

Guthrie Center TIMES

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JANUARY 2026

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INSIDE

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Presenting the 2025 Grant Recipients from

In 2025, the Guthrie County Community Foundation awarded **OVER \$215,000** to organizations and groups who serve Guthrie County residents.



Bayard Church of Christ
Summer meal program



Boys and Girls Club of Central Southwest Iowa
Updated outdoor play area



Casey Public Library Betterment Assoc.
Library updates



Coon Rapids Ambulance Department
CPR training supplies



Coon Rapids Fire Department
Bunker gear



Coon Rapids Police Department
New AEDs for police vehicles



Coon Rapids Thomas Rest Haven
Updated lighting



Panora Community Center
Updated restrooms



Friends of the Bayard Public Library
New outdoor digital sign



Friends of the Guthrie Center Library
New programs and materials



Guthrie Center Fire Fighters Association
SCBA replacements



Guthrie County Arts Council
Classroom upgrades



Guthrie County Conservation Board
New park signs



Guthrie County Fair Foundation
New showring paving



Guthrie County First Responders Assoc.
New EMS bags

\$200,000+ is available to be awarded in Guthrie County in 2026

If you have questions, email GCCFoundation@gmail.com or contact a board member.

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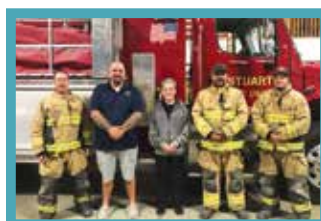
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Watering system



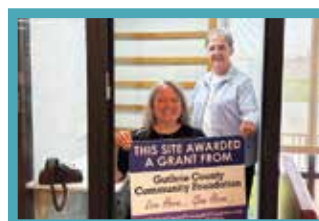
Panorama Soccer Club

New equipment



Stuart Fire Department

Helmet replacements



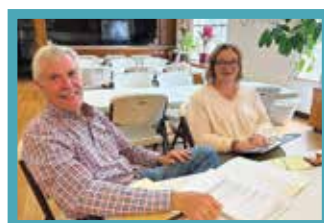
Stuart Public Library

New study pods



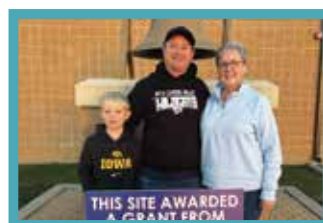
Tori's Angels Foundation

Donor software and strategy consulting



Tri Center Association, Stuart

Equipment for congregate meals site



West Central Youth Club

Help with summer programs



Yale Fire Department

Communication equipment



YJB Triple T

Supplies for fundraising activities

Now's the time to submit grant applications for 2026 funds. Funding is available to 501(c)3 non-profit organizations and government entities that reside in Guthrie County or serve Guthrie County residents.

The deadline to apply is midnight, January 31, 2026.

Applications and more information about eligibility are available at GuthrieCountyCommunityFoundation.org



A PROPOSAL IN LETTERS

It was 32 years ago when I asked my wife, Jolene, to marry me. We had been dating for a few years, and we both seemed ready to tie the knot. We were not ones to travel the world or take on outlandish activities, so a simple proposal seemed fitting, at least to me. What we did do was play a lot of board games, especially during the cold winter months. That gave me an idea.

One evening, I carefully placed the engagement ring I purchased for her in the bag of letters in a Scrabble game. I asked her if she wanted to play. She didn't react positively, but I eventually talked her into it. I nervously unfolded the board and set up the racks. Then I

drew my letters. She did the same.

As the game proceeded, Jolene kept drawing her replacement letters, and I kept looking at her face, awaiting her reaction when she would pull out the ring.

More rounds of play. More letters drawn. We were getting down to the end, and she still had not found the ring. Was it not there? Did I lose it? Or did she know my plan and was messing with me the entire time?

With her last draw, she felt something



Shane Goodman

different in the bag and remarked, "What is in here?" Then she turned the bag upside down and shook it, bouncing the ring off the table and onto the floor. I, of course, quickly picked it up and dropped to one knee, asking her to marry me. Fortunately, she said yes. And, fortunately, the ring was still intact.

Considering what we do in our jobs today with publishing and printing and journalism and words, maybe using the Scrabble game was a good fit. I would like to tell you I had that connection planned out, but I didn't. We simply liked playing Scrabble. And we like being married, too.

In this month's cover story, we share the engagement stories of local residents, telling how they gained the courage to ask for their partner's hand in marriage.

Have a great month and thanks for reading. ■

Shane Goodman
Editor and Publisher
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POPPING THE QUESTION

The proposals, engagements and love stories of a few local couples.

BY RICH WICKS
Guthrie Center Times

When it comes to marriage proposals and engagements, there does not seem to be a right or wrong way. In romantic relationships, it is often said that birds of a feather flock together. But, it is also said that opposites attract. Some people believe in love at first sight, while others say love must grow gradually through shared experiences. Some prefer a private proposal, while others pop the question while being televised on a Jumbotron screen at a public event.

So, what is the best approach? That depends. Falling in love, proposing marriage and building a life together are all unique experiences that each couple navigates in their own way. Below are the proposal, engagement and love stories of a few local couples.

JOHN AND PAT PETTINGER

A phrase to describe the love story of John and Pat Pettinger could be, “When you know, you just know.” The Pettingers shared the story of their meeting and engagement.

“I’m from Mason City and graduated from Iowa State, then got a job here in Adair to teach,” Pat said. “I came here to look for a place to live, and it was late June of 1976, so there wasn’t much available. The principal told me about a guy in town who had a mobile home to rent out, and that was John. He lived in the A-frame across the street.”

Pat agreed to rent the mobile home and



Pat and John Pettinger

moved in just prior to the school year.

“I came down for beginning teachers’ workshop, and moved in on Aug. 21,” Pat said. “It was a Sunday, and he came over and asked if I wanted to go to the park. He said there was a slow pitch softball tournament, and I could meet some people. So that was our first date, kind of.”

John said he was a very attentive landlord.

“I went over there a lot,” John said. “I thought she was kind of cute, and I started thinking of all sorts of things I needed to fix at the trailer.”

Pat recalled that the couple spent time together every day, including going to play tennis in Atlantic. Both Pat and John felt their bond growing.

“We were so compatible. We would finish each other’s sentences. We liked the same things and had the same values,” John said. “Everything was just clicking so much.”

On Aug. 31, after only 10 days together, their relationship grew suddenly more serious.

“I said something like, ‘Gee, we’re so compatible, we should get married,’” John said. “And then she said, ‘Is that a proposal?’ So, I asked, ‘What would you say if I did?’ And she said, ‘Why don’t you find out?’ ”

With that encouragement, John popped the question, and Pat said yes. But, the couple wisely chose to delay announcing the news to their families.

“We ended up telling them in October,

like after six weeks. We figured after some time had gone by it wouldn’t be so shocking,” Pat said. “And, I don’t think it was that shocking because they had heard me talking about him.”

John and Pat each said they do not recall friends or family trying to “talk sense into them” about being engaged so quickly. The one exception Pat recalled was at her job as a teacher.

Pat recalled that upon hearing of the engagement, her principal suggested Pat not announce the news to her students “in case things don’t work out.” That advice ended up being unnecessary. The Pettingers married June 4, 1977. They have two grown children and two grandkids. And now, the Pettingers are looking forward to celebrating



Wedding day photo of the Pettingers.





A Florida beach made a scenic spot for a proposal.

their 50th anniversary next year. Sometimes, you just know.

KYLIE DORAN AND KAEI ILES

Kylie Doran and Kael Iles are a local couple that met in high school and have been together ever since. She graduated from Panorama High School in 2023, while he graduated from Perry.

"I lived in Yale growing up, but now I'm living north of Fansler. Kael and I started dating in December of 2022, our senior year of high school. Kael was going to Perry, and I was going to Panorama. We dated for a little over two years, and this last March, my job required me to go and live in Florida for about a month and a half with the family I was working for as an assistant," Doran said.

Unknown to Doran, her boyfriend, friends and family were hatching a scheme.

"I had flown down there, and my friends were scheduled to fly down the weekend of March 10," Doran said. "Kael and I had kind of been joking around about getting engaged, but I didn't know it was coming. I thought maybe in the fall."

Cell phone technology played a factor in Kael's surprise but also nearly let the secret out.

"I worked that week while my friends were there, and on my day off, we got up and went into Tampa to go shopping, and it was on Thursday, March 13. Kael works for an HVAC company, and he had texted me that he was at work a little bit early and his location feature wasn't working that day, and I thought nothing of it, because that happens sometimes," Doran said. "Around lunchtime, I noticed that my calls and texts to Kael weren't going through anymore. Sometimes, he works down in a basement, so I talked to his mom just to make sure



Kael Iles and Kylie Doran are all smiles.

things were OK. She said he was getting off work early and was going to go shopping with her."

About this time, Doran began to notice something felt odd.

"I started picking up hints. He sent me a picture, and he was in his work uniform, but I noticed in the glass reflection that he wasn't actually wearing his work pants and work boots," she said. "He was wearing shorts, so I started getting a little nervous, because he never lies to me. I could tell something was off."

Doran recalled that her friends came up with an idea to distract and cheer her up.

"Around 4 p.m., we went home, and us girls decided we'd go take some sunset pictures on the beach. They picked out a white dress for me to wear and they wore dresses, too. We drove down to the beach about 7 p.m.," Doran said. "At one point, we

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Darrin and Karen Kelly

stopped, and my friend turned me around, and there was Kael just standing there in the distance. He had some white roses sticking out of the sand and a blanket, and letters that spelled out 'Marry me.' I had always figured that when the time came, I would know it, but I had no idea."

As the surprise wore off, the actual proposal occurred.

"I gave him the biggest hug, and then he asked if I would marry him, and I said yes," Doran said. "And he had a photographer set up, in a hole in the sand that some kids had dug up. So he was actually hiding in that hole."

Following their engagement, the couple enjoyed a long weekend on the beach.

"It ended up being really cool. Kael took the rest of the week and weekend off, and he got to stay down there with me and celebrate with our friends," Doran said.

The couple plans a May 2026 wedding. With that date only a few months away, they are busy planning the details of their big day, but they are also striving to remain calm and balanced.

"We had about 13 or 14 months to plan, and I never realized how much went into a wedding until I'm in the position of planning one," Doran said. "I've got all the vendors booked. It's starting to get a little stressful, but I'm also just trying to enjoy the process. It's been fun to hear stories from grandparents and aunts and uncles of things that didn't go according to plan at the wedding, but it's things they can look back and laugh about."

The young couple looks forward to the next step in their relationship.

"It's definitely been different than dat-

ing," Doran said. "Getting ready for marriage has been really fun. We've been doing pre-marriage counseling at our church, which is one of the best decisions we've made for our relationship. It's been really exciting, and we're getting anxious."

KAREN KELLY

Karen Kelly is a familiar face at Mary J. Barnett Library in Guthrie Center. She has spent most of her life working with youth, first in the schools and now in the library. Karen grew up in Guthrie Center and taught locally for 30 years. She has been married twice and told the tale of how each engagement came to be.

"My first husband was George. With George, it was completely unexpected because we had only dated for about a month when he proposed," Karen recalled. "One of my good friends married his best friend, and they'd been trying to set us up, and they kind of tricked me into going out with him. They invited me to a birthday party, and I didn't know that George was going to be there. I'd had a bad breakup and didn't think I was interested in a relationship. But, he kept asking me out. Finally, my friend called me and said, 'Please, would you just go out with the man. Just go on one date and call it good.'"

That first date turned out to be unintentionally memorable.

"Everything that could go wrong did go wrong. He had car trouble on the way, and this was back before cell phones, so he stopped at Casey's and called me," Karen said. "We were supposed to go out for dinner. So, he called my friend's husband, and they happened to be in Panora at her



mom's house, so they went and got George and then me, and we went to my friend's mom's house for dinner. George then borrowed their car to drive me home. Then, it was embarrassing because I lived right on State Street, and we were sitting in the car talking, and there was a carload of my students that kept circling the block and driving past my house, honking. When he walked me up to my door, they drove past again, and one of them yelled, 'Just kiss her!'

Although the first date did not go according to plan, things were quickly smoothed out.

"On that Monday, I got a huge arrangement of flowers with a little note saying, 'I'm sorry that things went so badly, but let's try this again,'" Karen said. "And it was all of my favorite flowers."

From then on, the couple dated. Karen recalled that one day, after spending time with teacher friends, she came home to find that George was awaiting her. Karen was scheduled to chaperone a student dance that evening, so she told George of her plans. Although George tried to say that he just stopped by, Karen knew there was something more going on. He then said he had an item to add to Karen's growing collection of McDonald's Happy Meal toys.

"He said, 'I stopped by because I know that you collect Happy Meal toys, and I don't think you have this one,'" Karen said. "I was kind of irritated that he just showed up unannounced. He acted kind of nervous and weird, so I opened it up, and there was this engagement ring. So, I felt kind of stupid for being so cranky with him, but I wanted boundaries. I didn't want him to think he could just show up and change my plans."

Eventually, George realized he had not gotten a clear answer to his proposal. Karen could not resist the chance to tease him a bit.

"Later, he said, 'You never gave me an answer,'" Karen said. "So, I said, 'Well, I guess so because I need new towels.' I was



Karen Kelly's ring in a flower.

joking when I said that, but everybody thought that was why I married the guy, so when we got married, we got scads of towels."

Unfortunately, George later passed away, leaving Karen a widow. Initially, she had no plans to marry again, but she eventually began dating Darrin Kelly. She recalled the day their relationship took a meaningful turn.

"When Darrin and I got engaged, we were just hanging out watching a movie. It had been one of those weeks. I was cranky and my feet hurt, and he started rubbing my feet, and I said, 'Oh, my goodness, that's really nice. I'd marry you on the spot if you would do this every day.' He said, 'Hold that thought,' and I thought he'd gone to the bathroom or something," Karen said. "When he came back, he held out his hand, and it was a box with an engagement ring in it. He'd had it for a couple of months, but he wasn't quite sure how and when to bring it out."

Karen said she is glad Darrin proposed, but she still enjoys teasing him about it.

"Occasionally, I point out to him that I did keep my end of the deal, and my feet are pretty tired sometimes," she said. ■

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Guthrie Center **TIMES** **WEDDING** **GUIDE**

Here comes the bride. This time that means you. Or maybe it means your daughter. Or, possibly, the one who will dress in white is engaged to be your wife. Whomever it is, before the wedding bells ring, you need to plan. Start your research early, don't be afraid to ask others to help out, and read the following Wedding Guide for ideas on how to pull off the perfect day.

WEDDING GUIDE

5 TIPS TO ENHANCE WEDDING DECOR

Family Features

Wedding days are meant to be filled with love and celebration, and what better way to ring in the new stage of life as newlyweds than with a well-decorated venue to match the joyous occasion? Whether a couple is on a tight budget or picky when it comes to theme ideas, these decorating tips can help add more flair for the big day.

1. USE A NATURAL VENUE.

Many couples choose wedding venues that require immense amounts of decorations, but a venue with organic scenery or a beautiful view can help alleviate the stress. Consider having the ceremony near a garden or beach with enough natural surroundings to keep guests in awe.

2. MAKE THE CAKE A CENTERPIECE.

Wedding cakes are almost guaranteed to be filled with flavor, but they can also serve as a decorative centerpiece for the reception. Choosing a cake topped with flowers, highlighting bright colors and placing it in a prominent spot at the reception can grab guests' attention while also keeping them eager for a bite.

3. CHOOSE TABLE ACCESSORIES THAT POP.

Leave guests in amazement as they make their way to their seats for the re-

ception with beautifully decorated tables. Table accessories can be anything ranging from patterned table runners to flowers in full-bloom placed in simple, elegant vases. If you are not having a formal sit-down reception, try using paper lanterns or hanging flowers from the ceiling to create an eye-catching atmosphere to remember.

4. ADD CLASSIC LIGHTING.

At times, finding the right lighting to match the mood of a wedding venue can be tricky. In this case, less may actually be more. Try opting for a classic candlelit ceremony or reception to create a more romantic setting. This can save both money and countless hours spent attempting to configure elaborate light fixtures, and also provide a timeless feel.

5. PLACE ENGAGEMENT PHOTOS AROUND.

With any wedding, you want the day to feel personal and intimate for the couple and guests alike. Consider decorating the venue with engagement photos of the soon-to-be spouses as they popped the question. This can allow the newlyweds to reminisce while guests view those cherished moments and revel in the occasion. ■

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WEDDING GUIDE

HOW TO HANDLE SEATING WEDDING GUESTS

Family Features

Receptions may be big or small, lavish or casual. But regardless of their size or style, receptions all share a common element: They will require couples set up seating arrangement for guests. Even though assigned seating isn't mandatory, selecting seats for a sit-down dinner makes things simpler and reduces confusion. Some reception venues may even require assigned seating so that catering staff can service tables accordingly.

Seating guests can be tricky, but employing a few strategies can make the process go quickly and smoothly.

- **Use a seating chart.** A seating chart, whether it's venue-specific or one couples make themselves, is essential. If you are using a self-made chart, inquire with the venue about the shape of tables, how many guests each table can seat, and the location of tables around the space.
- **Start with the wedding party table.** Couples can ease themselves into the task of seating by doing the easy tables first. The primary one is the wedding party table. This traditionally can be a dais or a sweetheart table flanked by the wedding party. According to Martha Stewart Weddings, the table should be centrally located, and the wedding couple should sit in the middle. A male-female pattern follows on either side of the couple, consisting of the ushers, bridesmaids, best man and maid of honor. If much of the wedding party is already married, couples may opt to have the wedding party sit with their spouses instead of at the dais.
- **Organize family tables.** Tables for parents, grandparents and immediate family members of the bride and groom also are high priority. Both families can be combined at one table, or they can be separated into two tables. These tables should be the closest to the bride and groom.
- **Consider mobility issues.** Next seat guests who have specific needs at tables. Elderly guests may want to



be away from the band, deejay or speakers. Guests in wheelchairs may need an accessible seat near the exit.

- **Get some help.** Enlist the help of parents to seat their friends and extended family members. Parents may know best who gets along and who should be separated.
- **Seat dancers near the dance floor.**

To encourage dancing, place guests who tend to be lively close to the dance floor so others can see them getting up to dance and join in.

Couples can use apps, lists or self-made charts to plot their reception seating arrangements. Create place cards or a central chart so guests can find their seats promptly and easily. ■

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LOCAL FILM REVIEWS

NEIL DIAMOND. KING DAVID. SHAKESPEARE. AND THREE MOVIES WITH A CHARACTER’S NAME IN THE TITLE.



“Ella McCay”

BY MICHAEL C. WOODY
Guthrie Center Times

It’s the end of the year, so let’s clean out the film closet and throw everything that we have got against the wall and see what sticks. And, just to be different, let’s start with the worst movie in this batch and end with the best.

“ELLA MCCAY”

With the talent behind and in front of the camera, this movie was set up like few others to be successful. It was written by James L. Brooks, who wrote “Broadcast News,” “As Good As It Gets” and co-wrote “Terms of Endearment,” which was nominated for just shy of a dozen Academy Awards. It stars Jamie Lee Curtis, Albert Brooks, Rebecca Hall, Julie Kavner and Woody Harrelson. That being said, this an absolutely horrible movie. Emma Mackey, whose last credit was the Barbie movie, is so mis-cast as a political power person in the middle of a scandal and chomping at the bit to make a name for herself. This movie



“David”

should have never been made. I sat in on a screening, and it was all I could do to stay in my seat. **GRADE: D-**

“DAVID”

This is a look at the biblical King David as a young warrior trying to make a name for himself and help his people escape the cruelty of their enemies. “David” is an excellent animated film that is so much better than the other cartoon stuff that kids have been fed all year. I was not expecting a great animated film, but that is exactly what I got. And, as a life-long Catholic, I learned some things about my faith. **GRADE: A**



“JAY KELLY”

Here is one more movie with a character’s name in the title. The film is George Clooney’s long-awaited return to movie theaters. His last movie was “Wolfs” with Brad Pitt, and it was not great. Here, Clooney plays Clooney, a famous actor living with his beautiful family in France and preparing to be celebrated for his career of excellence. Adam Sandler, in



“Jay Kelly”



“Rental Family”

a rare serious role, plays his manager. Great to see Clooney on screen again, but we need a better story next time. **GRADE: B+**



“WICKED: FOR GOOD”

Unless you were hiding under a rock for the last six-plus months, you are certainly aware that the second half of the movie “Wicked” opened this past fall. This is the conclusion of the first movie, and expectations were way over the top. How could any movie expect to live up to that hype? Well, I’m hap-



“Wicked: For Good”



“Song Sung Blue”

py to say that this one did, and it was a fantastic experience — even better than the first. The voices are great, the sets are crazy good, and the story seemed more focused. This was one of the better times I have had in a theater this year. **GRADE: A**

“RENTAL FAMILY”

“Rental Family” is a curious but charming little film about a man (Brendan Frazier) who is hired by families overseas for certain jobs. This job is to write a story about an old man. The film is full of great joy and great sad-



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ness, but you walk out of the theater feeling better about yourself and the world we live in. I would expect to see Frazier's name when the Oscar nominations come out. He is just that good. **GRADE: B+**

"SONG SUNG BLUE"

I've been a Neil Diamond fan for many years, and this new film, "Song Sung Blue" is based on a true story about a couple of Neil Diamond impersonators, played perfectly by Kate Hudson and Hugh Jackman. I would do no justice to the film if I told you more than that. Just go see it and love every minute. My 92-year old mother-in-law told me there was nothing about that movie she didn't love. I agree. **GRADE: A**



"ETERNITY"

Another wasted opportunity awaits you with this movie. At the beginning of the film, an old man dies (no secret there) and is sent to eternity, which is a weigh-station, if you will, as he awaits his wife. She does show up, but so does one of her old beaus, and then there is a decision to be made. It is an interesting movie with something important to say, but it could have been said better. **GRADE: C+**



"HAMNET"

This film is based on the true story of William Shakespeare and his loss of a young son named Hamnet. It is a sad tale of loss and grief, but the performances



were excellent, and it is most likely headed for at least a few Oscar nominations. Again, this is one of the year's best films. **GRADE: A-**

"WAKE UP DEAD MAN: A KNIVES OUT MYSTERY"

This is at least the third in this murder mystery series starring Daniel Craig in a Sherlock Holmesian role. I was not a big fan of the first two, so maybe it was best that I went in with a low expectation. I really enjoyed this chapter and might even revisit the previous films on one of these bitter cold nights. It's a mystery, so I can't tell you much other than to check it out. **GRADE: A**



"TRAIN DREAMS"

This is another great movie I did not see coming, but, at the end of the day, it

might be the best one I have seen all year. It is a quiet film about a solitary man, written by a writer in Iowa's Writer's Workshop. Playing on Netflix. Do not miss this one. **GRADE: A**



Have a great holiday season and a safe and fun New Year. Why not take a holiday trip into Waukee and see a movie in the IMAX? You will be so spoiled. See you next month. ■

Michael C. Woody has been reviewing movies on radio and television since 1986. He and his wife, Susan, are residents of Guthrie County.



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GUTHRIE COUNTY SUPERVISORS VOTE FOR 9-MEMBER EMS COMMITTEE

BY RICH WICKS
Guthrie Center Times

DEC. 16 - EMS ADVISORY COUNCIL DISCUSSION, LIBRARY FUNDING, BAYARD TAX ABATEMENTS

During the Dec. 16 meeting of the Guthrie County Board of Supervisors, discussion was held regarding how to create an EMS advisory council, as the county investigates the feasibility of designating EMS as an essential service.

Panora EMS Director John Delavergne shared that the three services currently operating within Guthrie County (Panora EMS, Stuart EMS and Adair EMS) are largely dependent on grants, which could expire. He added that Panora EMS is generally only collecting about 45% of what the service bills. He said many city EMS services are facing a similar challenge. Delavergne also noted that it is difficult to

have adequate numbers of EMS personnel in the various parts of the county.

“We are, unfortunately, a struggling breed right now,” Delavergne said.

One area of significant discussion was how many voting members to have on the advisory council. There was discussion of the possibility of a smaller voting council and a larger ad hoc council. Supervisors noted how, on one hand, a larger council allows more widespread representation, but a larger group makes it more challenging to hold meetings that can be attended by all or nearly all voting members.

“Are we looking at seven to nine, or 10 to 15?” Supervisor Steve Smith asked.

Smith suggested that the supervisors should not name individuals to serve on the advisory council but instead should name an organization/entity and let that entity determine which individual would serve on the council.

No vote or formal decision was made at this time. The supervisors will gather feedback from various areas of the county to bring back for discussion at an upcoming meeting.

The supervisors heard from the Guthrie County Library Association with a fiscal year 2027 funding request. No vote was taken at this time.

“In January, we’ll make some decisions,” Armstrong said.

At the recommendation of county Treasurer Brenda Campbell, the supervisors voted to approve two City of Bayard Tax abatements (Parcel 0000440001 and Parcel 0000440501).

DEC. 23 - BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT, VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE

County Engineer Josh Sebern discussed the plans for bridge replacement project BROS-C039-8J-39 on 240th Street over

Seely Creek, south of Highway 44.

“It’s a three-span timber bridge currently, and we’re going to replace it with a concrete slab bridge. This is federal aid, 100% covered by federal aid. It will pass through the local budget, but it’s 100% reimbursed,” Sebern said.

Sebern said the construction would likely happen either in 2026 or 2027. The board unanimously approved the final plans of the project as described by Sebern.

Board Chair Maggie Armstrong brought up the possibility of moving the General Assistance/ Veterans Affairs office into a different office space within the courthouse. She said the reason for considering such a move is for privacy concerns. Armstrong said she discussed the situation with Beth Watson, department head of the GA/VA departments.

“We all know what it’s like when there’s somebody in Beth’s office and they’re try-

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ing to conduct a meeting, and we have a meeting. It's just very loud, and that has brought up some privacy concerns," Armstrong said.

Armstrong said the best option appears to be having the GA/VA office move downstairs into the former "mental health room." Armstrong said if the move is approved, clear signage would be needed to help all visitors know how to reach the GA/VA office. Armstrong said the proposed move was an idea that Watson brought to her attention, so Watson is in favor of the idea.

The supervisors unanimously approved the office move as described by Armstrong.

DEC. 30 - MORE EMS DISCUSSIONS, PARCEL INQUIRY, PROPERTY VALUATIONS, PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Discussion was again held regarding the county's interest in pursuing EMS as an essential service. Supervisor Steve Smith shared his opinion that the supervisors should allow the EMS committee (once it is formed) to handle most matters, including the specific makeup of an ad hoc committee.

"This is the committee's task, not ours," Smith said. "Number one, we've got to decide how many should be on the committee, and number two, make sure that everybody has some kind of representation. And, after that, it's like, it's yours."

No formal action was taken at this time.

Supervisor Brian Johnson explained Mike Webb's inquiry about purchasing Parcel 0000711800, which is adjacent to Webb's property. The parcel is .63 acres. Supervisor Mike Dickson suggested County Engineer Josh Sebern should be consulted to see if there is any expected need, such as widening the adjacent roadway at some point.

"We'll check with Josh," Johnson said. No action was taken at this time.

County Auditor Dani Fink shared data on the county property valuations and outlined the fiscal year 2027 budget process. Fink shared that while Guthrie County supervisors have traditionally

held a second weekly meeting during budget season, some counties have the budget meetings all within one or two weeks. After discussion, the supervisors plan to hold budget meetings with department heads the week of Jan. 26. The meetings will be scheduled for 9 a.m. to noon.

The supervisors discussed how best to hold performance reviews for county employees. Smith shared his opinion that if the review includes only one or two supervisors (rather than all five), employees are more likely to engage in productive conversation. Chair Maggie Armstrong agreed.

"I think changing it to just two people leads to more fluid conversation," Armstrong said.

The supervisors suggested getting feedback on this idea from department heads. Armstrong will contact department heads to ask their preference.

JAN. 2 - ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS

Supervisors held a special meeting on Friday, Jan. 2 to make annual appointments. Steve Smith was appointed chair of the board for 2026. JD Kuster was appointed vice chair.

Board Chair Maggie Armstrong voiced appreciation regarding her chairing of the board through 2025.

"I do want to thank the board, the departments heads, elected officials and all county staff, basically everybody who supported me during my year as chair. It's always a pleasure to serve the people of Guthrie County," Armstrong said.

The supervisors then went through the list of various annual appointments. There was no change to the regular meeting schedule and approved holidays. The mileage reimbursement rate will be 72.5 cents per mile.

Most other appointments remained unchanged. Among the other annual appointments were Smith for Region XII, and JD Kuster to replace Smith as alternate for Midwest Partnership. Armstrong will be the representative to the Adair/Guthrie County EMA, with Smith as al-

ternate.

JAN. 6 - MAKEUP OF AN EMS COMMITTEE, INSURANCE RATES

Chair Steve Smith shared the recommendation from Brian Johnson and himself that the supervisors decide on the basic makeup of an EMS committee. He explained that the recommendation includes nine entities, but each entity would be able to designate a specific person who would serve on the nine-member committee.

Smith listed the nine recommended entities as city of Bayard, city of Bagley, Union Township, Adair Fire and Rescue, city of Guthrie Center, Guthrie County Hospital, city of Panora, city of Stuart, and Guthrie County Sheriff's Office. Smith stressed that the cities listed could choose anyone (a council member, city administrator, first responder, etc.). Smith also said the recommendation is for a larger ad hoc committee, but that would be determined by the nine-member committee, if approved.

Supervisor Maggie Armstrong voiced support for the recommendation. Supervisor Mike Dickson disagreed.

"I don't like it," Dickson said. "I don't like the structure that you're going with either. The rationale is you're limiting it to nine. I'm thinking it needs to be larg-

er. Why not give representation from each township?"

Smith said a larger committee creates challenges in assuring participation from all members, and that a larger ad hoc committee would allow for broader input. He also added that the final decisions would be made by the county supervisors.

"There are missing pieces, but we can add all of those to the ad hoc," Smith said. He clarified that he believes the nine-member committee (if approved) should decide who is invited to any ad hoc committee.

The supervisors voted 4-1 in favor of the nine-member committee as proposed. Dickson voted against.

Becky Benton (State Street Insurance) presented information on insurance rates and coverage options for the county to consider. Guthrie County participates in coverage through ICAP (Iowa Communities Assurance Pool), which covers 75 of Iowa's 99 counties. The supervisors reviewed and renewed the coverage.

The supervisors meet regularly on Tuesdays at 9 a.m. The public is welcome to attend in person (at the courthouse) or via remote technology. To join remotely, call 323-792-6123, then use meeting code 547029216# ■

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No. 1 Thomas Skram on the wing in a game against Ogden on Dec. 12.



No. 10 Karli Kautzky passes it out wide against Ogden on Dec. 12.



No. 5 Meranda Gruber rises for the layup against Ogden on Dec. 12.



No. 11 Preston Kent battles with the Ogden defender on Dec. 12.



No. 21 Becca Littler drives into the paint against Ogden on Dec. 12.



No. 1 Stella Largent feeds the ball to the post against Ogden on Dec. 12.

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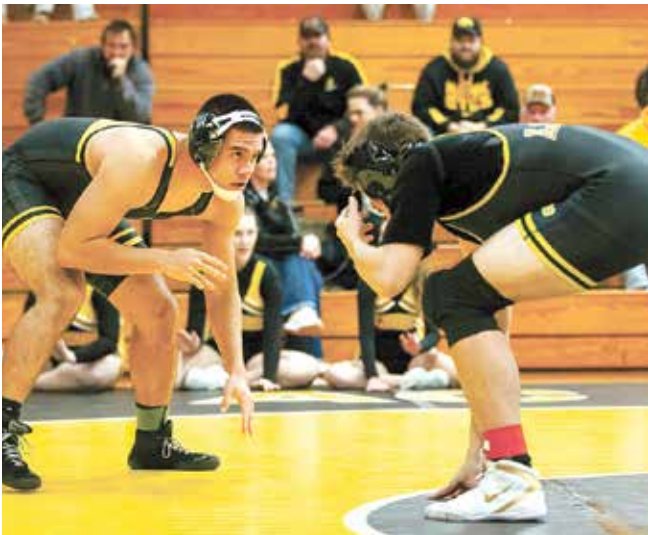
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Lane Stringer at the ACGC quad on Dec. 11.



Ryder Cline at the ACGC quad on Dec. 11.



Angel Martinez at the ACGC quad on Dec. 11.



No. 20 Andrew Baumert defends the paint against Ogden on Dec. 12.



No. 4 Joe Crawford gets air for two points against Ogden on Dec. 12. ■

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EDUCATION

GUTHRIE CENTER SCHOOL BOARD OFFICIALLY NAMES MATTHEWSON AS HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

BY RICH WICKS

Guthrie Center Times

DEC. 15

During the Dec. 15 meeting of the Adair-Casey School Board, Superintendent Josh Rasmussen shared data on the Comprehensive Financial Projection Model for the next five years. One area noted was the Unspent Authority Balance (UAB), which has been steadily increasing in recent years. He explained that the reasons for this include the Adair-Casey and Guthrie Center school boards working toward the possibility of consolidation.

"We've gotten really efficient," Rasmussen said. "We have money we can spend on some programs."

Rasmussen said he is concerned that school districts with very high UAB balances may see less funding from the state. Board members discussed the need to spend UAB funds wisely rather than haphazardly.

The board reviewed projections on student enrollment, revenues and expenses.

Rasmussen provided a legislative update and encouraged board members to advocate with lawmakers.

"I would say whenever you get a chance to meet or email our representatives (to do so), because operational sharing, there's some discussion about limiting that," Rasmussen said. "We don't want that to go away."

The board discussed the facility upgrade recommendations made by consulting firm Denovo. Each board member shared which projects they felt were priorities. Those included secure entrances, making an ADA-compliant bathroom, and walls and doors at the elementary. Board member Lindsay Dinkla advocated for strongly considering some of the classroom improvements suggested by teachers. No formal decisions were made.

Principal Ed Den Beste said the recent music concert was well attended and went smoothly.

The board held its annual organizational meeting. Blair Carney was reelected as board president, with Justin Crawford as vice president.

DEC. 18

During the Dec. 18 meeting of the Guthrie Center School Board, board members considered a recommendation regarding Cody Matthewson, who has been serving as interim principal for the high school. Superintendent Josh Rasmussen shared his observations.

"I feel like he's in a good spot, and so am I. And I've met with a few high school teachers and a few community members," Rasmussen said. "My recommendation is that we remove the 'interim' tag and make him the fulltime principal here at the high school."

The board voted unanimously to approve the recommendation.

Elementary Principal Tandem Eischeid shared information on the recent discovery of a small leak in the roof at the school that became noticeable when the snow on the roof melted. Eischeid said he shoveled snow off the roof in that area, and a repair will be investigated.

Eischeid reported on another issue.

"Our intercom system went out at the elementary. It's something with the fuses. We replaced it, and it worked for about a half an hour and then it blew a fuse again," Eischeid said. "We have some people coming Friday to check that out."

Matthewson said he is checking on the number of credits senior students have accumulated so that any students in danger of missing the credit requirement for graduation can take action now to resolve the issue.

"We've notified the parents of anybody who has been or will be at risk going into the second semester," Matthewson said.

Upcoming dates noted included no school on Jan. 19 due to teacher professional development.

The board reviewed the proposed Chronic Absenteeism Policy (501.9) and unanimously approved the first reading and waived the second reading.

The board made committee assignments for the upcoming year.

The board's next regular meeting is set as a joint meeting of the Adair-Casey and Guthrie Center School Boards on Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. at the high school in Guthrie Center. The public is welcome. ■



HEALTH

GCH TRUSTEES APPOINT OFFICERS

BY RICH WICKS
Guthrie Center Times

During the Dec. 29 meeting of the Guthrie County Hospital Board of Trustees, the trustees voted to appoint officers for 2026. Cheryl Marks will serve as board chair with Doug Kent as vice chair. Dana Tews will be the board secretary, and Mike Underwood will be the treasurer.

Chief Human Resources Officer Mary Anderson reported on recent staff hirings. “We hit the employee count of 150, and we’re still going. I’ve not seen that since I’ve been here,” Anderson said. “That’s fantastic. We’re getting the workplace built up.”

Chief Operations Officer Travis Martin reported on the cardboard clinic space mockups at the Big Green Umbrella Media building in Guthrie Center.

“We’ve been working on the mockups. We have one more department left to do. That is respiratory therapy, and hopeful-

ly that will be done this week and we can get that team out there to review that space,” Martin said.

The board set a public hearing regarding the proposed purchase of the Panorama clinic (103 Southeast 13th St.) by issuing revenue bonds or borrowing, not to exceed \$3 million. The public hearing will take place at the January board meeting Jan. 22.

Foundation Director Dennis Flanery reported the employee appreciation campaign was successful. He also noted the annual Handbags and Bingo event is set for April 10.

“Registration for that opens up tomorrow,” Flanery said.

The next regular meeting of the trustees is set for Thursday, Jan. 22 at 4 p.m. The public is welcome. ■



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MITZIE RUE’S CANINE CORRAL TREATS DOGS LIKE FAMILY

Owner Anna Miller says, “I’m living my dream.”

BY RICH WICKS
Guthrie Center Times

Numerous surveys have found that most American dog owners consider their pet to be a part of the family. Depending on the survey, the results on this question usually fall in the 95% or higher category.

The Ian and Anna Miller family of rural Guthrie Center is no exception. The Miller family includes three dogs: Odin, Raya and Trixie. But, at any given time, many more dogs are in the dog boarding facility they run, which is named Mitzie Rue’s Canine Corral. Anna Miller explains how the business came to be.

“The name of the business comes from my wolfdog, Mitzie. I had her in college, and she passed away in 2017. We moved here with the idea to open a kennel; that was my dream. We thought this would be a good location,” Miller said. “Then, in 2017, my dad passed away. And then, a month later, Mitzie passed away. That was a rude awakening that there isn’t always tomorrow, so immediately we got started on it. By July 4 of 2019, we were open.”

Miller explained that her husband, Ian, did about 90% of the work turning an old machine shed into a kennel.

“We offer boarding and dog daycare. We’re open seven days a week, but I do



Anna, Ian and Alice Miller with their dogs Odin, Raya and Trixie.

close, as far as pickups and drop-offs, on the big holidays. Daycare we offer Monday through Friday,” Miller said.

Mitzie Rue’s dog boarding is a family affair with help from the kids, Alice and Vic-

tor. Miller explained that Alice sometimes crawls into a kennel to read to a dog, which helps enhance her reading skills and the dogs always seem to enjoy.

“We offer walks while dogs are being

boarded here, depending on the weather,” Miller said. “But, we don’t do grooming.”

Mitzie Rue’s Canine Corral is a state-licensed facility located at 2706 Roost Lane, just off Highway 44 between Panora and

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Anna Miller provides TLC to all dogs at Mitzie Rue's.

Guthrie Center.

There are 14 kennels, and the facility is licensed to house up to 28 dogs, but Miller said the most she has ever had at once was 21. Those interested in learning more, or scheduling a stay, can do so on the website www.mitzierues.com or by going to the Facebook page. The business phone number is 641-755-3793.

"On holidays, we're always full and have

a wait list, so I recommend people book as soon as they know their plans," Miller said. "We have a lot of regulars, but it seems like I get at least one new customer phone call every week."

Miller shared that dogs do not need to be spayed/neutered to stay at Mitzie Rue's. She selects kennel spots to avoid any problems that might arise from intact dogs being next to each other. Miller also said it is



Alice's reading has gone to the dogs.

rare that she has to reject a dog due to aggression or behavioral issues.

When asked what makes Mitzie Rue's unique, Miller's short answer was "family." She then explained further.

"I think with me not having a staff, everyone knows me and my kids. We've gotten so close to some customers. We get a lot of word-of-mouth customers," Miller said.

Mitzie Rue's also goes above and beyond in treating all dogs like family.

"Every month, a customer of the month is nominated, where a dog gets recognition on Facebook and sent home with a doggie treat bag. We like to do giveaways, and the dogs get spoiled on holidays. This Christmas, they got Christmas-shaped treats. At Thanksgiving, they get a Thanksgiving meal that everyone likes. For Easter, they usually get an Easter egg full of treats," Miller said. "I have fun with it. I'm living my dream." ■



Alice and Victor help socialize the dogs.

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BY RICH WICKS

Guthrie Center Times

The Dylan and Aspen Barnes family of Casey has found a hobby they enjoy that also helps teach valuable lessons for the children. For the past four years, the family has been keeping chickens for egg-laying. The family now includes 3-year-old son, River, and 2-month-old daughter, Charlie.

"When we first moved to Casey in 2021, we started out with goats and sheep, then we got into chickens, pretty much for a fun hobby," Aspen said. "Once we had River, we knew that we wanted to keep up with the animals, because it does teach kids good responsibility. I grew up with that, and when I met Dylan, he had chickens under his deck at his mom's house. So, we were used to that, and we wanted to introduce that to River."

In addition to the life lessons, the family appreciates the edible results of their hobby.

"My dad actually went in half on this with us, just because he likes the farm-fresh eggs as well," Aspen said. "This is our fourth year of having eggs, but our first year selling them."

Unfortunately, Dylan and Aspen discovered others viewed the chickens as a free meal, too.

"There's a little barn out there, and Dylan built a little run off it just so the chickens could be outside," Aspen said. "We had some free-range chickens for the first three years, but there are a lot of foxes around here, so the chickens disappeared very quickly."

Aspen and Dylan explained that besides foxes, the chickens face threats from other predators, including raccoons, hawks, opossums, minks, owls and others. Dylan

made changes to the chicken enclosure, and the predators have no longer been a major issue.

The chickens produce more than enough eggs for the family, so some eggs are now donated or sold.

"We have only hens. We got them in April," Aspen said. "They are just now all starting to lay eggs. Now we're getting 20 to 30 eggs a day. We eat eggs like crazy, but we can't keep up."

Aspen explained that free local delivery of eggs is available, and she even delivers to the Des Moines area for free when she is headed there. Currently, the eggs sell for \$3 a dozen, but Aspen explained the price may fluctuate from time to time. Discounts are offered for anyone who trades in empty cartons. When the family has plenty of eggs to sell, Aspen posts their availability on the Casey Community page on Facebook with current pricing.

The family's eggs are various shades of brown and vary in size, but the insides look nearly identical to store-bought eggs with bright yellow yolks. Although free-range eggs tend to have orange yolks, the Barnes family's eggs do not get that coloration in their run.

"The chicken run eggs look like store-bought eggs when you crack them open. But ours are not processed in any way," Aspen said.

The Barnes eggs are available either washed or unwashed. Although some customers prefer washed, the unwashed eggs stay fresh longer.

"You can keep unwashed eggs for three to four months on the counter, and if they're in the fridge, probably seven to eight months," Dylan said.

Looking to the future, Aspen said the family plans to continue having animals as long as that provides a learning experience for the kids and as long as the workload remains reasonable. Asked about the most challenging part of having laying hens, Aspen said the weather can make everything more work.

"Chickens are fairly simple. The chores can be challenging, especially when it's really cold out. Their water freezes," As-



Dylan, Aspen, River and Charlie show the eggs they raise.

pen said. "At one point, I was ready to just throw in the towel and be done with animals, but, at the end of the day, I do want

to be able to teach our kids that these are living creatures and they provide for us, so we need to provide for them." ■



Guthrie Center ASK TIMES



Submit your questions at
www.guthriecentertimes.com or
email shane@gctimesnews.com.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PHOTOS OF THE ORIGINAL GUTHRIE COUNTY COURTHOUSE?

A: We don't have that one, but here is one of the third courthouse, which was destroyed by fire in 1963. The current facility is the fourth structure in Guthrie Center to house county administration and court functions since 1859. According to the book "Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses," the first courthouse structure for the county was a two-story frame building built in Panora in 1859. The building was subsequently removed from the center of the public square, and it was replaced by a high school. The building itself became an agriculture warehouse. A new brick courthouse that was capped with a dome was completed in 1877 in Guthrie Center. The \$22,500 building was paid for by the sale of swamp land in the county. On March 3, 1882, it was destroyed by fire. A clerk saved the county records. The following year, the third courthouse, a three-story, brick Renaissance Revival structure, was built, featuring cut-stone facings and trim. The construction cost was \$25,000. This building would serve the county for 80 years. In 1963, the fourth courthouse was under construction in the courtyard next to the third courthouse when the older building was destroyed by fire on Nov. 27, 1963. Luckily, some of the records had already been removed from the old building so the loss wasn't as great as prior fires.



The third Guthrie County Courthouse

Q: WHO IS THE CITY OF CASEY NAMED AFTER?

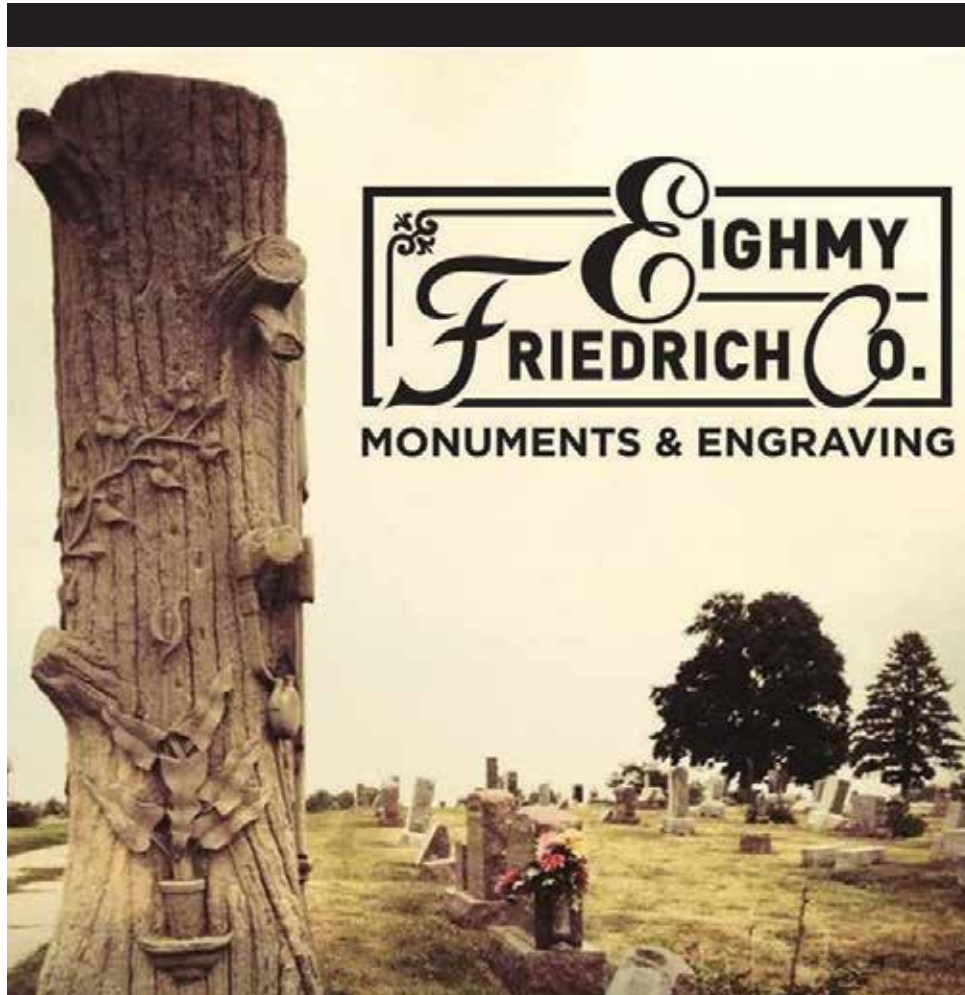
A: Casey was platted in 1869. The community has the name of a railroad man. The firm John and James Casey, Contractors, from Erie, Pennsylvania, under John F. Tracy, president of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, built the railroad across Iowa and through Casey from 1866 to 1869. Most of the streets in the town are named for Union Army generals in the American Civil War. On June 29, 1880, Casey was officially incorporated as a city.

Q: WHEN WAS THE ADAIR VIADUCT BUILT?

A: The short answer is 1923. The longer answer, according to the Iowa Department of Transportation, is that in that same year, the Iowa State Highway Commission (ISHC) designed a concrete viaduct for the crossing. In May of that year, the Adair County Board of Supervisors awarded a contract to build the Adair Viaduct to the Federal Bridge Company for \$42,263. The Des Moines contractors began excavating for the concrete substructure soon thereafter. By June 1924, the bridge was ceremoniously opened to traffic "with the usual accompaniment of music, speeches, and motion pictures," the highway commission reported. After the hubbub of the dedication ceremony died down, the Adair Viaduct functioned as a regionally imported railroad overpass. It remains in use today in an essentially unaltered condition. ■



The Adair Viaduct



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OBITUARIES

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DALE BETTS
1953-2025

Dale Craig Betts was born Oct. 30, 1953, in Richland, Washington, at the U.S. Military Hospital at Camp Hanford to Richard and Lois Betts. Dale was raised on a farm south of Jefferson. He attended Jefferson Community School until graduation in 1972. During his school years, he participated in wrestling, baseball, FFA and 4-H. He earned money doing

chores for neighbors and working at a local feed mill while also helping on the family farm. He enjoyed modifying cars and motorcycles. He shared many stories of drag racing with friends and a month-long motorcycle adventure out west with minimal money and no plan. What an adventure!

Dale met the love of his life, Connie Clause, at Spring Lake and married in 1974 in Grand Junction. They made their home south of Jefferson. Dale continued to help on the family farm and welded at Ideal. Dale and Connie became parents to two children: Alan and Jessi.

In 1981, they moved to their permanent farmstead near Winkleman Switch and began farming on their own. He and Connie worked side by side caring for their livestock and began to start their own row crop farming. Dale continued

to use his welding skills at Osmundson and later Scranton Manufacturing while farming. Eventually, he gave up the welding jobs and focused on his own operation. As the years went by, they continued to expand their row crops and cow herd until they eventually had 200 cow calf pairs. Dale took great pride in his cow herd.

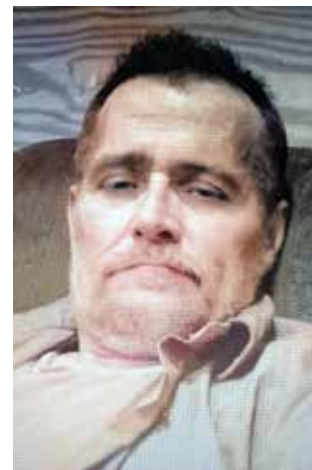
Dale always had time for his kids, making sure they learned skills and life lessons that would carry them through their lives. He took time to attend the many activities they were in, and he was the same when he became blessed with four grandkids. He was a grandpa who made time for them fishing at the river, riding ATVs, teaching them hands-on skills or going to their activities.

Dale passed away Dec. 16, 2025, at the age of 72 years. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Connie; son, Alan Betts

(Tanya) of Jefferson; daughter, Jessi Riley (Andy) of Rippey; four grandchildren: Kara Heick (Eric), Cole Betts, Brent Riley and Max Riley; brother, Gary Betts (Alene); sister, Betty Hoyle (Kirby); mother-in-law, Dorothy Clause; in-laws Reg Clause (Mary), Linda Clause (Guy), Mary Ann Haver (Ed), Cindy Stubbs (Mark) and many nieces and nephews.

The family would like to thank the staff at Mary Greeley Medical Center, Greene County Medical Center and UnityPoint Hospice for their wonderful care of Dale. Also, thank you to those who have helped our family or reached out during these last three months.

Visitation for Dale Betts was held from 4-6 p.m. on Dec. 22, 2025 in the Greene Room at the Wild Rose Casino in Jefferson. Services by Slininger-Schroeder Funeral Home and Cremation Care, Jefferson. ■



JOSEPH RAY BROOKS
1973-2025

Joe was born on Nov. 30, 1973, to Danny and Debbie Brooks in Guthrie Center. He tragically passed away on Dec. 6, 2025, at his home in Guthrie Center.

Joe spent about two years in the Army stationed in Fort Stuart, Georgia. After returning home, he worked road patch construction and worked as a welder. Most of his life was spent driving truck and doing mechanic work in his

shop.

He had five children, Thomas Brooks and son Oliver Palmershiem of Sioux City, daughter Angela (Brooks) McMichael, and daughter Riley of Guthrie Center; Tyler Brooks of Council Bluffs; John Sherwood of Guthrie Center; and Danny Sherwood of Guthrie Center. He had a long-term relationship with Lisa Sherwood of Guthrie Center.

He was preceded in death by his dad, Danny Brooks; twin sisters, Anne and Angela; and grandparents, Raymond and Nadine Mortensen and Frank and Irene Brooks. Whistler, Joe's dog, also passed away in the fire.

Left to mourn are his mom, Debbie Brooks Wilson of Guthrie Center; lifelong companion, Lisa Sherwood of Guthrie Center; sister, Kris (Art) Hill of Carlisle; brother, Mike Brooks (and fiancé Kelly Ballantyne) of Logan; his five children; and two grandchildren ■

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THOMAS LEE BROOKS
1996-2025

Thomas Lee Brooks, a man of courage and remarkable handiness, left this world on Dec. 11, 2025, at the age of 29. Born on Sept. 28, 1996, in Des Moines, Thomas grew into a person who could always be relied upon to lend a helping hand. His final moments were spent in Sioux City, surrounded by the love and comfort of his family.

Thomas was a proud graduate of Guthrie

Center High School, where he formed many lifelong friendships and laid the foundation for his future. Thomas enjoyed his time working at Blue Bunny Ice Cream, where he was not only a maintenance worker but also a beloved colleague. His dedication to his job was evident in the meticulous care he took in every task he undertook.

Family was the cornerstone of Thomas' life. He is survived by his cherished grandmother, Debra Wilson, who instilled in him the values of kindness and perseverance. His siblings, Angela (Brooks) McMichael, Tyler Brooks, John Sherwood, Danny Sherwood, Zach Mobley and Mary Elizabeth Trent, will remember him as the brother who was always ready to offer support and share in life's joys and challenges. Thomas' legacy will live on through his son, Oliver Palmersheim, who was the light of his life. His loyal dog, Cardi, was a

constant companion and source of joy.

Thomas was preceded in death by his father, Joseph Brooks, and his grandfather, Danny Brooks. Their memories served as a guiding light for Thomas, inspiring him to live a life of integrity and purpose. Those who knew Thomas will remember him for his courage, which shone brightly, whether he was facing personal challenges or coming to the aid of a friend in need. His ability to fix and build, a testament to his handiness, was a gift he generously shared with all who knew him.

Thomas Lee Brooks will be deeply missed by his family, friends and all who had the pleasure of knowing him. His spirit, characterized by bravery and a knack for making the world a better place, will continue to inspire and influence those he left behind. As we say goodbye to Thomas, we celebrate a life well-lived and a man well-loved. ■



BRENDA KAY SHEEDER
1958-2025

Brenda Kay Sheeder, a loving mother, devoted wife and cherished friend, passed away in Guthrie Center on Dec. 17, 2025, at the age of 67.

Brenda's early years in Nebraska were filled with the warmth of a close-knit family and the joys of discovery and learning. After graduating from high school, she pursued her interest

in numbers and details by majoring in accounting in college, a field in which she excelled due to her meticulous and organized nature.

Brenda's love for her family was evident in every aspect of her life. She is survived by her adoring children, Richard Sheeder and Kassandra Sheeder, both of Guthrie Center; her loving mother, Laverne Barnard of Beatrice, Nebraska; and her caring brother and sister-in-law, Duane (Teri) Barnard of Palisade, Nebraska, and Janell (Darrell) Parde of Loomis, Nebraska. Brenda was preceded in death by her father, Everett Barnard; and her beloved husband, Kerry Sheeder.

Brenda's love story with Kerry began in Beatrice, Nebraska, where they were introduced by her mother. Their love blossomed quickly, and they were married on May 26,

1990, in Pickrell, Nebraska. Together, they embarked on a life full of adventure, following Kerry's pipeline work across the United States.

Brenda's adaptability and supportive nature were the glue that held their family together during these travels.

A woman of many interests, Brenda found joy in the simple pleasures of life. She was an avid sewer and scrapbooker, capturing memories and creating beautiful keepsakes for her family and friends. Her passion for the outdoors was shared with Kerry, as they often went on pickup rides or side-by-side rides, exploring the beauty of the countryside.

Those who knew Brenda will remember her as a loving, thoughtful and passionate soul. Her ability to listen and her readiness to offer a helping hand made her a beacon of light in her community. ■

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CITY GOVERNMENT NEWS

GUTHRIE CENTER CITY COUNCIL RECEIVES SUMMARY OF 45 PROPERTY COMPLIANCE ISSUES

BY RICH WICKS
Guthrie Center Times

During the brief Dec. 22 regular meeting of the Guthrie Center City Council, the councilmembers heard a year-end report from Compliance Officer Wes Clark regarding property owners who appear to be in violation of city ordinances in some way.

“Here’s a summary of all the official notices that went out. I think there were 45 of them that got served,” Clark said. “A lot of repeat people, per usual.”

In other news, City Administrator Kris Arrasmith swore in Mayor Mike Herbert for another term as mayor. She also swore in councilmembers

Carolyn Masters and Erica Finster. Finster was elected to fill the seat previously filled by Chuck Cleveland, who has served two terms on the council. Mayor Herbert thanked Cleveland for his time on the council.

The next regular meeting is set for Monday, Jan. 12 at 6:30 p.m. The public is welcome. ■



Mike Herbert



Kris Arrasmith

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DARRELL D TALLMAN

Darrell D Tallman was born in Guthrie Center to Charles Walter and Margaret (Vanderley) Tallman. He passed away peacefully Oct. 10, 2025, in Salem, Oregon, surrounded by family.

Darrell grew up in a small farming community with his parents and nine siblings. He attended

“Frog Pond,” a one-room schoolhouse, and worked on the family farm before pursuing studies at Iowa State University. He began his career in agriculture but soon discovered a natural talent for sales.

Darrell and Barbara were married in 1960 and together they raised three adopted children: Kris, Scott and Ken. The couple shared 62 years of marriage.

Darrell and Barbara lived in Denver, Colorado, where he advanced in the insurance industry. In 1974, they moved to Salem, Oregon, where he continued his successful career in insurance sales. Known for his dedication to clients, many remained with him for decades. Darrell earned numerous sales awards and built lasting relationships across generations. He retired at age 88.

Outside of work, Darrell enjoyed traveling, golfing,

cribbage and spending time with friends and family. He was known for his warm smile, sense of humor and generous spirit. A trusted friend, colleague and mentor, Darrell left a lasting impression on those who knew him.

He is survived by his daughter, Kris (Mike) Powers; son, Ken Tallman; grandchildren, Samantha, Jackson and Austin; great-grandchild, Thaddeus; siblings, Jack (Jan) Tallman, Norman (Opal) Tallman, Marilyn (Roger) Hansen, Shirley Tallman and Bill (Dixie) Tallman.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Barbara; son, Scott; siblings, Henry, Jerrod, Charles, Don, Jim and Denny; and nephews, Chuck and Mark.

A celebration of life was held Dec. 6, 2025, at Westminster Presbyterian church in Salem, Oregon. ■



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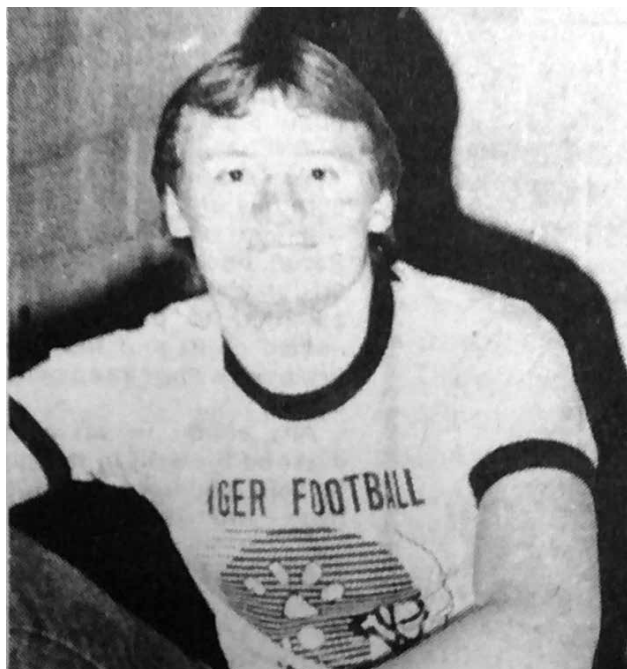
50 YEARS AGO



From the Guthrie Center Times, Jan. 21, 1976

HELP! Vicki Smith is double-teamed by the Coon Rapids zone and looks for a teammate to pass to. Smith, a freshman, led the Guthrie Center scoring with 20 points.

40 YEARS AGO



From the Guthrie Center Times, Jan. 8, 1986

A "WANTED" MAN. Tim Siemens, Guthrie Center High School senior, has been nominated for three of the four U.S. Military Academies.

30 YEARS AGO



From the Guthrie Center Times, Jan. 24, 1996

PORK PROMOTERS. Jody Calvert and Jesse Wilson of Guthrie Center are serving as Miss Pig Tail and Mr. Tail Twister for the Pork Producers.

20 YEARS AGO



From the Guthrie Center Times, Jan. 18, 2006

CAN WE MOVE IT? YES, WE CAN! Fred Scarlett, Adair, watches as Batschelet Law Office is moved Wednesday morning from its Guthrie Center location. Now retired from the moving business, Scarlett was one of a few who believed the building, estimated at 40 tons, could be moved with the safe intact. Stanley Excavation hauled the former law office, with an initial push from a City of Guthrie Center endloader, to its new home at the Guthrie County Historical Village in Panora.

10 YEARS AGO



From the Guthrie Center Times, Jan. 6, 2016

LET'S TWIST AGAIN! Dallas Steenson and Deb Coffman dance to a tune during The New Homestead's 50th anniversary celebration Sept. 12 in Guthrie Center. Coffman is the activity director at the facility and keeps those in attendance active.

5 YEARS AGO



Guthrie County Times Vedette, Jan. 28, 2021

PROGRAM AIMED TO HELP SMOKERS QUIT! A tobacco cessation program called BreatheFree2 is underway at Guthrie Center for the first time. Emily Goode-nough, right, a registered facilitator, is working with four people who are progressing well in their self-designed program to kick nicotine. This program has nine meetings with follow up gatherings at one month, six months and one year to gauge progress. ■



RECIPE

WHERE I FIND INSPIRATION — AND A NEW COMFORT-FOOD FAVORITE

BY JOLENE GOODMAN
Guthrie Center Times

Today's home cooks have no shortage of inspiration. With a quick search online, we can access thousands of recipes from trusted test kitchens, community-driven platforms and individual food bloggers. While I appreciate that convenience, I still find myself reaching for cookbooks, browsing new releases at the bookstore and checking out titles from the library — a perfect way to “test drive” a recipe before committing to it.



Jolene Goodman

Another favorite source of inspiration is Family Features, a free recipe site filled with reliable dishes and beautiful photography that never fails to spark my creativity in the kitchen. This month's recipe, Loaded Philly Cheesesteak Baked Potatoes, brings together two of my favorite comfort foods: steak and potatoes — both of which also happen to be Shane's favorites. It takes the familiar flavors of a classic Philly cheesesteak sandwich and transforms them into a warm, satisfying baked potato meal. It's hearty, comforting and perfect to enjoy for dinner, with plenty left over for lunches throughout the week. ■

Jolene Goodman is the advertising director for Guthrie Center Times and vice president of Big Green Umbrella Media.



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LOADED PHILLY CHEESESTEAK BAKED POTATO


Recipe courtesy of Real California Milk
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 1 hour, 11 minutes
Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 4 large russet potatoes, washed
- 1 cup Real California sour cream
- 1-2 tablespoons Real California whole milk
- 1/4 cup Real California unsalted butter, divided
- 1 small green bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1/2 small yellow onion, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 pound fresh shaved sirloin steak
- 2 cups shredded Real California provolone cheese

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 425 F and line baking sheet with aluminum foil.
- Prick potatoes all over with fork. Bake until potatoes are tender and fork inserted easily comes out, 45 minutes-1 hour. Split tops of potatoes open with knife and fluff potato flesh with fork. Set aside.
- In small bowl, combine sour cream and milk, adding more milk as needed, until sour cream is pourable. Set aside.
- In large skillet or on griddle over medium-high heat, heat 1 tablespoon butter. Add peppers and onions; cook until tender, 3-4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Transfer to plate and set aside.
- Clean skillet then melt remaining butter. Add steak and cook until fully cooked and lightly browned, 3-4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Return vegetables to skillet and toss to combine.
- Evenly top each potato with 1 tablespoon butter, steak mixture and cheese. Transfer to oven and bake until cheese is melted, 2-3 minutes. Drizzle with sour cream and serve. ■



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BY KAREN KELLY

Special to Guthrie Center Times

With the new year underway, remember that the MJB Library is here to help you reach your goals for 2026. According to recent surveys, in addition to the ever-popular New Year's resolutions like exercising more and eating healthier, Americans are resolving to improve their quality of life by setting goals to be happier, read more and learn new things.

Whatever patrons are resolving for 2026, the MJB Library has resources to support the goals. The library has cookbooks and resources about healthy eating, weight loss and exercise. Books about relaxation, meditation and mindfulness can jump-start efforts to improve quality of life.

Puzzles, games, movies and books are available for check out for those

who are working toward adding relaxation, more family time or more reading to their routines.

Patrons who are looking to learn a new skill or enhance a skill they already have should consider the library programs that are offered each month. Be sure to follow the calendar of events on the library website and consult the monthly newsletter to see what programs are available to everyone in the community. For library card holders with a Guthrie Center address, remember to take advantage of the expanded offerings of the Adventure Pass.

Crafty community members, you are invited to join the Craft and Connect group who meet each Monday from 4-6 p.m. The participants bring whatever project they might be working on, a warm beverage and drop in at the library to work and visit with other creative people while they create.

"The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife" by Anna Johnston is available for check out for members of the Reads Well with Others evening book club. The next meeting will be at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 27.

Youth events for January include Creation Corner on Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 2 p.m. in the Taylor Meeting Room with pre-registration preferred. Interested participants may sign up on the MJB Library website.

Story Hour for preschoolers and their caretakers will continue on each Friday at 10 a.m. The theme for Jan. 16 is cold with winter being the topic of Jan. 23's story hour. On Jan. 30, story hour will feature seasons.

Card players are invited to join the weekly groups at the MJB Library. Cribbage players meet on Monday mornings from 9-11 a.m. in the Taylor Meeting Room. Bridge Class meets

each Wednesday morning from 9-11 a.m. Both groups are always excited to welcome new players of all skill levels.

Cookbook Club meets at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 15 to taste and discuss recipes from "The Amish Friends' No Waste Cookbook" by Wanda Brunstader. To join the Cookbook Club, stop by the library and choose a recipe from the selected cookbook. Prepare the recipe and bring it to the meeting to share with the group on the third Thursday of each month. Patrons who have an interest in joining the cookbook club can call the library with questions.

On Thursday, Jan. 15 from 9-11 a.m., the card-making class will be held in the Taylor Meeting Room for anyone who would like to make one-of-a-kind greeting cards. All supplies are provided for a \$5 fee to cover the cost of card-making materials. ■

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Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
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641-742-3802
<http://goodshepherdadair.com>

New Life Baptist Church
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www.newlifeadair.org
Our messages:
www.newlifeadair.org/videos



Saint John Catholic Church
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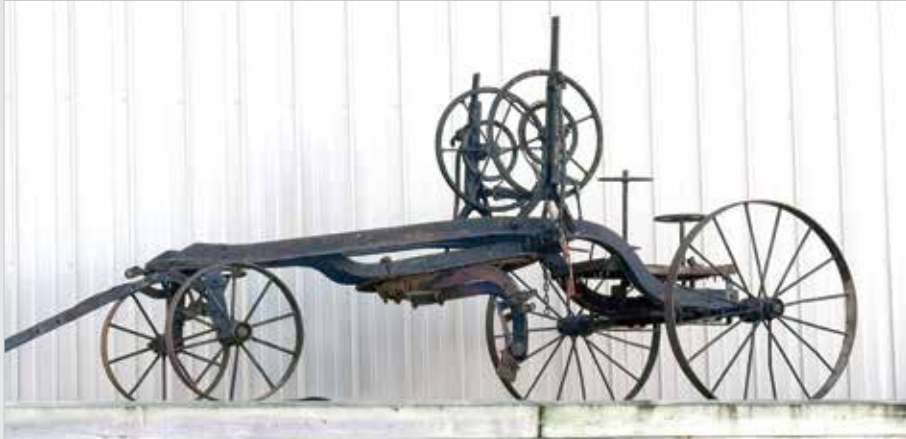


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WHERE IS IT?



The answer for the location of the photo in last month's contest is the teeter-totters at the city park in Casey. Gwen Blass was the first person with the correct answer. Have a guess on where this month's photographed image is at? Have a photo to submit for future issues? Send to shane@gctimesnews.com. ■



LAST MONTH'S PHOTO



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