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LIKE A WAR ZONE

Alexandria couple lose their home in a tornado

By Celeste Edenloff
Alexandria Echo Press

Alexandria

Dustin Wiita had just finished putting his lawnmower in the garage. His wife, Desiree, who had gotten home from work a little later than normal, was outside playing with the couple's four young children – ages 8, 6, 2 1/2 and 5 1/2 months.

The Alexandria family who lives along South Darling Drive noticed that the clouds were starting to roll in.

"There was a little clearing in the sky where it was that greenish, blueish color," said Desiree.

It was 7:09 p.m. Thursday, May 12, when Dustin said he received a tornado warning alert on his phone. The family immediately went inside their home and headed for the basement to take shelter. They hung out under the stairwell in a storage space for what Desiree said felt like five minutes.

But in reality, it was mere seconds. And in those seconds, a tornado ripped through their house, leaving what Desiree calls "skylights" in just about every room. The roof was ripped off most of their home, the garage was flattened, windows were shattered and Dustin said he doesn't have to worry about putting away the clean and folded laundry that was waiting for him on the couch.

The couple, who will be celebrating their ninth wedding anniversary next month, said laughter is helping them get through this devastating time in their lives.

Hard to believe

When Dustin came out of the storage space in their basement and looked up the stairwell, all he saw was the sky and pieces of his house.

TORNADO: Page 16



Celeste Edenloff / Alexandria Echo Press

Looking through a broken window on the backside of a house owned by Dustin and Desiree Wiita of Alexandria, debris can be seen scattered around their living room and the roof is gone. A tornado hit their house along South Darling Drive shortly after 7 p.m. on May 12.

BRANDON-EVANVILLE SCHOOL

B-E names Glenetske as superintendent

By Travis Gulbrandson
Alexandria Echo Press

BRANDON-EVANVILLE — A new superintendent has been named for the Brandon-Evanville School District.

Current high school math teacher Louisa Glenetske was announced as the new superintendent for the district, taking over for outgoing superintendent Don Peschel, whose last day is June 30.



Glenetske

Glenetske's contract was approved at the district's regular school board meeting on Monday, May 16.

A 2000 Osakis graduate, Glenetske began her teaching career in 2004 in the Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa School District. She

taught there for four years before being hired as a math teacher for Brandon-Evanville.

"It is my honor and privilege to start my new position at Brandon-Evanville as the superintendent. ... I am excited for all of the changes that are happening in the district and am thrilled to be part of such a great team and community," Glenetske wrote in an email to the Echo Press. "There are many challenges and even more opportunities that lie ahead, and I look forward to working collaboratively with the staff and community to continue the positive growth I have seen in the district in the past 14 years."

GLENETSKE: Page 17

DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD

Roundabout near YMCA put on hold

By Celeste Edenloff
Alexandria Echo Press

DOUGLAS COUNTY — A roundabout that was scheduled to be built at the intersection of County Road 82 and County Road 45 at the entrance to the Alexandria YMCA (Karl Drive) has been put on hold.

At the Tuesday, May 17, Douglas County Board meeting, commissioners rejected the bids because they came in way over the engineer's estimate.



Erickson

Tim Erickson, Douglas County Public Works director, told commissioners, "The bids were not good for the YMCA roundabout."

He said the engineer's estimate was around \$2 million for the project, while the lowest bid was at \$3.45 million – 171.49% over the proposed amount. The high bid came in at \$3.87 million, which was 192.5% over the engineer's estimate.

Erickson recommended for the board to reject the bids and put the project on hold until next year or even the year after.

"Right now, we don't know when we will reschedule," Erickson said.

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What is it like to be a cop?

Police sergeant, ATCC law enforcement graduate share insights

Editors note: The following is the first in a two-part series featuring an Echo Press interview with Alexandria Police Sergeant Brian Kakach and 2022 Alexandria Technical and Community College law enforcement graduate Jack Anderson.

By Thalen Zimmerman
Alexandria Echo Press

ALEXANDRIA — An Alexandria police sergeant and a law enforcement graduate discussed the training and responsibilities of police officers on Friday, May 6, for the Echo Press "Talk of the Town" podcast.

Jack Anderson recently graduated from Alexandria Technical and Community College's law enforcement



Jack Anderson, left, and Brian Kakach discussed training, responsibilities and political talking points with the Echo Press for the Talk of the Town podcast on May 6.

Thalen Zimmerman / Alexandria Echo Press

"We feel like we're a jack of all trades but a master of none."

BRIAN KAKACH

program. He grew up living in Moorhead until eighth grade and finished his high school education in Perham. Anderson chose to do his

police training at Alexandria College for a variety of reasons.

COP: Page 6

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