

# The Globe



## COUNTY VOTES TO ADVANCE LIBRARY PROJECT

In 4-1 decision, W.E.L.L. to get master plan, conceptual design

**By Julie Buntjer**  
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**Worthington**

Nobles County commissioners voted 4-1 Tuesday to take the next step in its quest to collaborate with the city of Worthington and Independent School District 518 on a building project dubbed the W.E.L.L. (Welcome, Education, Library, Livability).

The action commits the county to being involved in the planning process, and funding a share of the master plan and concept design to get an accurate cost for a building project on the former Campbell Soup property along Worthington's Second Avenue. The project design includes a new county library, adult basic education and community education, early childhood family education and city office space, with the potential to include a welcome center (offices of the Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce, Worthington Regional Economic Development Corp.. and Worthington Regional Health Care Foundation), and some community services space.

Tuesday's action followed input from Nobles County Library Director Marjorie Ferguson, who presented commissioners with a list of requirements library board members have for a new library. Those include a 30,000-square-

foot facility on one level, railroad safety measures, viable and sufficient green space, a dedicated entrance, that a library architect be involved in the process, that the library director be included in all meetings where the library is discussed and that final approval of the project be granted by the library staff and library board.

"How flexible is the library board?" Commissioner Gene Metz asked after hearing the list. "I don't think this project will work with a one-floor library."

Ferguson replied that a library on a single floor was outlined in the needs assessment, and that's what the library board wants to follow.

Metz said with the other parties involved, it will depend on how flexible they can be to space and collaborative areas.

"I'm hoping for flexibility," added board chairman Matt Widboom.

"We've got to be able to negotiate and work together with everyone that wants to be involved in the building," said Nobles County Administrator Tom Johnson. "The only way we can do that is with planning and concept design."

With the city ready to move forward if the Minnesota legislature approves its request to instate a special half-cent sales tax to fund renovation of the existing

steel building on the site, and the school district also wanting to make a decision, Johnson said now is the time for the county to decide if it's going to be a part of the project.

Commissioner Justin Ahlers, who has consistently voiced opposition to a proposed new library, said it will get more space when the Nobles County Historical Society moves from the War Memorial Building.

"Let's see what we can use in that basement and see where things are after that," Ahlers said. "I don't know what the rush is here right now."

Johnson replied that bonding applications need to be submitted in June to be included in the first round for consideration.

Ahlers then raised concerns about the farm economy, planting delays due to the weather and calls to the suicide hotline.

"We're not all farmers here, but Nobles County is a farming community," Ahlers said. "What happens on the farm affects Main Street a lot. I just think that now is not the time to get involved in a project like this."

His fellow commissioners, however, disagreed.

"I've been on the board for six years and we stopped the last

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**Tim Middagh/The Globe**  
Pwe Ku, who will graduate Friday from Worthington High School, will major in biology at St. Cloud University on a pre-medicine track.

## Abound with gratitude

Friday's graduation 'bittersweet' moment for WHS student

**By Alyssa Sobotka**  
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**WORTHINGTON** — Pwe Ku describes himself as someone who doesn't take anything for granted.

That includes graduating from high school. Ku and more than 200 other Independent School District 518 students are set to earn their diplomas between two graduation ceremonies this week. Area Learning Center graduates will begin their procession at 6 p.m. Thursday in the ALC Gymnasium, while the WHS graduation will begin at 7 p.m. Friday in the WHS Gymnasium.

For Ku, graduating from high school is an accomplishment worth celebrating. As a refugee from Burma (Myanmar), Ku said he's grateful for the opportunities the Worthington area has provided him.

"After World War II the Burmese lost power," Ku said about the longest civil war in world histo-

**GRADUATION CEREMONIES**

- **What is it:** Area Learning Center graduation procession
- **When:** 6 p.m. Thursday
- **Where:** ALC Gymnasium

  

- **What is it:** WHS graduation procession
- **When:** 7 p.m. Friday
- **Where:** WHS Gymnasium

ry that continues today. "The military regime kept burning villages. It got to the point where my parents had to leave."

When Ku was 6 years old, his parents, Sec Col-lar and Say Gay Moo, moved the family to Minnesota. He attend-ed Edgerton Elementary in St. Paul for two years before the family found their longtime home in Worthington.

His childhood and experience as a refugee inspired him to pursue a

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## Geese and goslings in the green



**Tim Middagh/The Globe**  
A pair of Canada geese and their goslings wander toward the E. O. Olson stormwater pond on the campus of Minnesota West Community & Technical College in Worthington recently.

## Annual Spomer Classics Show 'n Shine is Saturday

**By Ryan McGaughey**  
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**WORTHINGTON** — As always, fingers are crossed for good weather as Spomer Classics hosts its 14th annual Classic Car Show 'n Shine this Saturday.

Highs on Saturday are expected to be in the low 70s, and there's not a significant chance of precipitation at this point. That's in stark contrast, of course, to what has been the case for much of this spring.

"Everyone deserves a great day this year," Spomer Classics owner Marv Spomer said of his hope for pleasant conditions. "We've started to hear from a lot of car clubs (about Saturday), and we're expecting another

great turnout this year."

The yearly Show 'n Shine typically brings between 200 and 300 vehicles to the Spomer Classics grounds, and Spomer doesn't expect much different this time around. That's because the event is not only a showcase for eye-catching automobiles, but for Spomer's museum itself.

"I kind of hope this whets the appetite for people to want to come back and see more of what's in the museum's collection," Spomer said. "There's so much history here. The cars are secondary here; it's all the memorabilia and the signage that's really primary."

As is typical, the Classic Car Show 'n Shine will take place beginning at 10 a.m. As

is always the case, the show is a non-competitive event. People will begin showing up at Spomer Classics with their vehicles before the official 10 a.m. start, and folks typically come and go throughout up until the event's 2 p.m. conclusion.

Cars will also begin lining up at about 1:45 p.m. for a cruise around Lake Okabena.

An additional key component of Spomer's annual Show n' Shine is the fact that there is no pre-registration and it's free for all. The show also represents a collaborative effort between Spomer Classics and multiple volunteers. The Southwest Minnesota Car Club, for instance,

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**Tim Middagh / The Globe**  
The interior of the main showroom at Spomer Classics is pictured in this May 2017 photo.