

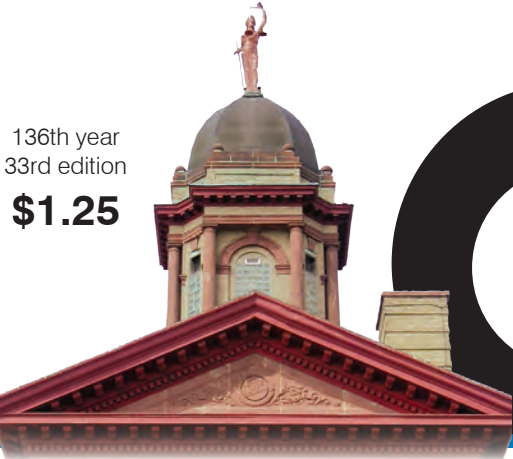
Photos capture PFCT 'Cinderella' Snapshots from youth summer stage production at WAMHS Theater



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CITIZEN

Cottonwood County



Firing away
Eagles open fall practices
Page 9

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

WHAT'S INSIDE

A doggone good police officer

Windom's newest officer, Bruno, hails from the Czech Republic

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Orientation Nights set

WAMHS to hold orientation nights for grades 4-12

Pages 7

ONLINE POLL

Last Week's Results

Windom Schools will hold an all-class reunion in the summer of 2020. When should it be held?

Riverfest weekend..... **67%**

A different weekend in the summer.... **33%**

Next Week

What Minnesota sports story are you following more closely?

Vote at www.windomnews.com

DID YOU KNOW?

Cookies and milk at State Fair



The Minnesota State Fair opens on Aug. 22. And while there are over 300 vendors to tempt the taste buds, two of the most popular are Sweet Martha's cookies and the unlimited milk stand.

The cookies are so popular that roughly 3 million can be produced in a single day.

And it would take nearly nine years for a single cow to produce the 26,000 gallons of milk consumed at the milk stand during the 12-day fair.

WEATHER

A look back...

	H	L	P
Tues.	86	65	—
Wed.	86	57	—
Thurs.	78	55	—
Fri.	81	59	.07
Sat.	84	66	.19
Sun.	78	67	tr.
Mon.	81	64	—

—TORNADO HITS WINDOM—



DAVE FJELD 8/14 storm damage 3

NEIGHBORS ALONG 15TH Street in Windom, Mark and Karen Schumann talk with a friend as Mike Bogle walks over to join them to assess the damage from a weak tornado that moved

down the street on Saturday evening. Just minutes after the tornado that struck without warning, neighbors were already cleaning up.

TWISTER

EF0 tornado carves narrow path of damage through town

Michael Byam and his wife, Kari, were talking about conditions being right for severe weather, maybe even a tornado. However, Michael assured his wife that tornadoes weren't possible in Windom because the city is situated in a valley.

"My wife said, 'I can't wait for the day we get a tornado, just to prove you wrong,'" Michael says with a laugh.

She waited all of 30 seconds.

What has been classified as an EF0 tornado whipped through Windom Saturday about 6:15 p.m., leaving little more than a 100-foot

path of damage through the city.

According to Cottonwood

SEE **TORNADO**

• **BACK PAGE**



8/14 storm damage 11

THE POP CAN BIN along 16th Street, less than a block off Highway 60-71 was blown over by the twister.



8/14 storm damage 17

AMBER GRUNEWALD'S FRONT door and frame was ripped from the house and strewn across her yard. It also knocked over a portion of her fence in her backyard.



8/14 storm damage 8

KARI BYAM AND her daughter, Morgan, look over the damage at their residence on 15th Street. The twister destroyed a metal shed and felled one of their trees.



8/14 storm damage 9

THE TORNADO'S PATH sheered off the top of a tree at United Prairie Bank at the corner of Highway 60-71 and 16th Street.

Fair time

Many favorites are back for '19 county fair

Exhibits arrived Tuesday and Wednesday and food stands began opening Wednesday morning.

Sometimes the best decision a fair board can make is to resist the temptation to make major changes.

That appears to be the thinking of the Cottonwood County Fair Board when it comes to the grandstand line-up for this year's fair. In fact, the biggest change can be seen tonight with entertainment by Sean Benz and Gayle Becwar.

The 138th annual Cottonwood County Fair got underway with open class arriving yesterday and food vendors opening this morning (Wednesday).

Benz, a local musician, will perform at 6 p.m., in the Windom Arena, followed by Becwar, a comedian and magician, at 8:15 p.m.

"Sean is a tremendous singer and puts on a great show," said Mike Hanson, fair board president.

The next three days bring grandstand events that are back by popular demand:

- Thursday — Bob and the Beachcombers, a family-friendly rock and roll band, starting at 6:30 p.m., in the Arena.

- Friday — the free Ranch Working Rodeo, starting at 6:30 p.m., in the Arena.

- Saturday — The Midwest Outlaw truck and tractor pull in the former demolition derby area at 2 p.m. Later, at 7 p.m., the Arena will host the Minnesota Xtreme Bullriding tour, which includes mutton busting.

Of course, there is far more activity at this year's fair, including a wide array of inflatables for kids, free entertainment, bingo and a growing list of food options.

EDA approves plan for new commercial rehab program

Funds are available now.

The Windom Economic Development Authority unanimously approved a plan to put \$100,000 toward a new commercial rehabilitation program.

The program is available now and is funded with dollars initially received through a state grant assisting the expansion of what was then the PM Beef plant.

The program is open to all Windom commercial businesses, on a first-come, first-serve basis. It follows rules for Small Cities Development Program and includes things like windows, roofing, sprinkler systems, wastewater line repairs, tuckpointing and more.

Each commercial loan has three components:

- One-third of project costs are paid by the property owners (minimum of \$5,000).

- One-third is a forgivable loan (minimum of \$1,000, maximum of \$5,000).

- One-third is a repayable loan (minimum of \$5,000).

For more information, contact Drew Hage, city economic development director, at 831-8661.

Night to Unite delivers great food, crowd

Attendance was up this year.

The Square in Windom was a beehive of activity, Monday night, as area residents celebrated the annual Night to Unite.

There were long lines for hamburgers, hot dogs and, of course, ice cream served by Windom school staff and members of the Windom Area Chamber of Commerce.

It was also a chance for folks of all ages to get a closer look at an assortment of rescue and law enforcement vehicles. There were also plenty of booths, games and activities. All the while, the crowd enjoyed music provided by Hannon Ford.

"We sold more food than we did last year. So the numbers were definitely up as far as attendance," said Anna Smith, executive director of the Windom Area Chamber of Commerce. "The kids had fun and the drug dog demonstration was a big hit."



OFFICER LOUIS NORELL watches closely as Windom's new K9 officer, Bruno, finds drugs that were hidden behind an SUV's grill. The crowd seemed to enjoy the demonstration.

8/14 unite 40

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School board looks at proposal for three home development in Environmental Center

■ Board spends 90 minutes in closed session for superintendent evaluation.

Windom Economic Development Director Drew Hage presented a proposal to the Windom School Board concerning the possible development of three homes in the school's Environmental Center.

The three buildable lots, in the area across from the new elementary school, are all outside the flood plain in an area of about 300-by-190 feet. Each 100-foot lot runs 190 feet from 17th Street south to Perkins Creek.

There is a 300-foot area between the western-most home of that section of the street and the first buildable lot. That 300-foot area is in the flood plain.

Hage said he was asked by a developer connected with the Cemstone project, if the lots would be available for building spec homes.

Board member Joe LaCanne was concerned that the school would be taking

away space that originally was designated for educational purposes.

"It's kind of like a park," LaCanne said. "It has some value as far as education. I would hope that would not be affected by this."

However, Superintendent Wayne Wormstadt pointed out that the proposed area is about 1.5 acres of the nearly 50-acre Environmental Center, which includes land south of Perkins Creek.

Hage said that if the board was interested, the site would be shovel-ready and the developer could start site work yet this year.

The board referred the matter to the Building and Grounds Committee for further discussion.

Teachers contract Ok'ed

The Windom School Board approved a two-year contract with Education Minnesota-Windom, retroactive to July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021.

The agreement includes a total package increase of 6.97% over two years, includ-

ing 3.24% in the first year of the contract and 3.62% in the second year. The package includes salary, insurance, retirement, FICA and other benefits.

Remick donations

The school board accepted eight donations totaling over \$20,800.

The Remick Foundation donated nearly \$20,500 to five programs — \$7,593 to the 2019-20 middle school art program; \$5,000 for the Robotics Camp; \$4,500 for math calculators in Aneissa Sebring's classroom; \$1,885.50 for a Chill Out Chair for Ashley Schmit's special education classroom; and \$1,500 for the Prairie Fire Children's Theatre residency.

Hardees/River Foods and Fredin Construction and Cabinetry each donated \$100 to the school's robotics program; Bethany Lutheran Church donated \$55 to the Weekend Backpack Program; and Windom Area Health donated hot dogs and buns, totaling \$78.38, to the Sum-

mer Lunch Program.

Administrative reports

Elementary Principal Jamie Frank told the board that 30 students were involved in the Soaring Eagles Summer School program. The program was for elementary students to review reading and math from the previous year.

She also added that 95 kindergartners are enrolled for the 2019-20 school year. Sixteen of those students are enrolled in the Beginder-garten program, which is for students with birthdays between May 1 and Aug. 31.

Middle High School Principal Bryan Joyce shared that Jack Zimmerman, a double amputee veteran, who served five tours in Afghanistan, will speak to students on Sept. 11 during the final hour of the day. He will speak about overcoming challenges.

Superintendent Wormstadt said that discussions are continuing with the Windom EDA and Chamber

concerning community day-care needs.

He also told the board that the new elementary school project is ahead of schedule and foundation work has been completed.

In addition, the parking lot is expected to be completed by the first day of school. The first lift of asphalt is scheduled to be laid Aug. 20 and 21, the second lift on Aug. 22 and 23 with striping to follow.

Other business

In other action, the Windom school board:

- Went into closed session for approximately 90 minutes for its annual superintendent's evaluation. When the board reopened the meeting, the meeting was immediately adjourned. A report on the evaluation will be presented at a future school board meeting.

- Approved the 2019-20 middle high school student handbook.

- Approved the student activity accounting policy.

- Approved Family Medical Leave Act for an employee from Aug. 19 through Nov. 8; and additional medical leave for an employee from Nov. 9 through the end of the school year.

- Approved resignations from Tammy Crowell, paraprofessional; Carrie Pratt, LPN; and Janelle Wilson, middle/high school secretary; and a reduction of hours for Tera Crowell from 8 hours per day to 6.5 hours per day with no bus duty.

- Hired Tabettha Andersen as an ECFE paraprofessional; Tammy Crowell as a middle/high school secretary; Sue Curley as a third grade long-term substitute teacher; Angela Geesman as ECFE coordinator; Michaela Hacker and Marlys Rempel as middle/high school paraprofessionals; Brenna Hatfield, Jody Johnson and Margo Wright as elementary paraprofessionals.

TORNADO/Path of twister was about 100 feet wide

FROM PAGE 1

County Emergency Management Director Paul Johnson, who sent information and photos of damage to the National Weather Service in Sioux Falls, the weather event was classified as a weak tornado.

Johnson said in a Facebook post on Saturday that the tornado started behind a home at the corner of 13th Street and River Road and left a path of debris little more than 100 feet wide through the middle of the city.

From the River Road/13th Street home, the tornado peeled back a section of roof on the Children's Petting Barn at the Cottonwood County Fairgrounds, twisted a door off the Olson Pavilion and snapped off a tree.

Vent caps were torn off the roof and a branch was downed from a tree at Winfair Elementary.

But the most severe damage followed as the tornado headed down 15th Street in Windom. The Byams live at the corner of 15th Street and Third Avenue.

"I looked out the window and saw (neighbor) Tim Jenniges's flag all over and I said, 'Get to the basement!'" Byam recalled. "We went all the way to the basement and the door flew open and about knocked my son over. By the time we got down the steps, it was already over with."

It came out of nowhere and happened so quick that sirens didn't start going off until after it had passed.

Byam experienced a tornado while serving in the military in Georgia and he said that event had the sound of a freight train. He heard nothing with this tornado other than transformers popping.

But he saw plenty of damage. The tornado snapped off a tree on their yard that fell on his 1978 custom conversion van that was parked in the street. It is likely totaled.

It also picked up a small metal shed that was south of his garage, twisted it and dropped it in the middle of the street.

"It only moved one plastic sled that was inside it and moved a Christmas ornament, Mother Mary, into the alley," Byam said. "Baby Jesus and Joseph were still in there."

Byam also learned that patio chairs were dropped in his neighborhood from a homeowner's yard two blocks away.



KATRINA LACANNE SNAPPED this photo of the tornado from their home on the south side of Fish Lake, looking back toward Windom.



EVERY OTHER mailbox along 16th Street near United Prairie Bank were suspectedly opened by wind from the tornado.

8/14 storm damage 13

Bogle trees downed

Mike Bogle, who lives at the corner of 15th Street and Fourth Avenue, had several trees knocked down at his residence.

He, too, was surprised by the tornado. He heard a wind come up suddenly, then went to his front porch, which faces Fourth Avenue.

"The wind got extremely intense, like maybe 100 mph," Bogle said. "I decided this must be a tornado, so we decided to go to the basement. But then it seemed to slacken."

"Strangely enough, I had been reading a book, off and on all day, about how God can speak to us through natural disasters. What a coincidence."

Bogle said this was the first tornado he had experienced. In fact, many longtime Windom residents don't ever recall a tornado touching down in Windom.

However, in June 2001, high winds blew through Windom and there were residents, at the time, who were hit by the winds that claimed it was a tornado.

Door blown off

Like Byam's shed that was destroyed, but the contents hardly touched, Bogle's neighbor Amber Grunewald literally had a front door ripped from the front of her home.

The door and pieces of the framework were strewn in the yard between her house and Bogle's.

"The fence in my backyard was flipped over, too, and I have some siding damage on my garage and house," said Grunewald, who was not at home at the time.

Her uncle who lives two houses down from her, called and told her about the damage. She has since boarded up the front door.

Mathis watches tornado

More damage was done to trees further east along 15th Street before shearing off

the top of a tree at United Prairie Bank.

The tornado then knocked over the pop can bin on 16th Street, across the street from United Prairie Bank. It then uprooted a tree on the west bank of Cottonwood Lake, knocking it into the lake.

Moments later, Hilary Mathis of Windom eyed it in the center of the lake. She was at the home of her grandparents, Jack and Delores Malmgren, which is on the opposite side of the lake from the beach house, when she noticed it was getting quite windy.

"I walked out and stood in front of the picture window and I'm like, 'Is that a tornado?' I was totally dumbfounded," she said. "I couldn't even pick up my phone and take a picture because I was (in awe)."

"I thought it was literally right in front of their house. I watched a blue tarp spin up and fly around. You could see both debris and the water."

Could she see the circular motion?

"Absolutely and it was pretty wide. It was scary enough that I couldn't move. But I thought, 'If that comes this way, we're done.'"

It didn't come at the house, but instead turned back toward the opposite side of the lake. It flipped a public access dock on its side just to the east of the Malmgren house before crossing back to the other side of the lake.

"It was so loud that I didn't hear the sirens until after I decided, 'That is a tornado,'" she concluded.

Quick response

Byam was particularly pleased with the quick response he received from local residents.

Luke Anderson, an employee at GDF in Windom, brought a large forklift to pick up the tree so that Byam could move his van.

"He went above and beyond," Byam said. "He was there right away with some equipment and a chain saw, clearing the road — 10 minutes after it happened."

Residents along 15th Street were quick to start cleaning up, cutting up limbs and trees with chain saws and piling branches on curbs.

City of Windom street crews picked up the debris on Tuesday.

Heat is key as corn, beans inch toward fall

■ Both corn and soybeans are roughly a week behind schedule.

As the calendar moves toward fall harvest, the months change, but the message does not — the region continues to need heat, plenty of it.

"The corn is at about 80 growing degree days," said Cody Mielke, an agronomist for Country Pride Cooperative, based in Bingham Lake. "We are looking at about a week behind schedule on growing degree days."

"The corn is late to mature compared to a normal year."

After a slow start, Mielke said the corn crop had gathered momentum, thanks

to warmer temperatures. Unfortunately, Mielke said a recent wind storm caused significant damage to corn in most parts of the county.

"The damage varied from very slim, to corn stalks being completely broken off in some areas," Mielke said.

Meanwhile, Mielke believes soybeans are also a week behind schedule.

For both corn and soybeans, Mielke said the region needs a little rain and a lot of heat this month.

"August really makes your beans and a nice warm September would really help," Mielke said. "The common theme across the board is that we need a nice, warm fall."

City council gets first look at '20 street project

■ Plans are to bid the street project in early 2020.

Last week, the Windom city council got its first look at the 2020 street project. In addition, the council approved a motion to have DGR Engineering prepare a feasibility study on the project.

In addition to providing cost estimates, the report would indicate whether the improvements are necessary, cost-effective and feasible.

Plans are to bid the project in early 2020 and if all aspects of the project were to be included, the total cost could fall just short of \$5 million.

Here is a quick look at the list of streets included in the project:

- Des Moines Drive
- Highland Road
- Fairview Lane
- Verona Avenue,
- 14th Street (from Highway 60-71 to Sixth Avenue)
- Sixth Avenue South (from Fuller Drive south to city limits)
- 16th Street (from Highway 60-71 to Cottonwood Lake Drive.)
- Arena parking lot

- 18th Avenue/Red Leaf Court drainage improvements (includes 18th Avenue from River Road north to city limits, Red Leaf Court and Maple Park Circle).

This project includes replacement of water and sewer lines, curb and gutter, storm sewer, paving and some sidewalks.

At last week's meeting, the council briefly discussed each of these areas with engineers and staff. The council is specifically interested in seeing the costs for improvements on Sixth Avenue and the 18th Avenue drainage improvements.

In both cases, there is some question as to whether those aspects of the projects would move forward if the price seems too high. At this point, the Sixth Avenue overlay project cost would be shared with Great Bend Township (which is adjacent to the entire west side of the Sixth Avenue project area). City officials say cost is a factor in the township's decision.

The DGR feasibility study is expected to be finished sometime this fall.

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