the Midwest Dairy regional meetings. The pair shared about 2024 checkoff work at the national, regional and local levels.

Locally, Minnesota had 68 Undeniably Dairy grants disburse over \$200,000. Undeniably Dairy grants fund up to \$5,000 per project for dairy promotion. Some projects include a milk cooler for a weight room, color changing cups for a malt stand and more.

"If there's something you're thinking about (doing) ask us," Watrin said. "We'll probably find a way to write an application to fund it."

In 2024, Undeniably Dairy grants did not fund on-farm events because of the H5N1 bird flu. This year, with testing in place, they plan to again fund on-farm events, subject to change.

Turn to MIDWEST DAIRY | Page 7

## A farm to call home

Rewitzer realizes dream to own dairy

By Tiffany Klaphake  
tiffany.k@dairystar.com

BELLINGHAM, Minn. — Matt Rewitzer is living proof that dreams do come true. As of Oct. 1, 2024, Rewitzer is milking cows at his own dairy farm.

"I've tried many different ways to get here," Rewitzer said. "Whenever I did anything, my thought process was, 'How is this going to get me closer to dairy farming?' That was always the goal — to dairy farm."

Last year, Rewitzer purchased a dairy farm complete with 130 cows, a double-6 parlor and freestall barn from Kor Mulder near Bellingham. The farm features headlocks in the freestall barn and the heifer shed and a 10-acre pasture next to the freestall barn so

the milk cows can go outside.

"I like how efficient this place is," Rewitzer said. "There are lots of headlocks, so it is easy to catch the cows or heifers for pregnancy checking and breeding. I really like the pasture by the freestall barn. The cows will stay outside until I go get them for milking."

The farm site is 35 acres and feed is purchased.

"Kor already had agreements with neighbors to get feed so we will continue doing that," Rewitzer said. "This way I have more time for the cattle and the kids."

Rewitzer grew up on his parents' dairy farm near Eagle Bend. However, they sold their herd in 2007. After graduating from Ridgewater

Turn to REWITZERS | Page 5



The Rewitzer family — Harvey (front, from left), Jaelyn and Maverick; (back, from left) Skyla and Matt — gathers in their parlor March 11 at their farm near Bellingham, Minnesota. The Rewitzers purchased the farm in October 2024.

## Welcome home, Wade

Muths rejoice as toddler son's cancer goes into remission

By Stacey Smart  
stacey.s@dairystar.com

WEST BEND, Wis. — Last fall, Peter and Gina Muth received news no parent ever wants to hear: their son had cancer. Wade Muth was 18 months old when he was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia Oct. 21, 2024. AML is a cancer of the bone marrow and blood.

"I was shocked," Peter said. "It was scary, but it was in God's hands; it was out of our hands. All you can do is pray about it, and we had a lot of people praying for him."

The Muths milk 200 cows and farm 700 acres at Cedar Lawn Farm near West Bend with Peter's parents, Kathy and George.

Turn to MUTHS | Page 2



The Muth family — Gina holding Josie and Peter holding Wade — gathers outside the barn March 13 at Cedar Lawn Farm near West Bend, Wisconsin. Wade returned home March 4 cancer-free after spending 4.5 months in the hospital to be treated for acute myeloid leukemia.

Dairy Star | Sauk Centre, MN



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INSIDE Classifieds page 5+6 | Real Estate on page 3

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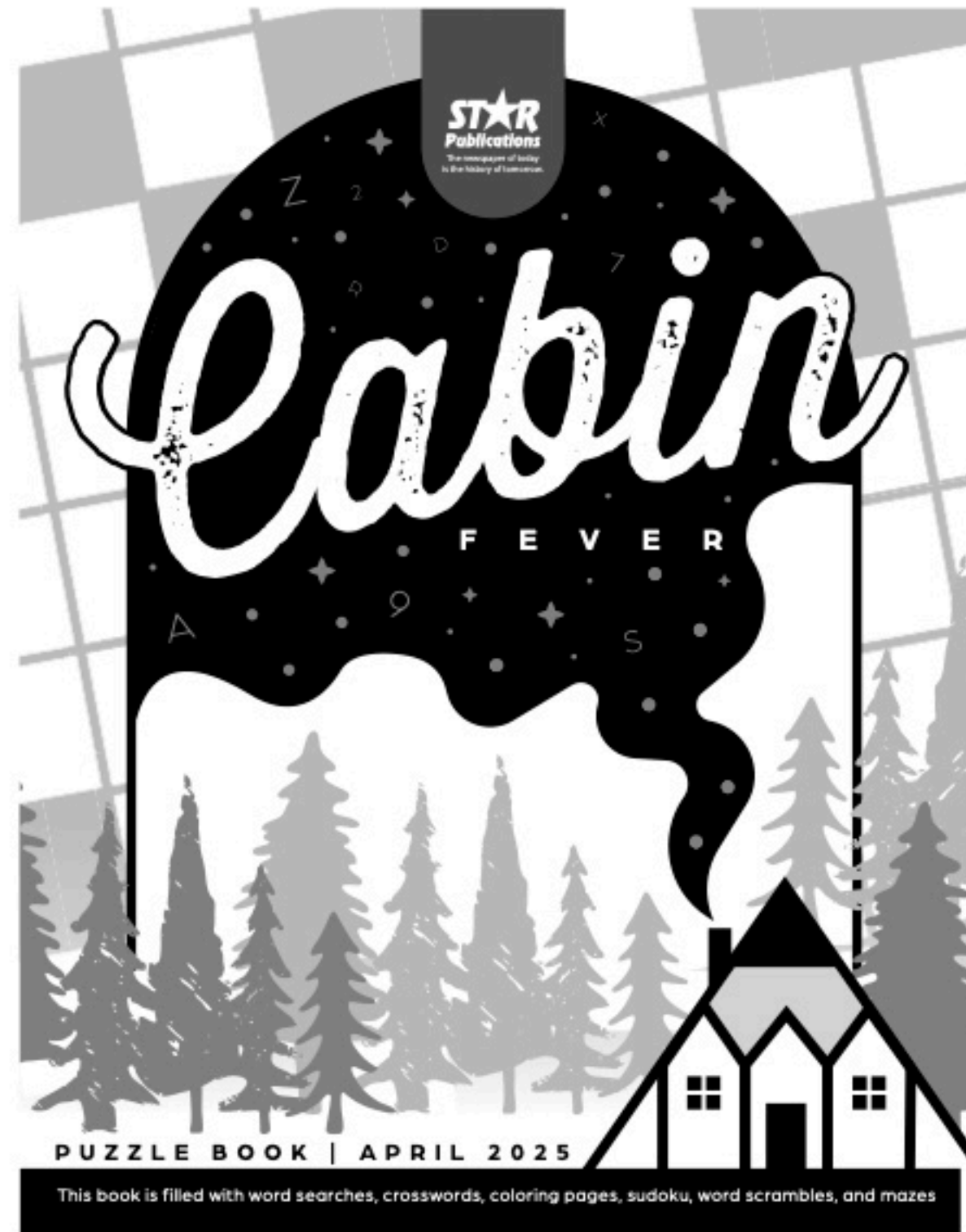
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