



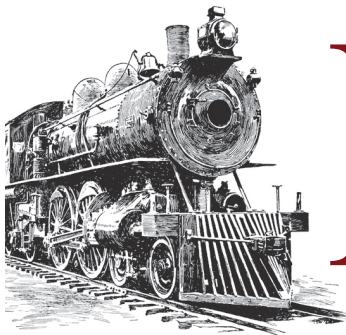
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OPENER**
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TRACY AREA HEADLIGHT HERALD

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OUR 143RD YEAR - NO. 37

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WORKERS LAST THURSDAY BRING UP A PONTIAC SPORTS CAR THAT HAD BEEN SITTING AT THE BOTTOM OF LAKE SARAH FOR AT LEAST 19 YEARS. THE CAR WAS BLANKETED IN ZEBRA MUSSELS AND ITS WINDOWS WERE GONE. PHOTOS / PER PETERSON

MYSTERY AT LAKE SARAH

Sports car with 2003 tabs recovered from bottom of lake

BY PER PETERSON
EDITOR

Surrounded by slowly developing and worrisome white caps, a group of workers methodically but surely pulled a sports car with tabs from the bottom of Lake Sarah on Thursday.

The process, which took more than three hours to complete, ended in front of a small crowd gathered at Sundquist Park on the west side of the popular recreational and fishing lake when the vehicle, submerged in the lake for at least 19 years, was pulled onto a flatbed.

There was no evidence of a body found in the car, and foul play is not suspected, said Murray County Chief Deputy Sheriff Heath Landsman.

"We're going to try and figure out who the owner is; we'll have our investigative team go through it and confirm that there



MURRAY COUNTY CHIEF DEPUTY SHERIFF HEATH LANDSMAN holds the license plate recovered from a Pontiac car pulled from Lake Sarah last Thursday. Landsman said, "After that, we'll try to figure out who the owner is. Somebody will have to answer for why this car was in the lake." Since the investigation into the

owner of the car is ongoing, the Murray County Sheriff's Department is not releasing any information. Landsman said there will likely be criminal charges against the owner.

City Line Towing out of Willmar was commissioned to retrieve the car and were assisted by Pulver Towing and the Murray County Sheriff's Department.

The white Pontiac, license plate EBE 564, was covered in at least 19 years of mud and silt and caked in another few years' worth of zebra mussels.

The Murray County Sheriff's Office was contacted about the car — discovered by local anglers — on Aug. 29, and divers were sent down the next day to investigate, ensure the car was unoccupied and retrieve identifiable information and a license plate.

MYSTERY
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\$495K available for potential hangar project

BY PER PETERSON
EDITOR

The Tracy City Council heard some good news at its recent budget study session — news that could pave the way for new hangars at the Tracy Municipal Airport.

Tracy City Administrator Erik Hansen told the council that the infrastructure bill passed this summer by Congress includes money for airports; the City of Tracy is in line for up to \$495,000 in non-restricted funds.

"Basically, a half a million dollars has fallen into our lap," Hansen said. "It's kind of a big deal. Sometimes you get lucky."

Hansen provided the council three scenarios for new hangars and broke down the costs of each, depending on how many hangars that would be built — four, six or eight.

Four hangars would cost roughly \$999,000, with the City putting up \$160,450. Other monies would come from a MnDOT grant of \$234,750, the aforementioned \$495,000 FAA grant and a hangar loan of \$108,000.

"We're going to have to put some cash up front in any of these scenarios," said Hansen. "We have to have cash to match some of these grants."

Hansen said if the City bumps the rent up to \$150/month for the new hangars, that would bring in \$7,200 per year. That would more than pay for the annual hangar loan payment (\$5,440). Hansen based the \$150 rent figure on what other cities are charging for their new hangars. The City is currently charging \$80 per month for use of the old hangars.

Six new hangars would cost \$1,191,200 (\$193,700 from the City), and eight hangars would cost \$1,326,600 (\$220,350 from the City). Those two scenarios would result in a cash gap for the City of \$175,800 and \$414,400, for six and eight hangars, respectively. That's the money that the City couldn't afford to cash flow.

"The question is, 'How do you fill that gap?'" Hansen said. "You can borrow more money in the hangar loan. 'I kind of built this under the assumption that we don't want to borrow anymore money, because if we borrow more money it would have to come from the General Fund,

PROJECT
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Council begrudgingly OKs pay app for Phase 3A-2 work

BY PER PETERSON
EDITOR

The question of can the City avoid paying the construction company responsible for unsatisfactory Phase 3A-2 street work this summer was answered with one word at Monday's Tracy City Council meeting: No.

"The contract says that we are contracting for a certain amount of work ... we pay them and they do that work," Tracy City Administrator Erik Hansen said. "If they do a job that we're not satisfied with, our remedy is to go to them and say, 'Fix it and do it right.' We can make them give us the work that's required in the contract, but we cannot pay them less because we don't like the work that they do."

Earlier this month, the council approved a resolution on a 5-2 vote to delay final completion of the project, which had a Sept. 1, 2022, deadline. That means the council can set a new completion date, which R&G Construction will have

COUNCIL
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MEMBERS OF THE TRACY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH congregation recently gathered for a group photo in advance of the church's 150th anniversary celebration. Church members believe this is the first congregation photo taken since 1912. Photo / Per Peterson

TUMC GOING STRONG AT 150

BY PER PETERSON
EDITOR

During a time when many churches in small towns are seeing their congregations shrink to the point where they're unable to keep the doors open, Tracy's United Methodist Church is staying vibrant. And on Sunday, the church will celebrate its 150th anniversary.

"What I find interesting is the longevity of the Methodist faith here," said Miron Carney, who began his duties as pastor of the church

in August 2021. "We have an anomaly. Our attendance and engagement and giving has gone up about 30% since 2019 — pre-COVID. We're very fortunate that, for whatever reason, our congregation has really sprung back in the last 12 months."

Carney is a self-described salesman and has done everything he can to build numbers at the TUMC
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What is the future of Tracy's senior programming?

BY PER PETERSON
EDITOR

Among the ideas shared at a recent budget study session to come up with funding to help pay for Capital Improvement Projects as a \$94,000 deficit looms was a reshuffling of senior programming.

Ideas bounced off the council included moving senior activities such as cards to the back room of the Plaid Moose (the building that was once home to the Multi-Purpose Center). Rent would be the same as it is at the Eagles Club (\$300 per month), but the City wouldn't have to pay part-time workers to be on-site for senior activities since Plaid Moose employees will be in the building — the Eagles Club isn't open during the day.

Hansen estimates the City could save about \$20,000 a year.

Tracy Community Development Director Jeff Carpenter said there is plenty of room in the back room of the Plaid Moose.

The other idea would be to expand

PROGRAMMING
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