

STEELE COUNTY Times

Wednesday, August 25, 2021
 www.SteeleCountyTimes.com
 Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

CATCHING A FEW ZS



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Nestled right up next to her dairy cow and laying in the straw, 9-year-old Cali Nelson of Ellendale catches a nap in the dairy barn at the Steele County Fair Thursday afternoon. This year was Cali's first year in 4-H with the Straight River Stars. See Section B for complete fair coverage, including 4-H and Open Class results.

Elevator bankruptcy hits farmers' pocketbooks

BY DEB FLEMMING
 AND KAY FATE
 TIMES STAFF

When Pipeline Foods LLC filed bankruptcy in July, several area farmers found themselves entangled in a legal quagmire. Together, they face losing more than \$1.35 million.

Each had delivered contracted grain – and lots of it – to the Pipeline elevator in Hope in the months before the com-

pany filed for Chapter 11 protection from a bankruptcy court in Delaware. That landed them on the Top 20 list of creditors with the largest unsecured claims

According to court documents, Pipeline Holdings LLC lists creditors who have claims secured by property at nearly \$64 million; the total amount of nonpriority unsecured claims is nearly \$11 million. That puts the compa-

ny's total liabilities at \$74.73 million.

Its total assets – taking into account real property, equipment, cash, inventory and investments – are recorded as zero.

Initially, the bankruptcy judge agreed to allow the company to operate within a cash collateral budget and sell its grain inventories to pay employee wages and benefits and pay off secured creditors.

The Minnesota

Department of Agriculture, the state's primary regulator of grain storage facilities, objected and asked the court to require the firm to place income in a secure account to be overseen by the court.

On Friday, the bankruptcy court did just that – affording unsecured creditors an opportunity to recover some of their funds.

"If farmers get a penny out of this, I will

be shocked," said Kevin Motl, a farmer from Blooming Prairie. Court documents show that Pipeline Foods owes Motl a little more than \$250,000. Motl said the figure is closer to \$350,000.

"They have no idea how bad this is going to hurt us," Motl said.

Other area farmers standing to lose thousands and on the Top 20 list are Brant Hemingway of rural Ellendale, \$356,220; New Richland

Grain LLC, \$414,695; and Herbst Farms in Kasson, \$338,597.

Omnibus hearings have been scheduled for Sept. 22 and Oct. 26.

Typically, Chapter 11 debtors receive a moratorium on the payment of most of their general unsecured debts for the time between their bankruptcy filing and the implementation of a confirmed plan. In most cases, that's anywhere from six months to a year.



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Denise and Carl Wieman of Owatonna gear up to take off on the annual MS River Road Run Saturday morning in Lakeville. They have used their Honda Gold Wing motorcycle on the run for the past 15 years.

Wiemans top goal with MS River Run

BY RICK BUSSLER
 PUBLISHER

As Carl and Denise Wieman geared up Saturday morning for the annual MS River Road Run, they had already achieved a sense of accomplishment before they even took off on their motorcycle.

Just days before the run, the Owatonna couple received two \$500 donations, pushing them

over their personal goal of \$4,000 for this year and bringing them to more than \$83,000 over the past two decades.

"We've had \$4,000 as a goal for many years, but this is the first year that we have hit it," said Carl Wieman. He added they have hit \$5,000 within the past 10 years, but the donations have been lower in recent years.

On Saturday, the Wiemans and dozens of

other motorcyclists took off on the 36th annual River Road Run from Leo's South in Lakeville. The 242-mile route going through portions of central Minnesota was a little extra special for the Wiemans because they designed it with a friend nearly two years ago. There was no run in 2020 because of COVID-19.

Carl said the goal of designing the run was to have a scenic route

with no interstates and very few state roads. "We want to make this more of a leisurely ride and enjoyable for people," he said.

Not only do the Wiemans enjoy motorcycling, but they also have a passion for raising funds for multiple sclerosis, a disabling disease that took the life of Denise's niece, Lori Serbus, in 2004.

See WIEMANS on A13 ▶

Board member's nose broken in fair assault

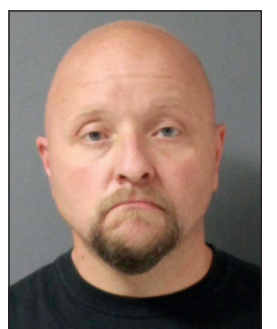
BY RICK BUSSLER
 PUBLISHER

A Fair Board member suffered a broken nose during an altercation Sunday night at the Steele County Fairgrounds in Owatonna.

The sheriff's office responded to a report of an assault involving Rick Ellingson around 8:22 p.m. at the intersection of Elm Avenue and Livestock Lane. Ellingson is a member of the Steele County Fair Board and serves as the sanitation superintendent during the fair. He is also a paramedic and part-time police officer, though he was not serving in those capacities at the time of the assault.

Paul Scott Seeman, 47, of Faribault, was charged Monday in Steele County District Court with felony third-degree assault and misdemeanor fifth-degree assault.

According to the criminal complaint, Ellingson reported he was controlling traffic when a Black Chevy Traverse approached his location. Ellingson



Paul Scott Seeman

asked Seeman to turn around because Livestock Lane was closed to the public. Seeman refused to turn around and instead exited the vehicle and became confrontational with Ellingson.

Ellingson stated Seeman spit on him and then, without warning, headbutted him, striking him in the nose with his head. The sheriff's deputy said Ellingson had a clear cut on the bridge of his nose and the area appeared to be swollen red.

Ellingson later told sheriff's deputies that his nose was, in fact, broken and partially dislocated.

After the assault, Seeman got into the vehicle and took off. See BOARD on A4 ▶

\$1.00 | Volume 130, No. 5



507-583-4431 | bptimes@frontiernet.net

INSIDE

Calendar.....	A6	History.....	A5	Public Safety.....	A4
Classifieds.....	A17	Opinions.....	A2	Sports.....	A10-A12
Community.....	A14	Owatonna School Page.....	A7	Steele County Fair.....	B1-B14
Faith.....	A15	Public Notices.....	A16		

AREA DEATHS

Arlene Bonnes, 98, Lansing
 Lisa Cochlin, 41, Blooming Prairie
 Carol Paulson, 89, Rochester
 Eugene Spindler, 89, Owatonna
 Patricia Vance, 60, Owatonna

Serving
 Blooming Prairie
 and Steele County
 since 1893