

# Secure your future ag seminar Feb. 20

Security Savings Bank and Professional Ag Marketing will cosponsor their fifth annual Ag Seminar from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, at Grand Prairie Events in Luverne.

The seminar, "Now's the Time to Secure Your Future," will explore new strategies for local farmers, as well as risk management planning and tools for local producers.

Keynote speaker will be John Blanchfield, principal with Agricultural Banking Advisory Services. Blanchfield brings nearly 40 years in ag banking and policy and is a speaker on topics related to finance, banking and federal agricultural policy.

"This is a one-of-a-kind event unique to the area, and we're so proud that we're able to bring in nationally recognized experts to share their experience with our local producers," said Tim Plimpton, Security Savings Bank president.

"The farming industry is tricky because it can make dramatic shifts year to year. Our goal is to share with customers, friends and other

local producers new insights and valuable information to provide them with the tools necessary to make the best decisions for their operation. It's a way to demonstrate our strong commitment to the industries and the producers who drive our local economy."

Doors open and registration begins at 10:15 with featured presentations beginning at 10:45. John Blanchfield will present for 90 minutes with an opportunity for questions immediately following.

"We are so proud to bring a leading ag expert to our panel," said Pat Von Tersch with Professional Ag Marketing.

"Having the best information and partners who are committed to you and your communities' success is key to maximizing an operation's productivity and profits and adapting to factors outside their control."

There is no cost for this event. Registration is required, and attendees can register by contacting Tyler at Security Savings Bank at (507) 449-6000 or by contacting Kim at Professional Ag Marketing at (507) 449-2030.

## LIFT gala is March 1

By Lori Sorenson

Community leaders will host the annual meeting of LIFT — Luverne Initiatives For Tomorrow — at 5:30 p.m. Friday, March 1, in Grand Prairie Events.

LIFT was established in 2010 as a collaboration of public and private sectors brainstorming about how to improve the Luverne community.

The annual meetings are a chance to celebrate accomplishments and review goals yet to be reached, according to Luverne Area Chamber Director Jane Wildung Lanphere.

"The LIFT Annual Gala will be a great opportunity for you to hear, first hand, the work that is going to happen in Luverne over the next year and beyond," Lanphere said in her February Chamber newsletter about the meeting.

"The meeting will also be an opportunity to meet the people responsible for the work that will happen."

The 2019 meeting will do the same, touching on highlights in the following areas:

- LuverneEvents.com
- Wayfinding is coming — Spring 2019
- C&B Operations Luverne
- Blue Mounds State Park
- 2019 Pheasant Pheasta

• Luverne Sister Cities International

- Main Street Plaza
- Premium Iowa Pork
- Towne Square project
- SWMN CEO program
- Luverne School District building project

"It might not seem like a lot is happening in Luverne and Rock County on a day-to-day basis," said Luverne Mayor Pat Baustian.

"But when you add all of them up over the last year you can see that we have a vibrant community with much to be proud of and a chance to recognize all of it."

The 2019 meeting will feature a catered Bluestem meal for \$40 per person or \$300 per table of eight as a fundraiser for LIFT.

"Your support is needed so they can continue their work in 'lifting' Luverne higher," Lanphere said.

A social gathering and cash bar is at 5:30 p.m. and the program begins at 6 p.m.

Bluestem-catered meal begins at 7:30 p.m. with entertainment at 8:15 p.m.

Tickets are available at the Chamber, 507-283-4061 or [luvernechamber@co.rock.mn.us](mailto:luvernechamber@co.rock.mn.us).

Reservation deadline is Feb. 25.



Mavis Fodness photos/0214 Evening Story Time

Children's librarian Bronwyn Wenzel (center, back) instructs participants at Rock County Library's first Evening Story Time on how to construct a snow globe Tuesday night, Feb. 5, in the library basement.

# No more shushing

Rock County Library increases attendance, changes image

By Mavis Fodness

About a quarter of U.S. adults admit they haven't read a book in the past year, according to the Pew Research Institute book-reading habits survey released in March 2018.

That's up slightly from 19 percent eight years ago when the survey of non-readers began.

Staff members at the Rock County Library in Luverne are working to reverse the non-reader trend by actively engaging residents through various library-sponsored activities.

So far, it appears to be working, according to library director Calla Jarvie who said attendance doubled in the past five years from 2,127 participants in 2013 to last year's 4,174.

From 2017 to 2018, attendance climbed more than one thousand people (1,117) alone.

"We are doing that through special events, ongoing

*"Yes, we are still the place to check out books, but we are no longer the place where you're going to get shushed."*

— Calla Jarvie, Rock County Librarian



Dad Zachary Zak helps son, Conner, 2, place the circle on the triangle to create a paper snow globe. **Below left**, Graham DeBoer, 2, concentrates as grandma Carol Goehle helps write his name on his paper snow globe.

programs, new materials and by creating a welcoming environment when you step in the library," she said.

The special events connect with possible patrons outside the library walls through community-library partnerships.

The most popular is Trivia Night at Take 16 Brewery in downtown Luverne. Since it started in May 2018 an average of 70 people participate in the event the first Thursday of the each month.

For young families the library expanded its popular Friday morning Story Time with a Tuesday evening event to allow more working parents to attend.

The first Evening Story Time was Feb. 5 with 13 preschool to second-graders and 10 adults.

Evening Story Time are scheduled to continue through the end of the month.

Jarvie said the invitation to laugh and learn is changing the role of the community library.

"Yes, we are still the place to check out books, but we are no longer the place where you're going to get shushed," Jarvie said.

Unfortunately, a quiet has come over the number of

Rock County Library increases attendance/see page 8



## County EDA study/

from page 1

the list and have received very positive responses," said county administrator Kyle Oldre.

A representative from the Southwest Regional Development Commission in Slayton will facilitate the meetings. Approved facilitation costs were not to exceed \$1,500.


The study committee is tasked to determine the pros and cons of establishing a Rock County Economic Development Authority.

The group has 90 days

from its first meeting to make a recommendation to the commissioners.


Last year, the federal government designated the southern third of Rock County as an Opportunity Zone. The zones are meant to encourage long-term business investments.

The county EDA committee would work with new businesses and potential investors in all of Rock County as well as in the designated Opportunity Zones.



**Ruth McClure**  
**90<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY**  
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Greetings may be sent to:  
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Marshall, MN 56258

**Happy 70th Birthday**  
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Greetings may be sent to:  
1018 N. Elmwood Ave., Luverne, MN 56156





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Mavis Fodness photo/0214 Evening Story Time  
Participants in the first Evening Story Time at the Rock County Library Tuesday night, Feb. 5, raise their arms as children's librarian Bronwyn Wenzel reads "Snow Happy."

Library attendance doubles/

library materials checked out in recent years.  
Last year, 66,642 in physical materials were checked out locally with another 4,331 in ebook and eaudio offerings available free online.  
The numbers seem large, but they represent a decline of 6,000 from 2017 and 10,000 from five years ago.  
"This is a (downward) trend that libraries across the country have been seeing," Jarvie said. "We are still well used, but the

numbers show a decline." As a remedy, the Rock County Library staff weeded the older and unused titles from stacks allowing the remaining collection to be more "browseable," with titles facing outward from the shelf.  
Some books have been wrapped in brown paper, displayed together as a "Blind Date With a Book," intended to intrigue potential readers to unwrap the book through story hints written on the wrapping.

In-house program attendees have taken note, often stopping at the library shelves before leaving.  
"Programs get community members here who might not be regular users, and all the better if they stop and check out books afterward," Jarvie said.  
More events are planned for this year, such as learning to swing dance and several upcoming author visits are intended to bring more patrons inside the library.  
For those who chose not to leave home, the staff also promotes its ebook and eaudio lending library.  
Staff bring notice of the online collection by visiting junior high classrooms, and flyers at the circulation desk tout the easily downloaded app to phones or iPads.  
The change in how the local library operates comes from the director herself.  
"I believe libraries are essential parts of their communities, and with that role comes responsibility to engage your community," Jarvie said.  
"My overall goal, while a bit intangible, is for the residents of Rock County to love their library and know it is a place for them."



Mavis Fodness photo/0214 Evening Story Time  
Mom Kelli DeBoer (left) and daughters Athena and Daphne make rabbit ears with their fingers as they sing the words "that hungry little bunny," during one singing opportunities.

The big three: restore, protect, enhance

What is the Outdoor Heritage Fund and why should we care about it?

By Scott Rall  
Outdoors columnist  
In my previous column, I covered where the funding came from for the most recent Wildlife Management Area purchase in Rock County.  
This parcel was called Rooster Ridge Wildlife Management Area. It was funded with dollars from the Outdoor Heritage Fund.  
These funds are overseen by and pass through the Leasard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, which makes recommendations for funding.  
This 12-member council is made up of eight citizens and four elected officials. They screen all of the applications for funding and then forward their recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature, which has the final say in which awards are ultimately made.  
The council is restricted to a very tight list of things that it can support.  
The statute language says that the funds collected and placed in the Outdoor Heritage Fund can only be spent to restore, protect or enhance Minnesota's wetlands, prairies, forests and other habitat for game fish and wildlife.  
So, what does that actually mean?  
There is certainly more detail than what I can fit in this space, but what follows is a generalization of what is allowable.  
I will jump to No. 2 first — protection — as this is what was done in Rock County with Rooster Ridge.  
Protection generally means the purchase of property. This can be fee title acquisition, like the Rooster Ridge property. They can also

purchase the wildlife benefits of a parcel through the purchase of a habitat easement.  
This is where property ownership is retained by the seller, but restrictions are placed on the property to perpetually protect the wildlife habitat benefits of the upland, shoreline, wetland or other types of habitat.  
When land is purchased in fee title and becomes a WMA, the state makes payments to the county to replace the lost tax revenue.  
I will cover Payment in Lieu of Taxes in a different column. In southwest Minnesota these state payments to the counties is almost always substantially higher than the private lands taxes received from the previous owner.  
Restoration is another allowable use of the funds.  
Restoration in my mind means creating habitat where no habitat existed before. For example, if there was a small farm field that was part of an acquisition, the restoration of that parcel would include the planting of native grasses and other forbs and flowers in order to provide the best habitat for the wildlife that lives in that part of the state.  
This would take place on land that had been row-cropped acres before the purchase.  
Restoration in southwest Minnesota might be very different than restoration in northeast Minnesota where trees might be planted in habitat areas that were destroyed by a fire or other destruction of great magnitude.  
Enhancement work can come in so many different forms.  
On Rooster Ridge WMA

there are areas that currently exist in smooth broom grass. This is not a great grass for wildlife, because it lays down the first time it snows less than an inch.  
Enhancement of this site might include inter-seeding native grasses. Or, if it's bad enough, they might spray it with chemicals and start over. Because there was some habitat there to begin with, this would still be an enhancement project.  
Enhancement work is often done in wetland ecosystems would include drainage every 10 years or so to imitate a drought to stimulate vegetation and kill off rough fish.  
Other work to benefit other habitat for game, fish and wildlife could include stream bank stabilization, removal of invasive species like buckthorn or removal of debris from a lake bed. All of these can be considered as improving various wildlife habitats.  
The strict limitations put on these funds from the very outset was deliberate.  
Stakeholders that help create the dedicated funding wanted to insure it went where it was supposed to go. By keeping the focus narrow, these funds would less likely be diverted to other state projects.  
Next week we will cover some of the biggest habitat projects completed in the first nine years of the fund.

Scott Rall, Worthington, is a habitat conservationist, avid hunting and fishing enthusiast and is president of Nobles County Pheasants Forever. He can be reached at scottall@gmail.com.



Submitted photo

Theater gift

Bill Stegemann (center) of CenterPoint Energy donated \$300 to the Blue Mound Area Theatre Board Tuesday morning, Feb. 12, in the Palace Theatre lobby in Luverne. Pictured are (front, from left) Luella Voigt, LaDonna Van Aartsen, Shirley Connor, Stegemann, Heidi Sehr, Lori Hallstrom, (back) Lorna Bryan, Shawn Kinsinger, Jim Juhl and Verlyn VanBatavia. Not pictured is BMAT board member Deb Aanenson who took the picture.

NOW'S THE TIME TO SECURE YOUR FUTURE!

# 2019 Ag Seminar

Wednesday, February 20, 2019  
10:30 am – 2:00 pm  
Grand Prairie Events  
Luverne, MN 56156

Enjoy informative and valuable presentations, lunch and our guest speaker, John M. Blanchfield, Agricultural Banking Advisory Services.

John Blanchfield will outline the steps to shock-proof your operation's finances and maximize profitability. The right information and the right partners can help you make informed decisions for your farm. Learn how to work with your banker – what they need, what they're looking for and how they can find it – to strengthen your finances.

Please bring a friend to this free and informative event!

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