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Tyler Sinclair is an all-star and rock star.
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Great debut
MHS freshman starts career with a goal.
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MONTICELLO Times

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Covering the cities of Monticello and Big Lake, and Wright and Sherburne counties \$1

Board approves Monticello back-to-school plan

BY JEFFREY HAGE
MONTICELLO TIMES

The Monticello School Board has formally approved the administration's back-to-school plan and was readying to submit it to the Minnesota Department of Education for approval on Tuesday, Sept. 1.

The Board approval came at the Monday, Aug. 31 meeting of the Monticello Board of Education.

The Monticello School District is fully committed to the safe return to school of its students and staff, Supt. Eric Olson said.

Under the approved plan, families have two choices when it comes to education during the 2020-21 school year.

The first is follow the school district's

implementation of in-person, hybrid, or distance learning models, moving in and out of them as needed according to state guidance and coronavirus activity. The second, is choosing one of three parent opt-in options, which includes elementary school indoor/outdoor classroom, nature-based education for pre-K through grade 5, or distance learning for pre-K through grade 12.

Under the plan, school start times have been reassigned. School hours, as approved by the school board, are: Eastview Education Center: 8:30 a.m. - 2:20 p.m.; Little Mountain Elementary: 9:15 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.; Pinewood Elementary School: 9:15 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.; Nature Based Education (Pre-K-5): 8:30 a.m. - 2:20 p.m.; Middle School: 7:30 a.m. - 1:37 p.m.; High School: 7:30 a.m. - 1:45

p.m. and Turning Point: 7:30 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.

When students return to school, they can expect to see changes in seating arrangements within the classroom to accommodate social distancing. There will be no more small group learning, for example. Also new at schools this year is the requirement that face coverings be worn by staff and students in kindergarten through grade 12. Hand sanitizer stations will be provided at each school so students can sanitize their hands throughout the day.

When it comes to meal service, there will be no self-serve options during the coming year. A hot and a cold meal option will be offered. In elementary school settings, students will eat in the classroom. At other schools, more eating

space will be added in order to spread out students and decrease student interaction.

All staff, students and visitors will participate in daily health screenings, as well. This will consist of a series of questions that will need to be answered in order to remain in the school buildings.

When it comes to busing, pick-up times will be staggered to reduce the number of students arriving at school at the same time.

Elementary school students are scheduled to attend school in person, five days a week. Middle school and high school students will start the year under a hybrid model that includes: students being assigned to one of two groups: Group A

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Big Lake

Street repair bids denied, City to be general contractor

BY JEFFREY HAGE
MONTICELLO TIMES

For the second time in 2020, the Big Lake City Council has rejected bids for the City's 2020 streets and utility project.

The project was halted earlier this year because of high costs associated with the project.

When the City reopened the bidding process and opened bids on Aug. 20, just one bid was received.

That bid came in at \$357,801, more than double the engineering estimate for the project of \$175,000.

City Engineer Lane Otteson noted that costs associated with paving and water main work was slightly elevated. However, costs for concrete and storm sewer repair were significantly higher than budgeted.

The cost to perform the work as bid did not fit within the city's project budget, Otteson said.

But that doesn't mean road and utility work be done in 2020.

Otteson said he would bring back a more cost-effective plan at the Sept. 9 meeting of the Big Lake City Council.

That could include breaking the project up into smaller pieces with the City acting as the general contractor and subcontracting out the work. Otteson suggested subcontracting with local businesses for the various aspects of the 2020 streets

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Jeffrey Hage / Monticello Times

Paul Warmka is pictured at the mural he has undertaken at the Monticello American Legion post as his Eagle Scout Project. The 17-year-old Scout finished the project on Sunday, Aug. 30.

Mural is a gift to those who served

BY JEFFREY HAGE
MONTICELLO TIMES

Paul Warmka has been a Boy Scout for as long as he can remember.

"I started as a Cub Scout when I was young and have basically been a Scout my whole life," Warmka said.

During all those years as a Scout, the 17-year-old Warmka can't remember a time when his local troop wasn't being supported in some way, shape, or form by the American Legion post in Monticello- and he's right.

Local Boy Scout troops were chartered under Monticello American Legion Post 260, the Legion has financially supported local Boy Scout troops, and boys working towards their Eagle Scout recognitions have always had the support of the local American Legion.

So it was only fitting that when Paul Warmka set out to plan his

Eagle Scout project, he turned to the organization that has been there for the local Scouting community from Day 1.

"When I started thinking about ways I could help the community, I thought about all the help the American Legion gives our community," Warmka said.

That includes the Boy Scouts, he said.

"I decided I wanted to help the Legion, because they have given us so much help," Warmka said.

Paul Warmka decided the best gift he could give the members of the Monticello American Legion Post 260 was a mural on the south side of the American Legion post building at 304 Elm St, in Monticello.

"I wanted it to be a memorial to our veterans, and a 'thank-you' to all who served," Warmka said.

To achieve a design worthy of honoring the local veterans, Paul Warmka called upon the services of his father Alan Warmka, and

Alan's cousin, Craig Gallagher, who work professional restoring and renovating churches. Craig Gallagher owns the St. Michael-based Craig Gallagher Liturgical Art Studio.

"We did a mock-up on Photoshop," Paul Warmka said. They created two designs, one with the stars and stripes of the American flag and Bald Eagle, and one design without an eagle.

After the Legion picked its favorite design (featuring the Bald Eagle), there was a plethora of paperwork and project pitches before Boy Scout officials that needed to be completed.

Once approved, the initially stages of the project commenced on Sunday, Aug. 16.

First, Paul Warmka and a handful of Boy Scout volunteers power washed the south side of the American Legion post. On Tuesday, Aug. 25, the Scouts sprayed a

Mural / See page 12

Government

Rep. O'Neill questions DOC over prison closings

BY JEFFREY HAGE
MONTICELLO TIMES

Monticello's state representative is questioning the closing of two state correctional facilities.

Rep. Marion O'Neill (R-Maple Lake) has joined and Rep. Brian Johnson (R-Cambridge) have sent a letter to Department of Corrections



O'Neil

(DOC) Commissioner Paul Schnell questioning the closing of the Togo and Willow River correctional facilities. O'Neill is the Republican lead on the Corrections Division of the Minnesota House of Representatives.

The lawmakers expressed concern about the closings, especially in light of the fact that Challenge Incarceration Programs at the two facilities have proven successful in the current locations.

The first phase of the Challenge Incarceration Program (CIP) includes programming in chemical dependency treatment; education; cognitive skills; restorative justice; physical training; military bearing, drill, and ceremony; work crew; and transition preparation. The second and third phases include intensive, close supervision in the community. After an in-depth evaluation in 2006, CIP was shown to

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