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Benton County NEWS

FOLEY, MINNESOTA

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FOLEY GETS \$8 MILLION FROM STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

City to use money for wastewater project

BY JAKOB KOUNKEL
STAFF WRITER

FOLEY – After more than a year of waiting and optimism, the city of Foley finally secured \$8 million in state funding for its wastewater treatment plant project – an essential project to complete if the city is to expand and grow.

“It’s very exciting,” said Sarah Brunn, Foley city administrator. “We worked very hard and our reps. (representatives) worked very hard, our council, our community. ... It’s a big win for the entire community.”

Not only is the project important for Foley’s growth, but it also provides sustainability for people and businesses already in Foley. Brunn said the \$8 million was the biggest and most difficult piece of funding to secure, but now that it has passed the Minnesota Legislature and has the governor’s signature, the project will move forward.

Without the connection to St. Cloud, Foley does not have enough capacity to extend sewer and water connections to additional homes or businesses that might want to relocate in the city. Businesses that want to build in Foley have to wait until the wastewater project is completed or build somewhere else.

The latest estimate on the project, which connects the city’s wastewater treatment system to St. Cloud’s, is \$22.4 million. Whatever the total ends up being, the city can essentially take \$8 million off the top, Brunn said – a direct benefit to Foley’s tax base which may not have to pay as much in monthly water fees as originally thought. Although it is not the \$10 million the city originally requested, it is still \$5 million more than Foley was appropriated in the first draft of the bill.

The money has to be spent on the wastewater project, whether using it for design, construction, acquisition of property or other things directly related to the project. It cannot be used for the connection fee, a direct payment to St. Cloud to purchase the extra capacity needed for Foley. That fee is estimated at \$7.5 million.

One of the primary reasons Foley is receiving \$8 million is due to Rep. Shane Mekeland’s work in the Minnesota House of Representatives, Brunn said. Mekeland represents Foley in the House along with the rest of District 15B.

“That was a long, hard fight to get Foley in there, and I pushed and pushed and pushed,” Mekeland said.

Mekeland voted against the early drafts of the infrastructure bill because it did not include enough funding for Foley and included funding for what he thought to be unnecessary investments.

State funding page 3



PHOTOS BY JAKOB KOUNKEL
Jesmine Rea (left), 9, rides on a snow tube pulled by Messiah Vizenor, 10, while Keiran Rea, 12, carries a sled on Fourth Avenue North on their way to Lions Park in Foley. The Foley Public Schools students were finished with their school responsibilities for the day and were excited to play in the snow.

October snow sets

NEW RECORD!

Previous monthly total was 6.8 inches set in 1936

BY ELLARRY PRENTICE | STAFF WRITER

SAUK RAPIDS – Ready or not, white flakes greeted the Benton County communities early this year with an Oct. 20 snowfall that shattered records.

Snow in the area set an all-time record for the heaviest, earliest snowfall of the season. The National Weather Service reported that 6.5 inches was recorded in Sauk Rapids and 6 inches was reported in Foley Tuesday evening, and that 7.1 inches was recorded in Rice Wednesday morning.

Retired St. Cloud State University meteorology professor Bob Weisman said he measured 7 inches of snow, which broke the Oct. 20 record snowfall of 5.8 inches set in 1936. That snow, added to the 0.2 inch from Oct. 16, pushed St. Cloud’s October total to 7.2 inches, according to Weisman.

The National Weather Service said some southern Twin Cities suburbs got around 9 inches of snow Oct. 20, while the western Minnesota town of Sedan received 10.8 inches.

Thursday brought more snow to central Minnesota, but even before

that storm, and any potential weekend snow, Oct. 20 broke the record for the most snow in October. The old record for the entire month of October was 6.8 inches in 1936.

The last major October snowfall total was 2002, with 6.4 inches, dropping its current rank to third place.

The Halloween blizzard of 1991 now ranks 10th, with 3.1 inches.

“It’s so low because the bulk of the 13 inches fell after midnight on Halloween night and into the next day,” Weisman said.

Perhaps there is a silver lining for those who want “snow” and “fall” to stay separate words this time of year.

“This does not guarantee that we will be under constant snow cover from now through the winter,” Weisman said. “The average date of the first continuous inch on the ground in St. Cloud is in early December. Even after 13 inches during the Halloween blizzard (and 28 inches in the Twin Cities), we had bare ground in mid-November.”



PHOTOS BY JAKOB KOUNKEL
Sterling Duckett plowed the sidewalk outside his house on Grand Street after the first heavy snowfall of the year Oct. 20 in Foley. Duckett said he did not expect to plow through this much snow in October, but said Minnesota weather does not care about his expectations.

Gilman officials run unopposed

City leaders look forward to city’s future

BY JAKOB KOUNKEL | STAFF WRITER



Adam Mueller



Jeremiah Dahler



Shawn Bemboom

GILMAN – In the city of Gilman, this year’s election is on track to produce similar results as the last election.

With a potential write-in candidacy in the making for the vacant council member seat, Mayor Adam Mueller and council members Shawn Bemboom and Jeremiah Dahler are readying for another term in elected office.

In Gilman, the mayor runs for a two-year term while council members run for four-year terms.

Mueller, Bemboom and Dahler each said separately

that they are running for similar reasons: for the general betterment of the city and collective cohesiveness. Mueller first ran for mayor in 2018, his first elected role in any capacity, in part to improve relations on the council, something Bemboom and Dahler agreed is a worthwhile goal for the council and city.

“I just felt like I could do better and restore cohesiveness,” Mueller said. “It was kind of fracturing the community.”

While no council is expected to always vote in lockstep, Mueller said that even disagreements on the council and in the community are handled with more civility now than with previous councils. Bemboom and Dahler agreed with that sentiment.

“It’s far better now,” Bemboom said. “We have a great group of people.”

For Bemboom and Dahler, cohesiveness came secondary to their commitment to the city and its prosperity, not that Mueller did not have an eye on such goals.

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- City of Foley Public Hearing for Potential Assessments - pg. 10
- Summons - pg. 12
- Benton County Planning Commission Public Hearings - pg. 10
- Benton County Amnesty Days Request for Proposal - pg. 12
- Benton County Ord. No. 479 - pg. 10
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- Ben Landowski
- Alvin J. Legatt
- William S. Lovitz
- John E. C. Swanson
- Michael J. Zulkoski



The newspaper of today is the history of tomorrow.