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Record

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LF Council to propose project to Legislature for ballot referendum question

By AMANDA RASINSKI
Staff Writer
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The Little Falls City Council voted Tuesday to pass a resolution allowing the city to submit a proposal to the State Legislature seeking approval to add a local option sales tax to the ballot for the November 2020 election.

The city is looking to build a community recreation center which is proposed to have a multi-purpose gym with an indoor track, meeting rooms, office and storage spaces as well as outdoor recreation amenities. The facility may also house a child care center.

If the Legislature approves the plan, City Administrator Jon Radermacher said that residents will be able to vote on a proposed local sales tax of .5% per year for 30 years, generating \$17 million to fund the facility. A .5% inflation on the revenue generation is figured into the total.

"I think it's important for everybody, all of our residents to understand that what's in this resolution is not all encapsulating of what it may be. It's going to be relied upon numerous discussions and meetings with our residents, and I mean numerous because we do want community input," said Mayor Greg Zylka.

There are three proposed locations for the recreation center, but using land near the high school

was a large part of the discussion. At the Jan. 13 Little Falls School Board meeting, the Board voted unanimously to approve the city's use of the land, if that location is chosen, provided that some of the land remain intact for school educational purposes.

The project would use nine to 10 acres of the 14-acre parcel of land, Radermacher said. He is also very interested in preserving the educational components of the property.

"We want to work with the school on a lot of different facets, not just on this location, but in the long-term operation and utilization of this facility," he said.

The location is sought after for its proximity to Highway 27 and Highways 10 and 371, which Radermacher said would not only make it easier to access for visitors but also intrigue hotel developers to build in the community.

"The opportunity of having something close to the highway, I think is really instrumental in the long-term success of this facility," he said.

Council member Frank Gosiak made a point to remind the Council that all options should be explored.

"That is an important area at the school, and it seems like all we're doing is talking about this when there are two other options. I'm not saying this is a bad option,"

(Continued on Page 2A)

Foster care and adoption on the rise in Morrison County

By SHEILA MCCOY
Staff Writer
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This is the first article of a series on foster care and adoption. Next: How the community can help create buffers to increase a child's resiliency.

For the last 15 years, as drug addiction become more prevalent in Morrison County, the number of children placed in foster care and adoption has increased.

Melanie Erickson, Morrison County Social Services supervisor, said in 2000 the number of children in foster care was 34. In 2005, it jumped to 91.

"The move to more than 90 children occurred first in 2005, due to the first round of meth addictions. There has been a pretty steady increase since then," she said. "We've never had this many kids in foster care. A lot of it is due to the significant drug problem we have in the county with heroin and meth and kids not being in safe situations."

In 2019, 116 children in Morrison County were placed in foster care. But the real number of children who are affected by parents' drug addiction, incarceration, mental illness or other circumstances that keeps them from providing a safe environment, is much higher than that.

Erickson said a large number of family relatives, especially grandparents, in Morrison County are



carrying for the children without the involvement of Social Services. Many children are also adopted privately by family members.

"They are not counted in the statistics, so we don't have an actual number for how many," she said.

One Little Falls grandma said she is currently raising five grandchildren because of her daughter's addiction to methamphetamine.

Erickson said it isn't unusual for a lot of misconceptions about Social Services and its efforts in protecting children.

"I don't think people realize how much we support families," she said.

Erickson said that while state and federal law states that removal of parental rights shall begin after six months if the parents have not met the set conditions for reunification, such as consistently testing negative for drugs in their system, establishing a safe environment, complete rehabilitation services and more.

However, wanting to reunite children with the biological fami-

lies, Erickson said the Morrison County team often tries to work with the parents much longer than that, sometimes even up to a year.

"We go to extreme lengths to reunite. There is always a lot of misconception with the Social Services. I have heard that foster parents are only in it for the money, that we take kids away for no reason. It takes a lot to have your child in foster care," she said.

Sometimes placing the child with another relative is a better option. There is a lot that goes on behind the scenes that people may not always realize.

Erickson said Social Services staff prefers placing children with relatives whenever they can.

"We try to find blood relatives. Many times the relatives become the foster parents. Even if the kids are reunited with their parents, they will still have the long-term support with the family member who provided foster care. Even if they are not reunited, the adoption will stay within the family,"

(Continued on Page 7A)

Kids who need mental health services have options

By AMANDA RASINSKI
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Upward of 20% of the youth worldwide experience a mental disorder, with half of all mental illnesses beginning by age 14, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Treating a mental illness is unique to every individual, and is often difficult for children due to a lack of funding and resources. Some team members with the County's Children's Mental Health (CMH) program said these barriers definitely exist, but kids still have treatment options.

The CMH program is a voluntary, free of charge, service for qualifying county residents under 21 who need education, support or coordination of mental health programs.

CMH case manager, Megan

(Continued on Page 2A)



(12620FRONT)Nordic

A Ripley race to the finish for Flyer Nordic skiers

Little Falls senior Eli Segler (No. 30) and teammate John Stockard (No. 23) chase Bemidji's Nathan Vleck toward the finish line in the skate portion of the pursuit at Camp Ripley, Thursday. The Flyer boys finished in third place as a team. For a full story on boys and girls Nordic ski see page 17A

Staff photo by Tyler Ohmann

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Registration now open for Master Naturalist training course

Registration is open for a six-day Minnesota Master Naturalist volunteer training course starting Aug. 10 at Wright County's Robert Ney Memorial Park Reserve west of Monticello.

The 40-hour course focuses on the Big Woods, Big Rivers biome and its plants, critters, geology, hydrology and ecology. The park's nature center serves as a base for exploring prime examples of Big Woods, Big Rivers habitat.

Class size is limited to 16. Participants will gain tools

for exploring the natural world and sharing it with others. A significant part of each class will be spent outdoors. Five field trips will feature Wright County parks, the Mississippi River and Lake Maria State Park. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday - Friday, Aug. 10 - 14, and 8:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, Aug. 15. The schedule includes one day-long field trip and time to complete group capstone projects.

Graduates maintain active status by volunteering

40 hours a year.

Instructors are Ken Bachofer, who is returning for the eighth year, Jeanne Dirksen and Ann Wessel. Guest presenters include experts in birds, plants, fisheries, trees, dragonflies and mushrooms.

The cost includes manuals and supplies. A limited number of partial scholarships are available. Details are available online at www.minnesotamasternaturalist.org. Register online at www.minnesotamasternaturalist.org/courses.

Constituents invited to Legislative Update with Kresha and Gazelka, Jan. 30

The Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce will host a Legislative Update, Thursday, Jan. 30, from noon - 1:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Little Falls City Hall, 100 Seventh

Ave. NE, Little Falls. Senate Majority Leader Senator Paul Gazelka, R-Niswaga and Rep. Ron Kresha, R-Little Falls, will be on hand to preview the 2020 Legislative session and

hear from constituents on items of interest or concern for this legislative session.

For more information or if there are questions, call Debora K. Boelz at (320) 632-5155.

Foster care and adoption on the rise

(Continued from Page 1A) she said.

Social Services also provides travel support, gas cards, help connecting with other relatives and more.

"We provide these connections to the kids because when the kids feel connected to the community, they do so much better," she said.

Erickson said it isn't unusual for children who are removed from unsafe homes to battle mental health issues. It's often a result of abuse, trauma and other adverse childhood experiences, which can have a tremendous impact on the child's health and quality of life.

"Safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments and other protective factors are essential to prevent emotional, physical and psychological trauma and adversity," she said.

Examples of adverse

childhood experiences within the family context are physical, sexual and emotional abuse, physical or emotional neglect, physical punishment, witnessing domestic violence, household substance abuse, mental illness within the home, incarceration, parental separation or divorce and child separation from the family, Erickson said.

Without any buffers to help the child develop resilience to bounce back despite the adversity, he or she may experience toxic stress.

When a body experiences this type of stress, it goes into a heightened state of alert that may result in rapid breath, elevated blood pressure, hypersensitivity to stimuli and more. Rather than relaxing in between incidents, the body instead programs itself to anticipate the next attack.

Erickson said toxic stress can have a lifelong effect on the individual and is more

deeply rooted than temporary stress.

Adverse community environments can also lead to toxic stress as many traumas may be connected to lack of resources or other physical, psychological or financial threats the family experiences, such as poverty, poor housing conditions, violence and substance abuse.

These environments often also lack positive buffers that builds resiliency, such as social supports, affordable and stable housing, safe neighborhoods and parks and thriving and diverse retail and opportunities for employment and creative expression, she said.

The approach the Social Services team takes to help children is through trauma-informed care. It not only recognizes and acknowledges the adverse childhood experiences, but also seeks to prevent re-traumatization and create buffers.

Neil Thesing Inc. Casino Tour Schedule

January, February & March 2020



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St. Croix Casino, Danbury, WI ****Must be 21 Years of age****

Day Trips: Friday, January 31st
Bus Fare: \$14.00 Friday, February 21st
Fridays, March 6th & 27th

Monday, February 10th
Monday, March 16th

Benefits: Possible Casino Promotion of the Day, Veteran's promo, Birthday month-Swipe Kiosk, 1st Time Player Promo

Depart: Little Falls/Walmart 8:15am (back 6:15pm), Royalton, Rice, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 9:00am** (back 5:30pm), Foley/Mr. Jim's 9:10am, Milaca/Hardee's 9:30am, Mora/Shopko 9:55am, Hinckley/Tobie's

Mondays are "Better With Age" - Senior Day

Grand Casino Hinckley

Day Trips: Friday, January 31st
Bus Fare: \$28.00 Friday, February 21st
Fridays, March 6th & 27th

Monday, February 10th
Monday, March 16th

Benefits: Whatever promotion is going on at Hinckley that day, ex: "Get a Gift", etc. Can use your mail coupons.

Depart: If you want to go to Hinckley, get dropped off on way to Danbury & picked up on return.

Birthday month promotion: Swipe Kiosk

St. Croix Casino, Turtle Lake, WI ****Must be 21 Years of age****

Day Trips: Wednesday, January 29th
Bus Fare: \$15.00 Wednesday, March 4th

Benefits: New Member Promotion, Birthday month pkg, Wedding Anniv month 50+ yrs Free Buffet (with proof 1st time)

Depart: Little Falls/Walmart 7:45am (back 6:20pm), Royalton, Rice, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 8:30am** (back 5:45pm), Princeton/Walmart 9:00am, Cambridge

Wednesdays are "Better With Age" - Senior Day

Shooting Star Casino, Mahanomen

Day Trips: Thursday, February 6th (Thursdays "TGIT")
Bus Fare: \$35.00 Tuesday, March 3rd (Tuesdays Age 50+ All Star Day)

Benefits: \$15.00 slot play, \$5 food coupon & earn additional Free Play based on points earned, Example: 50 pts extra \$15 FSP, 70-\$20, 90-\$30, 110-\$40, 150-\$55, 175-\$65, 200 points-\$75.

Plus monthly promos, Birthday month, Wedding Anniv. \$5 cash coupon \$10 off dining (with proof)

Depart: St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 8:00am (back 7:15pm), Rice, Royalton, **Little Falls/Walmart 8:30am** (back 6:45pm)

Best bus package on schedule!

There is a short break at a fast food restaurant on way to Shooting Star.

Treasure Island Casino, Red Wing

Day Trip: Tuesday, March 17th
Bus Fare: \$32.00

Benefits: \$15.00 Free slot play + \$3.00 off food, 1st Time Player Promo, Birthday month Free Buffet & \$20 Bingo coupon

Depart: Little Falls/Walmart 7:00am (back 6pm), Royalton, Rice, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 7:45am** (back 5:15pm)

BINGO matinee 11:45am, warm-ups 12:30pm

Black Bear Casino, Carlton

Day Trip: Friday, February 14th (Valentine's Day)
Bus Fare: \$33.00

Benefits: Promotion of the day, New Member \$5, Birthday month swipe kiosk

Depart: Little Falls/Walmart 7:45am (back 6:30pm), Rice, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 8:30am** (back 6pm), Foley, Milaca, Mora

Northern Lights Casino, Walker

Day Trips: Sundays, January 26th, February 2nd & 23rd & March 8th & 22nd
Bus Fare: \$33.00

Benefits: \$25.00 Free slot play + \$3.00 off food, Birthday month promo, Sundays "Earn a Gift" promo

Depart: St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 10:00am (back 7pm), Rice, Royalton, **LF/Walmart 10:30am** (back 6:30pm)

Jackpot Junction Casino, Morton

Day Trips: Tuesdays, February 11th & 18th & March 10th & 24th
Bus Fare: \$19.00

Benefits: \$15.00 Free slot play, Birthday month promo, New Member promo

Depart: LF/Walmart 8:10am (back 7:10pm), Rice 8:20am, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 8:50am** (back 6:25pm), **Waite Park/Cash Wise West 9:05am**, Cold Spring/Park & Ride 9:20am, Richmond/Casey's 9:30am, Paynesville 9:45am

Dakota Magic Casino, Hankinson, ND ****Must be 21 Years of age****

Day Trips: Wednesdays, February 19th & March 18th
Bus Fare: \$22.00

Benefits: \$20.00 Free slot play (after 50 points on card), \$3.00 off Cocktail coupon, Birthday promo & free drink, 1st Time Player, Wedding Anniv, "Earn & Get Points", Senior Days 55+ get points to use towards food & free slot play.

Depart: Little Falls/Walmart 7:20am (back 6pm), Royalton, Rice, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 8am** (back 7:30pm), **Waite Park/Cash Wise West 8:15am** (back 7:15pm), Avon 8:30am

"Senior Days" Wednesdays

Fortune Bay Resort & Casino, near Tower, MN on Lake Vermilion

1 Night Overnight Trip: Monday-Tuesday, Jan 27-28, Feb 24-25, April 27-28, May 18-19

Cost per person: Bus ride/double room \$94 each Bus ride/single room \$125

Stops at Black Bear Casino on way to and from for a 1 hour break

Benefits: \$50.00 Fortune Play (earn 10 pts first) Black Bear & Fortune Bay Promotions if available.
\$10.00 Food Voucher + \$5.00 coupon for the Tamarack Buffet or Gold Mine Grill
Buy 1/Get 1 Free Drink, 15% discount in Whispering Winds Gift Shop with \$30 purchase.

Depart: Little Falls/Walmart 9am, Royalton, Rice, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 9:45am** (back 6:15pm), Foley/Coborn's, Milaca/Hardee's 10:15am, Mora/Shopko 10:30, Hinckley/Tobie's 10:55am

2 Night Overnight Trip: Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday, March 30, 31 - April 1

Cost per person: Bus ride/double room \$150 each Bus ride/single room \$193

Stops at Black Bear Casino on way to and from for a 1 hour break

Benefits: \$100.00 Fortune Play (1st day \$50, 2nd day \$50) earn 10 points first, **2-\$10.00 Food Vouchers, 2-\$5.00 coupons for the Tamarack Buffet or Gold Mine Grill, 2 Buy 1/Get 1 Free Drink**, 2-15% discount coupons in Whispering Winds Gift Shop with \$30 purchase, plus current Black Bear & Fortune Bay promotions.

Depart: Little Falls/Walmart 9am, Royalton, Rice, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 9:45am** (back 6:15pm), Foley/Coborn's, Milaca/Hardee's 10:15am, Mora/Shopko 10:30, Hinckley/Tobie's 10:55am

Prairie's Edge Casino & Resort, Granite Falls

Day Trip: Thursday, February 27th
Bus Fare: \$30.00

Benefits: \$15.00 Free play plus Earn 50 points & receive \$5 Food Voucher.

Depart: LF/Walmart 8:10am (back 7pm), Royalton, Rice, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 8:50am**, **Waite Park/Cash Wise West 9:05am**, Cold Spring/Park & Ride 9:20am, Richmond/Casey's 9:30am, Paynesville/Aml Legion 9:45am

Overnight Trip: Tuesday-Wednesday, February 4th-5th

Cost per person: Bus ride/double room \$77 each (\$62+FRC) Bus ride/single room \$102 (\$71+FRC)

Benefits per person: \$50.00 Free Slot Play (1st day \$40/2nd \$10) + **Earn 50 pts & receive \$5.00 Food Voucher**, Birthday Package, plus daily promotions ex: "Wild Wheel Wednesday".

Depart: LF/Walmart 10am (back 4:30pm), Royalton, Rice, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 10:45am** (back 4pm), **Waite Park/Cash Wise West 10:50am**, Cold Spring/Park & Ride 11:05am, Richmond 11:15am, Paynesville 11:30am

Seven Winds Casino Lodge, Hayward, WI ****Must be 21 Years of age****

Overnight Trip: Wednesday-Thursday, March 11th-12th

Cost per person: Bus ride/double room \$92 each (\$70+FRC) Bus ride/single room \$126 (\$82+FRC)

Arrive St. Croix Danbury 10:20am-2:20pm (4hr stay), Arrive Seven Winds about 3:30pm for overnight.

Benefits: \$40.00 on Club Card (\$20 each day), plus \$1.00 New Member, Birthday-put 1 point on card & swipe kiosk, + Wednesday & Thursday promotions.

Depart: LF/Walmart 7:45am (back 6:15pm), Royalton, Rice, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 8:30am** (back 5:30pm), Foley, Milaca 9:00am, Mora, Hinckley *Stop at Grand Casino Hinckley for 1 hour break on way home.*

Diamond Jo's Casino, Northwood, Iowa ****Must be 21 Years of age****

Overnight Trip: Wednesday-Thursday, March 25th-26th

Cost per person: Bus ride/double room \$94 each Bus ride/single room \$134

Benefits per person: \$25.00 Free Slot Play, Free Supper Buffet (\$14.99 value), **Free Continental Breakfast**, Plus monthly promos, 1st time player and Birthday Bash.

Depart: Little Falls/Walmart 8:45am (back 4:30pm), Rice, **St. Cloud/Cash Wise East 9:30am** (back 4pm)

3RD ANNUAL SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2020

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