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Alexandria

# ECHO PRESS

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## Parkers Prairie police chief resigns

Barton was facing harassment claim

**By Karen Tolkkinen**  
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Parkers Prairie Police Chief Chris Barton resigned Monday after having been on paid administrative leave since June 26 after a complaint against him, City Clerk Beth Wussow confirmed Wednesday.



The city provided few details about the complaint, but a separation agreement signed by Barton and the city cited harassment allegations against him.

Wussow said the city hired Twin Cities-based law firm Iverson Reuvers Condon to investigate and has been billed just over \$24,500 so far for their work. The law firm was recommended by Tom Jacobson, the city attorney for Alexandria, she said. The firm specializes in civil trial work, according to its website.

The city's annual budget is \$990,049 and Wussow said she was not sure if other planned expenditures would have to be cut in order to pay that bill.

Barton was hired by the city in July 2006 and served as its police chief for not quite two years, Wussow said.

**BARTON:** Page 6



Paige Pearson prepared to take a shot at her first practice on the renovated outdoor basketball courts in Alexandria Aug. 13.

## COURT UPGRADES EXPAND WELLNESS

*Kjelland Foundation and Events supports improvements to outdoor basketball courts in Alexandria*

**By Jasmine Johnson**  
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Driving toward Alexandria's Broadway on Ninth Avenue West, a sign now says Matt Kjelland Memorial Courts.

The Kjelland Foundation and Events helped purchase the signs, poles and hoops for the new courts, which Mike Kjelland estimated will cost about \$5,000.

The foundation's goal is to promote mental and physical health and wellness in the Alexandria area, according to Kjelland.

Mike and his wife Sue created the Matt Kjelland Memorial Foundation in 2017. Their son Matt was 30 years old when he took his own life in 2016. After being diagnosed with Lyme disease, he was struggling physically and mentally.

Mike officially changed the name to Kjelland Foundation and Events in February after Sue passed away to honor both his son and his wife.

Since it began three years ago, the foundation

has financially supported suicide prevention, wellness education and COVID-19 emergency response programs. Last year, foundation board members mentioned the idea of a memorial park to honor Matt Kjelland's memory.

"Part of the reason the foundation wanted to work with the city was to give opportunities to people who sometimes can't get anywhere else to shoot hoops," Kjelland said.

Kjelland and three board members met with Bill Thoennes, Alexandria's parks director, at the facility last summer. He said that Thoennes reflected their enthusiasm, as he wanted to see improvements made alongside the new Veterans Memorial Park.

Two foundation board members, Chuck Wiener and his son, Andrew Wiener, developed a proposal that included the foundation's financial contribution and design ideas.

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## Alex native awarded Marine of the Year

Woman follows in father's footsteps

**By Jasmine Johnson**  
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Moriah Bartolomeo, a 2017 Alexandria graduate, enlisted in the Marines the summer she finished high school. She recently received the Marine of the Year award for her work in 2019.

"It's super honorable to get something like that," she said. "I was picked amongst everyone on the west side of the Mississippi in the Marine Corps, so it was a big deal."

Her first year consisted of training and schooling at Parris Island, S.C., and Jacksonville, N.C., for Marine Combat Training and Military Occupational Specialty school. After that, she was stationed at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, Calif., where she now does administrative work for Brig. Gen. Ryan Heritage and Sgt. Major Abel Leal.

**MARINE:** Page 16



Contributed Moriah Bartolomeo holds her Marine of the Year award and stands next to her father, Mike Bartolomeo.



Echo Press file photo The annual "Art in the Park" is the biggest fundraiser for the Andria Theatre, drawing thousands of people to Alexandria City Park. This year's event was canceled because of the pandemic.

## Arts in Alexandria pack a punch

New study says impact is \$3.1 million per year

**By Al Edenloff**  
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The arts are defined as "the expression of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be

appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power."

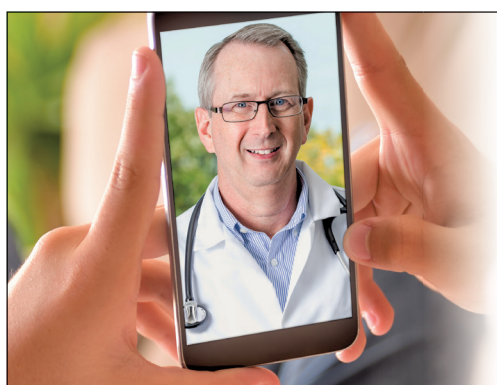
They also pack an economic punch.

In Alexandria, the economic impact of the arts adds up to \$3.1 million annually, according to

a new study by Creative Minnesota and eight other state and local art organizations.

"The arts are thriving in the Alexandria area," said Ann Hermes,

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## Introducing: secure Video Visits.

Alomere Health has added Video Visits as a convenient and secure option to meeting with your provider when a physical visit isn't practical. For more information, go to [news.AlomereHealth.com/introducing-secure-video-visits](https://news.AlomereHealth.com/introducing-secure-video-visits)



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