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What's
Happening
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BENTON AG
Section C

Sauk Rapids HERALD

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Saturday, February 20, 2021

Vol. 166, No. 45

2 Second Ave. S., Suite 135, Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

County passes first round of state business relief grants

43 successful
applicants
total \$365,887

BY JAKOB KOUNKEL
STAFF WRITER

FOLEY – In front of Benton County commissioners Feb. 16 was Amanda Othoudt.

Othoudt, Benton Economic Partnership executive director, sought approval for the first round of a second wave of coronavirus relief grants to area businesses affected by the health pandemic.

The grants are the result of state funds allotted to the county following the Minnesota Legislature's passage of a \$216 million relief package passed in December 2020. Benton County received \$787,399.76 to divide amongst the county's businesses and nonprofits. The program was in kind with the federal coronavirus relief funds administered through BEP in 2020.

In the first of two rounds, Othoudt said 71 applications were received, a total request of \$914,488.

Benton County page 2



PHOTO BY ELLARRY PRENTICE

Madison Moilanen celebrates one year of sobriety Feb. 8 in St. Cloud. A recovering heroin addict, she is an advocate for Beyond Backgrounds, a program intended to help people who are able to pay rent but face challenges in finding housing due to criminal, credit or rental history barriers in their background.

Beyond backgrounds:

Recovering heroin addict advocates for second chances

Moilanen champions program helping people find safe places to live

BY ELLARRY PRENTICE | STAFF WRITER

ST. CLOUD – Madison Moilanen has a past marked by trauma and addiction, but she said her former life does not define who she is now.

Today, she is in recovery, and her sights are set on a career as a licensed alcohol and drug counselor.

Feb. 8 marked a year of sobriety for Moilanen. Homeless, disoriented and desperate to turn her life around, the 29-year-old entered inpatient treatment for heroin addiction last year.

Originally from Duluth, Moilanen has lived in sober housing on the edge of Sauk Rapids since transitioning to outpatient treatment in June.

Moilanen page 3

Benoit completes three works in MLK contest

Pleasantview Elementary student
wins essay, visual art award

BY JENNIFER MORRISSETTE HESSE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

SAUK RAPIDS – Pleasantview Elementary School fifth grader Lauriel Benoit is a winner of the 2021 Dexter R. Stanton Essay and Visual Art Contest.

A series of virtual community events commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. recognized Benoit with the honor during sessions Jan. 16-18. Benoit received a monetary award for her submission and has an opportunity to participate in a virtual artist-in-residence monthly program.

The theme of this year's MLK community celebration was "Neighbors Serving Neighbors." To compete in the Dexter R. Stanton contest, Benoit answered the question, "How have I, or can I, help my neighbors and bring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream closer to reality?"

Benoit page 2

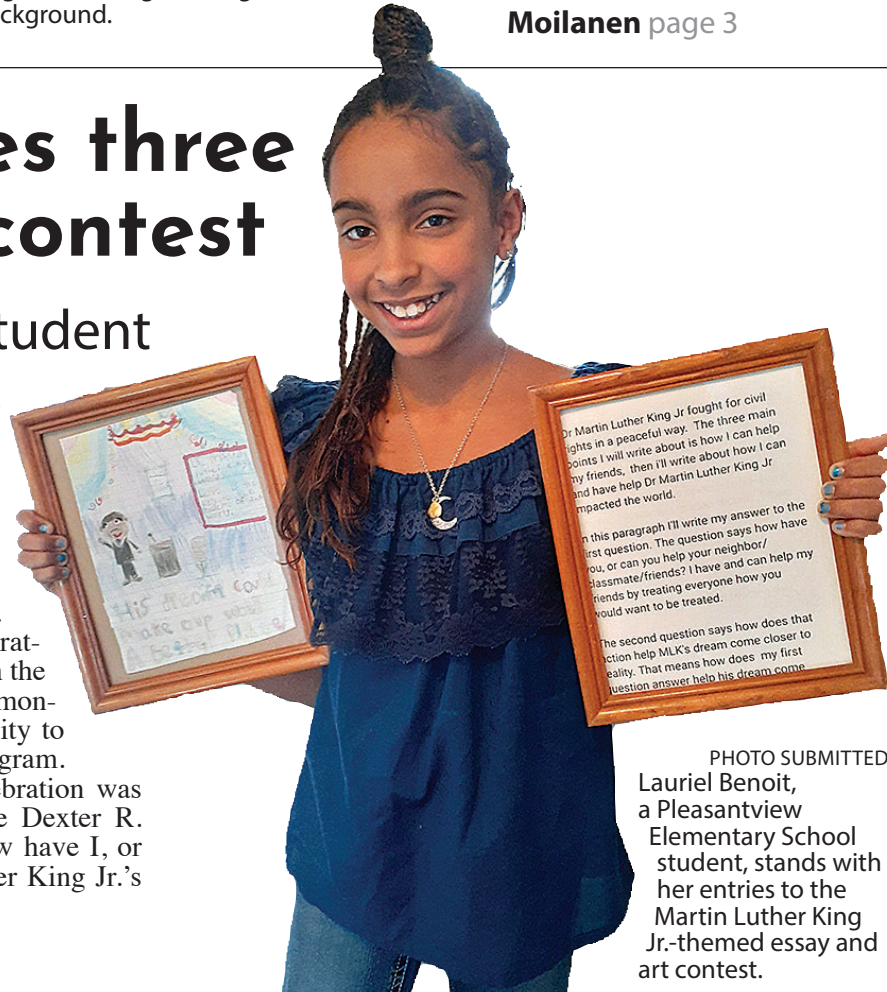


PHOTO SUBMITTED

Lauriel Benoit, a Pleasantview Elementary School student, stands with her entries to the Martin Luther King Jr.-themed essay and art contest.

STAR
Publications
The newspaper
of today is the history
of tomorrow.

**PUBLIC
NOTICES**

- Probate Notice - Underdahl - pg. 8
- Benton County Board of Commissioners Reg. Minutes, Feb. 2 - pg. 9
- Benton County Board of Commissioners Notice of Public Hearing - pg. 8
- Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School Advertisement for Bids - pg. 8
- Minden Township Notice of Annual Meeting and Election - pg. 11
- Mortgage Foreclosure - pg. 8

OBITUARIES

- Karen S. Ehlert
- Paul E. Naegeli