

'THAT'S A MIRACLE'



Photos by Tim Middagh/The Globe

A firefighter injured after an explosion at the New Vision Cooperative Elevator in Brewster early Tuesday evening was loaded into an awaiting ambulance for transport to Worthington as fellow firefighters gather.

Fire, explosion at New Vision Cooperative Elevator; just one hurt

By Julie Buntjer and Ryan McGaughey
The Globe

Brewster

Multiple ambulances responded to an explosion at the New Vision Cooperative Elevator in Brewster shortly after 5:40 p.m. Tuesday.

One firefighter was reportedly injured with back and shoulder pain and transported to Sanford Worthington Medical Center. It could have been much, much worse.

"With all the debris that blew out of there, to have only one person injured — that's a miracle," Brewster Fire Department 1st Capt. Lyle Oberloh said Tuesday night.

The explosion took place as firefighters remained on the scene of a fire in one of the grain silos on the New Vision site. The fire was reported at 9:54 a.m. Monday.

Firefighters from Brewster and several other area towns had been on scene around the clock since then, spraying water into the concrete structure and working to remove smoldering corn. Brewster Fire Chief John Garmer said Tuesday afternoon that there was a lot of smoke but no visible flames when they initially responded to the call.

The only way to put out the fire is to unload the estimated 15,000 bushels of corn, Garmer said Tuesday afternoon.

"That's the painstaking process," Garmer shared less than three hours before Tuesday evening's explosion. Working from an open doorway and a hole in the floor, Garmer said crews were sucking the grain out while firefighters sprayed water in to cool it.

As the corn burned, it fused together and created a shelf that was preventing water from penetrating it and keeping the grain from pouring out, Garmer said.

Then came the late afternoon



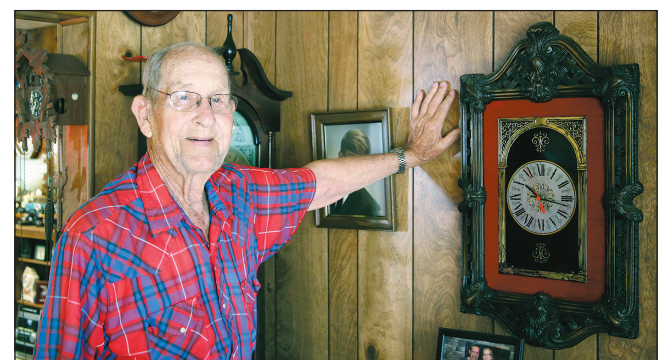
Nobles County Sheriff's deputies and firemen converse as an injured firefighter is cared for in the ambulance at New Vision Cooperative Elevator Tuesday evening following an explosion.

explosion, which Oberloh said took place "virtually right in the doorway" of the bay. The smoldering corn was "hit by a water blast" that pushed it toward grain dust, igniting the blast.

"Basically the elevator's

probably going to have to call a salvage company," said Oberloh, explaining that the integrity of the silo had been seriously compromised. "We won't be going

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Photos by Julie Buntjer / The Globe

Harry Robyn stands next to the clock he and his wife, Mina, received as a wedding gift in 1948.

The tick-tock of the clock

Worthington man's collection soothes the soul

By Julie Buntjer
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WORTHINGTON — Sitting in the dining room of Harry Robyn's Grand Avenue home, one is lulled by the constant tick-tock, tick-tock of the clock, but when it strikes the hour, get ready for a cacophony of sounds that range from chirping birds and running water to the stanzas of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

At one time, Harry had cuckoo clocks cuckooing too — seven of them — but they started to get on his nerves so he stopped winding them every day. "They're a nuisance," he says.

Harry has clocks in all shapes and sizes, from the ordinary to the unique, filling in just about every space on his walls and a lot of spots on mantels, end tables and wherever else he can find a home for them.

"If my wife could see this, she'd say, 'What are you doing with all of this junk?'" Harry claims.

But it was his wife — the grief of missing his wife — that led to this timeless collection.

"I was married 67 **CLOCKS:** Page A5

years," Harry says. "My wife has been gone, it will be six years in August."

"I'd be sitting here, wishing she was home, and the old cuckoo clock would cuckoo and it would take my mind off of her," he shares. "So then I thought a second cuckoo clock would, too."

Today, his collection includes about 300 clocks. Most of them are garage sale buys or auction finds. He picked up quite a few from the Bibles for Missions store in downtown Worthington, and his daughter has picked up a few clocks for him as well.

They are brought home with missing batteries and sometimes missing parts, or they simply don't work. He's made new pendulums featuring photographs of granddaughters, and stocks up on AA batteries when there's a good buy. This spring, after he returned from his 32nd winter in Mission, Texas, Harry purchased 68 batteries and still didn't have enough

timeless collection.



Harry Robyn stands next to one of his walls of clocks in his Worthington home earlier this week. Robyn has about 300 clocks in his collection.

City council discusses improvements, including sales tax projects

By Leah Ward
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WORTHINGTON — The Worthington City Council discussed a number of community improvements during its Monday night meeting, including the storm water pollution prevention plan, an application to join the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon support network and local-option sales tax projects.

The meeting opened with a public hearing regarding the city of Worthington's storm water pollution prevention plan.

Director of Engineering Dwayne Haffield explained that the city's municipal separated storm sewer system permit is up for renewal this year, and a few minor adjustments have been made to increase efforts to prevent pollution.

al requires a program that shows a measurable reduction in pollution of stormwater. Worthington's program approaches the problem from several angles:

- ▶ Public education and outreach
- ▶ Public participation and involvement
- ▶ Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- ▶ Construction site stormwater runoff control
- ▶ Post-construction stormwater management
- ▶ Pollution prevention/good housekeeping for municipal operations

No members of the public commented on the plan that was presented.

The council heard a proposal for Worthington to apply to become a Yellow Ribbon Community, a designation that means the city would create a

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Worthington, Lewis & Clark celebrate water

Tuesday ribbon cutting includes presentation of Trailblazer Award to Hain

By Julie Buntjer
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WORTHINGTON — Six months after the gala intended to mark the completion of the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System (LCRWS) pipeline — and the arrival of Missouri River water to Worthington — a much smaller gathering took place Tuesday to celebrate the actual finishing of the project.

Lewis & Clark water has been flowing through Worthington's water system and out of faucets in households and businesses across the city since May 13. The water is being blended 50-50 with water from Worthington's wells.

On Tuesday morning, Worthington Public Utilities commissioners joined city leaders and representatives from Lewis & Clark for a ribbon cutting at the site of the Worthington Meter Building. The building's plaque gives honor to Don Habicht and Scott Hain, consecutive Worthington Public Utilities general managers who dedicated significant portions of their careers to seeing the project to completion.



Julie Buntjer / The Globe

Worthington Public Utilities General Manager Scott Hain (left) accepts the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System's Trailblazer Award from board chairman Red Arndt during a celebration Tuesday morning at the site of the new Worthington Meter Building.

"I often said that I hoped to see Lewis & Clark water here by the time I retired," Hain said. "I'm not ready to retire yet, so ... I want to deliver that first repayment check up to somebody at St. Paul for the federal funding advance they gave us."

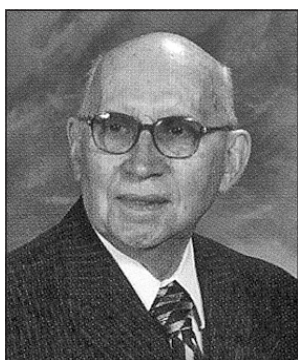
In addition to supplying the city

of Worthington with a consistent source for water — particularly important in periods of drought — the water piped in from the Missouri River is considerably softer than the water in the city's wellfields.

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DEATHS

Dale E. Erickson



Dale E. Erickson, age 89, of Council Bluffs, Iowa, passed away June 2, 2019, at Risen Son Christian Village.

He was born in Lakefield, Minnesota on June 23, 1929 to the late Edward and Esther (Shefland) Erickson. After finishing his education at the Minnesota Bible College, he spent his life in ministry serving a number of churches through the years.

In addition to his parents he was preceded in death by his daughter-in-law, Lisa Erickson; brothers, Earl Erickson, Reuben Erickson; sister, Charlotte Stinar.

Dale is survived by his wife of 68 years, Clarene Erickson; children, Sherry and James Miller, David and Paula Erickson, Dan Erickson; special friend, Lou Ann Olson; 10 grandchildren, 11 great grandchildren and a host of other family and friends.

Memorial service is 1:00 p.m. on Saturday June 15, 2019 at the Hoy-Kilnoski Funeral Home. Memorials are suggested to Deaf Missions, Good News International or First Christian Church.

Diane M. Ossenfort



Diane M. (Determan) Ossenfort was born on June 29, 1949 in Carroll, Iowa to Lyle and Doris (Bernholtz) Determan. At age 4 she started school in Sioux Falls, SD and later transferred to the Crippled Children's School in Worthington, where she finished her education.

On June 15th, 1974, Diane married Dennis Ossenfort at St. Francis Xavier Church in Windom. Diane worked in the secretary department at the Crippled Children's School and later at TAC in Worthington until retiring in 2017.

Dennis passed away on September 7th, 2016 and Diane continued living in her home in Worthington until June 9th, 2017, when she moved to the Good Samaritan Society Nursing Home in Westbrook. Diane passed away peacefully the evening of June 4th, 2019, at the age of 69.

Diane is survived by her siblings; Jack (Ruth) Determan of Jeffers, Connee (Craig) Therstad of Alexandria, Kevin (Diane) Determan of Jeffers, and David Determan of Jeffers; and many nieces and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her husband Dennis; and her parents, Lyle and Doris Determan.

At Diane's request, a private graveside burial took place on Saturday, June 8th, 2019, at St. Francis Xavier Cemetery in Windom.

Laura Steen

Dec. 31, 1931 - Dec. 25, 2018
SLAYTON, Minn. - Laura Steen, 86, Heron Lake, Minn., died Tuesday, Dec. 25, in Hospice House of Murray County.

Visitation will be from 5-7 p.m. Friday, June 14, at First United Methodist Church in Heron Lake. Visitation will continue from 9:30-10:30 a.m., followed by the memorial service at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, June 15, at the church. Pastor Carolyn Doering will officiate.

Arrangements by Osterberg Funeral Home.

Bonnie Mae Freking

Nov. 3, 1954 - June 9, 2019
SIOUX FALLS, S.D. - Bonnie Mae Freking, 64, Windom, Minn., died Sunday, June 9, in Sanford Medical Center.

Visitation will be from 4-7 p.m. Monday, June 17, at LaCanne Family Funeral Home in Windom. Visitation will continue from 9:30-10:30 a.m., followed by a celebration of life at 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, June 18, at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Windom. Father Pratap will officiate. Burial will be in Lakeview Cemetery in Windom.

Arrangements by LaCanne Family Funeral Home.

Robert "Robie" Dimmick

Sept. 6, 1970 - June 9, 2019
JACKSON, Minn. - Robert "Robie" Dimmick, 48, Jackson, died Sunday, June 9, in his home.

Visitation will be from 9:30-10:30 a.m., followed by a memorial service at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, June 15, at Dingmann Funeral Home in Worthington, Minn. Pastor Gary Andersen will officiate. A private committal of cremains will be at a later date.

Arrangements by Dingmann Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Ardell Cassens

July 23, 1936 - June 11, 2019
WORTHINGTON, Minn. - Ardell Cassens, 82, Westbrook, Minn., died Tuesday, June 11, in Sunset Cottage.

Visitation will be from 2-3 p.m., followed by the memorial service at 3 p.m., Saturday, June 15, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Westbrook. Interment will be in Slayton (Minn.) Memorial Gardens Cemetery.

Arrangements by Horvath Funeral Service in Tracy, Minn.

William "Bill" Kunz

March 3, 1939 - June 8, 2019
LUVERNE, Minn. - William "Bill" Kunz, 80, Pipestone, Minn., died Saturday, June 8, in Minnesota Veterans Home.

Visitation will be from 5-7 p.m. Wednesday, June 12, at First Lutheran Church in Pipestone. The funeral will be 10:30 a.m. Thursday, June 13, at the church. Private burial will be at a later date in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Arrangements by Hartquist Funeral Home in Pipestone.

James "Jamie" Decker

Aug. 2, 1993 - June 7, 2019
OKABENA, Minn. - James "Jamie" Decker, 25, Okabena, died Friday, June 7.

Visitation will be from 6-7 p.m., followed by a memorial service at 7 p.m., Thursday, June 13, at Dingmann Funeral Home in Worthington, Minn. Father James Callahan will officiate. Private Burial of cremains will be at a later date.

Arrangements by Dingmann Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Bernice Ryker

Oct. 2, 1934 - May 31, 2019
JEFFERS, Minn. - Bernice Ryker, 84, rural Jeffers, died Friday, May 31, in her home.

Visitation will be from 1-2 p.m., followed by a celebration of life at 2 p.m., Saturday, June 15, at United Methodist Church in Jeffers. Pastor Wesley Johnson will officiate. Burial will be in Jeffers Cemetery.

Arrangements by LaCanne Family Funeral Home.

Ann Rita Cross

Oct. 28, 1916 - June 9, 2019
STILLWATER, Minn. - Ann Rita Cross, 102, Stillwater, died Sunday, June 9, in Lakeview Hospital.

Visitation will be from 1:30-2:30 p.m., followed by a funeral at 2:30 p.m., Thursday, June 13, at Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Jackson, Minn. Father Tim Hall will officiate.

Arrangements by Osterberg Funeral Home.

Early Friday morning crash claims life of Okabena man

The Globe

OKABENA — An Okabena man died early Friday morning in a one-vehicle crash in rural Alba Township, Jackson County.

James Decker, 25, was driving a 2007 Subaru Legacy GT on Jackson County 20 near 360th Avenue when he reportedly lost control of his vehicle. According to a Jackson County Sheriff's Office press release issued Saturday,

the vehicle hit the bridge over the Okabena Creek and was on fire. Decker was the driver and lone occupant. Deputies responded to the scene at 5:18 a.m. Friday.

Responding to the scene were the Okabena and Heron Lake fire departments, the Martin County Dive Rescue Team, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Minnesota State Patrol.



Tim Middagh/The Globe

Firefighters from area communities are shown Tuesday afternoon, more than 30 hours after fire was discovered inside a concrete grain silo at New Vision Cooperative Elevator in Brewster. Crews have been working around the clock to extinguish the fire and remove smoldering grain from the bin.

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up there to extinguish it anymore. We'll put out the smoldering on the outside of the building, and that should be pretty much it."

As of Tuesday afternoon, Garmer said it wasn't known how the fire started. The bin contained just 20% of its 75,000-bushel capacity.

Brewster Fire Department had received mutual aid from the Worthington, Heron

Lake, Okabena and Round Lake fire departments, and Fulda and Wilmont firefighters responded early Tuesday evening. Garmer said in addition to manpower to replace firefighters, neighboring departments were relied upon for additional water.

"It just takes a lot of water," Garmer said. "Our city water tower can't support that. We need water tankers."

Garmer estimated about 10,000 bushels of the burning corn had been removed from the concrete structure as of Tuesday afternoon.



Julie Buntjer / The Globe

Representatives from Worthington Public Utilities, the city of Worthington, and Lewis & Clark Regional Water System gathered Tuesday morning for a ribbon cutting at the new meter building where Lewis & Clark water connects to the city's water supply.

CLOCKS

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to get all of the clocks up and running again.

His favorite among all the clocks is one that hangs on the living room — a gift to him and his wife, Mina, on their wedding day back on Nov. 2, 1948. Mina's brother and sister-in-law gave it to them.

His display includes a grandmother clock, a world clock that "tells you what time it is all over the world," says Harry, and a clock in the shape of a mariachi musician that, at the press of a button, blares music followed by the clippity-clop of horses hooves. Dog Chico — a 19-year-old Chihuahua —

barely reacts to the commotion.

Though Harry has backed off from buying more clocks, he won't turn one away when friends and family find one for him.

"I'd find a place somewhere," he says, realizing it would be just one more soothing sound to add to his collection.

Harry grew up near Mille Lacs Lake in northeast Minnesota and bought his Worthington home in 1967, after his sister, Pearl, married Worthington native John Sheepstra and settled here. Harry's career included working as a farm hand, then at the Ford garage and the state highway department before retiring after a 12-year stint as a truck driver.

Last month, Harry celebrated his 90th birthday.

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network of support for current and past veterans and their families.

The idea is to fulfill needs not met by the County Veterans Assistance Officer or Family Assistance Services. Examples include mowing lawns or shoveling snow for aging veterans and providing childcare for military spouses to have some alone time.

Mayor Mike Kuhle credited city clerk Janice Oberloh with the idea and passion to pursue this designation. All members of the council supported the plan.

City Administrator Steve Robinson presented the current schedule and budgets for the city's local-option sales tax projects.

The 2019-2020 projects and budgets are as follows:

- Improvements to the

field house, \$3 million

- Parks and recreation improvements (Centennial Park pedestrian bridge replacement, \$200,000)

The 2020-2021 projects and budgets are as follows:

- Outdoor aquatic center, \$4.5 million

- 10th Street Plaza, \$1 million

- Parks and recreation improvements, \$1.3 million (Centennial Park shelter, \$450,000; Buss Field restrooms, \$300,000; Slater Park restroom and shelter, \$300,000; Pleasant Park tennis court resurfacing, \$80,000; Ludlow Park amphitheater parking lot, \$120,000; Sunset Park boat landing improvements, \$50,000)

These projects are merely Phase One of the total local-option sales tax projects. The city has several other projects planned in the coming years that will be financed by the tax.

Also on the agenda:

- The council approved the Center for Active Living's request to adjust its meeting schedule.

- New Worthington police officer Madison Stearns was introduced to the council and sworn in.

- Council members awarded bids for the Homewood Hills Street Improvement Project and the 2019 Seal Coating Project.

- Council members approved plans for the 2019 bituminous improvements and the replacement of the Centennial Park pedestrian bridge.

- Council approved conditional use permits for the entertainment spec building and for the Tsadkane Mariam Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

- Council members considered a number of zone changes, all of which moved forward without dissent.

WATER

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As a result, Hain said consumers have told him they are using much less dish soap and shampoo.

"We've gone from about 25-26 grains hardness ... and now with the blended water we're down to 16-17 (grains hardness)," Hain said. "Once we have some consistency there, we're going to let the public know that now that you're getting softer water, you may want to think about adjusting your water softener down. That's going to help us on the wastewater side with the salty discharge the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is concerned with."

Hain and his predecessor, Habicht, were constant lobbyists on behalf of the city's water needs. During their tenures, both made multiple trips to St. Paul and Washington, D.C., to advocate for funding the water pipeline. It's been said that without the state funding advances for the project, Worthington might not have received its connection until 2050.

Habicht's widow, Beth Habicht, was on hand for Tuesday's dedication.

"When Don first came home with this idea, he was so excited about it," she said. "I know he's looking down with a lot of pride in the people who

made it work. He and Scott worked together for many, many years. One person couldn't do it — it took all of you. On behalf of Don, thank you."

Habicht served 16 years on the LCRWS board of directors, and Hain has now served on that same board for 15 years.

"Don often remarked that Worthington needed water a hundred years ago. It took us 30 years for the Lewis & Clark to finally arrive. Better late than never," said LCRWS Board Chairman Red Arndt of Luverne. "There's no doubt it would have taken much longer were it not for the transformation of Scott into the superhero lobbyist he turned out to be.

"Scott was in St. Paul so much over the four-year period advocating for the federal funding advances that the last, final advance was affectionately referred to by our local legislators as the 'Keep Scott Hain out of St. Paul Bill,'" Arndt said with a grin.

As part of Tuesday's celebration, Arndt presented Hain with the Lewis & Clark Trailblazer award — the highest honor given by LCRWS to recognize individuals who have "demonstrated the utmost commitment and dedication to making the dream of Lewis & Clark a reality." The award was a framed print featuring a hunting scene.

Habicht received the same honor in 2007, Arndt noted.