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Citizen's dispute brought before Motley Council

By ZACH HACKER
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A Motley man came before the City Council Monday, to dispute a citation he received regarding a city ordinance violation.

Konrad Alexander, who owns four lots — three of which are directly on Highway 10 — received the \$150 citation from Motley Police Chief Jason Borash on Sept. 7. It was issued due to what Borash said were violations of public nuisance ordinances affecting peace and public safety, as well as parking and storage. The two separate fines were \$75 each.

“Under Motley Ordinance 92-18, paragraph ‘P,’ as in, ‘Paul:’ Public nuisance affecting peace and safety, says ‘any accumulations in the open of discarded or disused machinery, also appliances, automobile bodies or other materials in a matter conducive to the harboring of rats, mice, snakes or vermin or the rank of growth of vegetation among the items so accumulated or in the matter creating fire, health or safety hazards from accumulation,’” Borash read.



(9-19-21 Alexander Property)

Staff photo by Zach Hacker

Motley City Councilman Steve Johnson addresses Konrad Alexander during a discussion, Monday, at Motley City Hall.

“You see that at my place?” Alexander asked.

“I do,” Borash said. The citations were issued due to Alexander, who owns a trucking business out of his home, having multiple tractors on his property, some of which are considered “discarded or disused.” Borash said he also had “piles of scrap iron” in his yard.

Citations were initially issued to Alexander on April 1, giving him 21 days to clean up the property. He received an extension until Aug. 15 from the Council, however, after requesting more time at the April Council meeting. At that time, he said items had accumu-

lated on his property and he was unable to get them cleaned up, in part, because he was undergoing treatment for throat cancer.

Alexander argued Monday, that the tractors and scrap iron were inventory for his business. He also said the lot on which his house sits is the only one zoned for residential use. He said the remainder of his property was zoned for dual purposes, residential or commercial.

According to Morrison County’s Beacon GIS mapping site, all four lots are “residential.” Borash said that was therefore the tax base that Alexander pays on the prop-

(Continued on Page 3A)

Randall sees potential for 23 new homes in city

By ZACH HACKER
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Discussions on a possible new housing development in Randall continued, Wednesday.

Dave Reese from Widseth Smith Nolting and Associates (Widseth) presented to the Randall City Council a proposed layout for the Brummer Plat, a 25.89-acre area of land owned by the city north and west of the existing Brummer Addition residential development. The first neighborhood was completed in 2005 and included 16 homes.

The new development, as proposed by Reese, would include 15 new single-family residential units and two multi-family units — most likely four-plexes. After nearly an hour of discussion, the

Council voted unanimously to have Widseth move forward on calculating infrastructure costs for the development. At the same time, City Manager Matt Pantzke said he would check with financial consulting firm David Drown Associates to see if the development would be eligible for tax increment financing (TIF) funding.

“I think it definitely would fill a void and this is, I think, a great starting point,” Pantzke said. “We at least have a general idea of what this is capable of.”

The size of the single-family lots would range from 13,685 to 32,680 square feet. The four-plex lots would be 54,820 square feet and 57,410 square feet, respectively.

Reese said the initial goal was to make a plan with lots ranging

(Continued on Page 2A)

First county COVID-19 death reported since June

By ZACH HACKER
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Morrison County reported its first death from COVID-19 in three months, Thursday.

It was the 63rd overall death in Morrison County, and the first since the week of June 11 - 17.

The report coincided with a big

spike locally; the largest one-week rise since cases started increasing again in early July. In all, Morrison County added 89 cases between Sept. 10 - 16, bringing it to 4,657 since the first was reported in April 2020. There were an average of 13 new cases reported locally, compared to 8.5 the week of Sept. 3 - 9.

(Continued on Page 2A)



(091921-LFArts&CraftsFair21) Staff photos by Sheila Bergren
Sunshine and smiles at the Little Falls Arts & Crafts Fair
 Eager to shop, have fun with friends and family and get inspired by new creative ideas, thousands of people made it to the Little Falls Arts and Crafts Fair and to the Antiques & Collectibles Show, Sept. 11-12. Pictured above left, Jana Lamb of Pine River, left, holding her 5-month-old daughter, Lianna, visited the fair with her adult daughter, Cheyenne Swenson of Pine River, who was front-carrying her own daughter, Vivienne, 4 months old, to hunt for fun snowmen decorations. Above center several friends from Long Prairie gathered in matching shirts to enjoy some shopping, good food and refreshing drinks (from left): Debbie Hudalla, Nyla Kraemer, Linda Mentele and Roxie Ostendorf. Above right, Maci Bergren, 12, of Little Falls had her hair done by one of the vendors who sold magic messy hair bun makers. Left, a henna tattoo artist with Henna Tattoos by Palbasha created a henna tattoo on the hand of Mahrya Weigelt, 5, daughter of Brandi Weigelt of Nisswa. Right, Brenda Fivecoats of Brainerd took her mother, Pauline Fivecoats, 86, of Brainerd for a stroll through the Antiques & Collectibles Show. It was the first time the mother-daughter duo visited the fair and is something they said they just might have to return to again.




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Randall sees potential for homes

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from 12,000 - 14,000 square feet, though that didn't work with the topography of the location. The Council had previously stated it wanted the lots to be bigger than the 10,000 square feet of the original addition. The existing lots are also 70 - 80 feet wide. Single-family residential units in the new development would have a width of around 100 feet.

"Personally, I wouldn't like to see them go any smaller than what is here," said Council Member Mary Venske.

Along with those usable lots, there also will possibly be six not suitable for building available for purchase. Those are directly behind the homes on the west side of Boulder Place, and the homeowners in that area would likely have exclusive rights to purchase the extra land.

In terms of the multi-family four-plexes, Pantzke said one idea was to use them as rentals for senior citizens.

"We talked about some of the wants and needs, and there is a definite want for rental homes; rental properties for seniors or what have you," he said. "I have had some dialogue with a couple developers that would be interested in potentially building a unit like this that could accommodate some of the senior citizens that would like to, maybe, get rid of their own home and rent a place."

Reese said the city could also explore extending the right of way to the west so there could be access to the multi-family dwellings from the west. That could be done by incorporating a park, and a road would be the only infrastructure needed in that area.

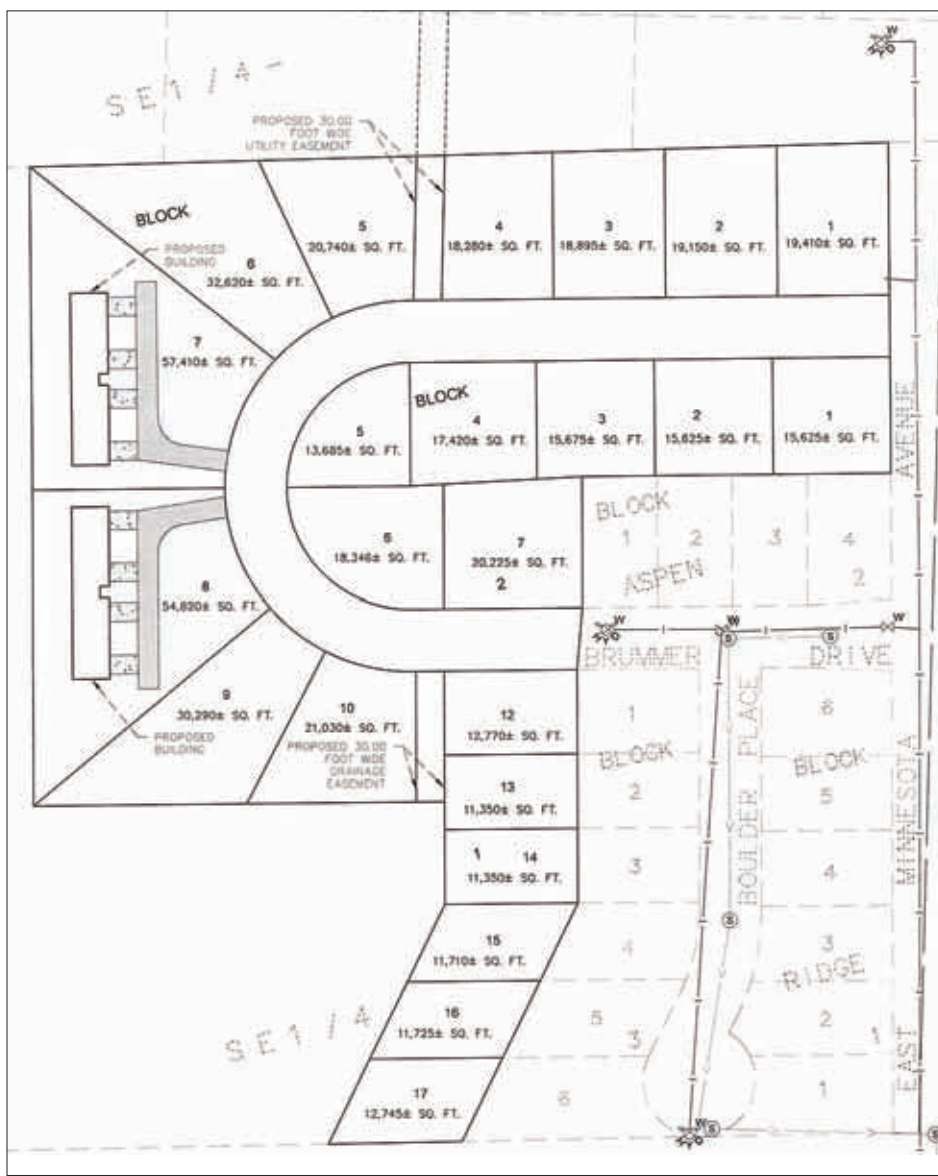
Pantzke said there is about 600 feet of available space.

"It would be nice to keep that in the back of our heads if that does go to senior living," Venske said. "Then they have a park or garden; something they could rent or a some place to sit."

Preliminary estimates on infrastructure, which Reese described as "rough costs," would be about \$100 per lineal foot for each sewer, water and road. Storm sewer would likely be more than that if the Council opted for the lots to feature curb and gutter, rather than rural roads with ditches.

Reese estimated a total cost of about \$360,000 for infrastructure if the city went with a rural road setup, and about \$500,000 - \$600,000 for curb and gutter.

"As soon as you add curb and gutter which, don't get me wrong, is a clean look for a neighborhood, but as soon as you put in curb



Graphic by Widseth Smith Nolting

A map provided by Widseth Smith Nolting shows a proposed layout to add 15 new single-family residential units and two multi-family units to the Brummer Addition on the north side of Randall.

and gutter, you're directing all the drainage toward the low spot," Reese said. "You have to deal with all of that with piping and you have catch basin inlets, so you're carrying all the runoff from the development, basically, that enters the roadway through a pipe and you have to have a place to put that at the outlet."

Mayor Dan Noss asked if having curb and gutter with a sidewalk would cut into the size of the lots. Reese said that would not necessarily be the case.

There is a 66-foot wide road easement drawn into the plan. A street with parking available on one side would be about 32 feet wide — two 12-foot driving lanes and eight feet for parking. If the city were to allow parking on both sides, it would be about 40 feet wide. Even in that scenario, there would be about 13 feet remaining on each side.

Reese said curb and gutter with a sidewalk is usually about 10 feet, while a ditch would be a little wider than that.

"That kind of gives them a little more appeal with a bigger yard with the curb and gutter," said Council Member Ernie Wright. "But, of course, you're at another \$150,000 - \$200,000." "Initially I'd love to see

sidewalks and curb and gutter there," Noss said. "But you always go for the big part, but reality brings you back to where you can afford it."

Wright pointed out, however, that the cost would be

"Even if we had 23 new living locations in town, for a town this size, that's a big increase."

— Mayor Dan Noss

incorporated into the selling price to the developer. It would ultimately be a potential developer who would be trying to

recoup its money, regardless of whether or not curb and gutter were included.

Reese said Widseth would recommend the city goes with curb and gutter, rather than rural ditches.

"In our opinion, curb and gutter would give the city much more control over the runoff situation, less risk," Reese said. "To go with a ditch in this situation, with the grades that you have, it's going to be more risk associated with erosion and the velocity of that water coming down that hill, handling it and getting it to where you want it to go."

Pantzke added that developers would probably be interested in smaller lots to maximize profits. After speaking with the city attorney, he said they could create a covenant in a contract that required the developer to stick to the lot sizes listed on Widseth's proposal.

"The thing to think about

is, obviously the more dense you make the development, the easier it is to spread the cost of all the infrastructure across," Reese said. "You increase the number of lots, your per-lot cost for sewer, water, road, storm sewer, is driven down. So, you're trying to strike the balance of what's affordable and getting the most lots that you can feasibly obtain."

Pantzke said he wanted to consult with David Drown Associates to find the feasibility of creating a TIF district. That way, he said any developer would be aware it had that money with which to work at the outset of the project — particularly as it relates to infrastructure.

He felt there would be several developers in the area who might be interested in the project, and felt the preliminary plans were great.

"I think knowing what some firm numbers are on infrastructure and knowing TIF eligibility would also be key in determining if this is realistic, or if the plots are going to be priced out of the market," Pantzke said.

Reese also recommended that city officials speak with local realtors to get a feel for marketability. He said they would be able to tell the city what size lots are trending, along with multiple- or single-family units.

"Even if we had 23 new living locations in town, for a town this size, that's a big increase," Noss said.

First county COVID death since June

(Continued from Page 1A)

Despite the rise, Morrison County saw a drop in its test positivity rate, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Locally, 6.28% of the people tested over the past week came back positive. That number sat at 8.09% the week before.

The county also saw a rise in hospitalizations last week, with four. That followed a week in which there weren't any. As of Thursday, there were 129 active cases in Morrison County, with an active case rate of 38.9 per 10,000 residents.

The most infections were seen in residents with Little Falls ZIP codes. There were 57. As of Thursday, Morrison County Public Health reported 24 Pierz residents with active infections along with 14 from Royalton and nine from Cushing. Randall saw the largest drop in active cases, going from 10 on Sept. 9 to four one week later.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) removed one congregate living facility in Morrison County from its list of those with known infections. Pierz Villa and St. Otto's Care Center in Little Falls still are reporting infections, but that is one fewer location than what was reported on Sept. 9.

Vaccines also continued to slow in Morrison County.

A total of 13,742 local residents had received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccination, as of Sept. 14. That is 78 more than what was reported on Sept. 7, a one-week dropoff of 10. So far, 50.8% of Morrison County adults had received at least one shot.

The county remains one of the lowest in the state in

terms of adult vaccination rate, according to MDH. Only six counties — Clearwater, Wadena, Todd, Pine, Kanabec and Mille Lacs — have lower percentages than Morrison County, which still is listed as having high community spread by the CDC.

Swift County — which has an adult vaccination rate of 60.8% — is the only one among Minnesota's 87 counties to be listed as having moderate spread.

The numbers continued to rise throughout the state between Sept. 10 - 17.

There were 14,519 new cases reported in Minnesota last week, an increase of 3,348 over the week of Sept. 3 - 9. That is an average daily rise in 2,074 cases, 478 more than the week prior.

Deaths also climbed, with MDH reporting 96 COVID-19 deaths from Sept. 10 - 16. That is nearly three times the 35 new deaths reported the week before. In all, 7,970 Minnesotans have died from COVID-19 since the outset of the pandemic.

About 3.365 million people statewide have received at least one dose of the vaccine, according to MDH. That accounts for 75.7% of the adult population, which is on par with the 76% vaccination rate reported nationwide by the CDC.

On a national scale, numbers did decline a little bit during the week of Sept. 9 - 15.

The CDC reported 902,471 new cases and 10,140 deaths during that timeframe. Those were both down from 1.245 million and 13,791, respectively, between Sept. 2 - 8.

A total of more than 41.426 million infections have been recorded in the United States since the beginning of the pandemic. There have been 662,620 deaths.

Cushing man injured in UTV vs. SUV accident

By ZACH HACKER
Staff Writer

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A Cushing man was taken to the hospital, Sept. 9, after he was involved in a two-vehicle crash.

According to the Morrison County Sheriff's Office, Ronald Headley, 70, Cushing, was injured in the crash that occurred at about 6:57 p.m., Sept. 9, on 330th Street, about eight miles northeast of Cushing.

The report states that Headley was traveling west on 330th Street in a Polaris Ranger side-by-side UTV. Brandon Johnson, 29, Cushing, was driving behind Headley in a Chevrolet

Tahoe SUV.

"Headley attempted to make a left turn into his driveway and was rear-ended by Johnson," according to the Sheriff's Office. "Headley's UTV was pushed into the ditch and rolled."

Headley was transported to St. Joseph's Hospital by Mayo Clinic Ambulance with undisclosed injuries. Johnson was not injured in the crash.

The Motley Police Department, Scandia Valley Fire Department, Scandia Valley First Response Team and Mayo Clinic Ambulance assisted the Morrison County Sheriff's Office.

Record requests winter event information

The Morrison County Record will publish a Winter Visitors Guide. It will be distributed with the Nov. 14 edition of the paper.

The Record news staff is seeking help in listing Morrison County and surrounding area events open to the general public that are being planned between Nov. 15 and May 31, 2022. Information must be received no later than Friday, Oct. 15, to be included in the publication.

Anyone with information should send the name of the event, date, time, location, a short paragraph explaining it and contact information in case there are questions, to: Morrison County Record, 216 SE First Street, Little Falls, MN 56345, Attn: Terry. Events may also be emailed to terry.lehrke@apgecm.com. Put "Winter Visitors Guide" in the subject line.

Randall City Council Briefs

In other business Wednesday, the Randall City Council:

- Approved a preliminary 2021 tax levy, collectible in 2022, of \$172,694. That is a 5% increase over 2020's amount of \$164,471, though it is customary for the Council to set the preliminary levy at a 5% increase. The amount can decrease before the final levy is approved in December, but it cannot be raised;
- Heard an update on potential grant funding for upcoming capital improvement projects from Dave Reese of Widseth Smith Nolting and Associates;
- Approved a change to

the city's ordinance on privacy fences to allow them to be 6 feet tall, rather than the previous maximum height of 4 feet tall;

- Approved a renewal of the law enforcement contract with the Morrison County Sheriff's Office for 2022;
- Moved the October City Council meeting to Tuesday, Oct. 19, due to a scheduling conflict;
- Heard a report from City Manager Matt Pantzke that, after a post on Facebook, the city had sold 57 old street signs for \$10 each;
- Was informed by Pantzke that the city's expenditures from its electrical fund

are higher than what had been budgeted. Revenues are on par with what was anticipated. Pantzke said this could have been off-set by raising prices, but the city opted not to do so.

Strong years for both the Randall Municipal Liquor Store and in the gas fund will help allow the city to absorb the extra expenses;

- Was informed that City Maintenance Supervisor Patrick Kalis got the new reclosers recently purchased by the Council installed; and
- Discussed the possibility of setting up a meeting

This week's government meetings

Little Falls School Board meets at 5 p.m. Monday, Sept. 20, in the Little Falls Community Middle School media center.

The Little Falls City Council meets at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 21, at City Hall. A work session with the public forum begins at 6:30 p.m.

The Morrison County Board meets at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 21, in the Board Room at the County Government Center in Little Falls.

The Upsala School Board meets at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 22, in the high school library.

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Citizen's dispute in Motley

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erty. "No I don't," Alexander said. "You talk to my tax lady. I pay the highest taxes in Motley." City Clerk/Treasurer Curt Bryniarski affirmed that the lots were zoned residential. Alexander insisted it has been dual use for 20 years. He said he is unable to homestead three of the lots, and therefore cannot get a tax credit for them. Council Member Pat O'Regan said just because something is zoned for dual use, doesn't mean that's what the county assesses as its current use. The use classification is what determines the taxes that are paid.

"I don't know about that, but I think that's where the confusion is coming in," O'Regan said "It's two different things. What the county designates it as being used as is one thing, what we've zoned it as is something otherwise. Zoning is what we're permitting to be in there based on the zoning and the zoning district."

Council Member Steve Johnson recommended to Alexander that he should go before the Morrison County Planning and Zoning Board. He said that would be a good place to start in order to get the zoning issue worked out.

Ultimately, however, Borash said it didn't matter. The ordinance regarding a public nuisance affecting peace and safety applies to all property, regardless of how it is zoned. As such, Alexander's property was still in violation.

Borash presented Johnson, O'Regan and acting Mayor Amy Hutchison —

Mayor Al Yoder and Council Member Jace Carlson were absent — with photos of the property taken on both April 1 and Sept. 7.

"It's just funny that I've been here for 38 years, been paying taxes to this place, and now, all of a sudden, this is an issue," Alexander said.

Borash said when they spoke in April, Alexander "agreed it was a mess" and said he would get it cleaned up after being given the extension. He added that he waited until three weeks after the extended deadline to

"As far as arguing back and forth, the pictures — they show it. It's just black and white."

— Steve Johnson

issue a citation. Alexander said he had moved "a whole bunch of stuff." Borash told him that may be the case, but the "big pile" of scrap iron and two particular tractors alongside the house were problems that had not been addressed, despite being discussed.

"Look, Konrad, 50 years ago it was a farming community and there were farms inside city limits," Borash said.

"It's still a farming community," Alexander said.

"It's not 50 years ago, anymore," Borash replied. "Things have changed. Things are more urbanized."

Alexander said he did try to make it look nice, and had even installed a fence on his property. Regarding the issues at hand, however, he said he is gone a lot because he is driving truck. It also was difficult for him to get outside and work because of his cancer and treatments for it.

"You know, I don't want to lose a friend over this," Johnson said. "I wanted to excuse myself from this because of friendship,

but when it happened this spring, we gave you all summer to do that. There was all kinds of people here to help. I can't walk very good so I can't do it, but there was many people to help.

"As far as arguing back and forth, the pictures — they show it. It's just black and white," Johnson continued. "Like I said, I don't want to lose a friend, but we run a city, and we want to run it the best that we can."

After looking at the photos Borash had presented to the Council, Alexander pointed out several of the tractors that were still operable and used regularly. Borash asked about the two alongside the house that had been mentioned earlier, and Alexander said he planned to get them into the shop for restoration over the winter.

"I'm happy to come by and show you what I'm talking about; what I consider a nuisance according to city ordinances," Borash said. "We'll go through it piece by piece, if you'd like."

He added that the two small tractors alongside the house have been in the same place as far back as 2016.

"They're not in [anybody's] way," Alexander said. "I don't understand that. You pay taxes — I just figured out my taxes — I paid \$93,000 to the city alone in 38 years. That's quite a chunk of change for one person. I should just level the place and make a dirt lot out of it and you can collect the taxes on that."

After about 20 minutes of discussion, Johnson made a motion to uphold one of the citations. The other will be dismissed on the condition that the aforementioned two small tractors and scrap iron are removed by Sept. 27.

"Believe me, I understand your business," Johnson said. "It's gotta look good for everybody involved. Not just one party."



(091921-PzFD)

Staff photo by Terry Lehrke

Pierz Fire Department honors fallen firefighters on 9/11 anniversary

On Saturday, Sept. 11, 2021, the 20-year anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist airplane attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York, N.Y., where many firefighters lost their lives trying to rescue those inside and outside the towers when they fell, the Pierz Fire Department put out this display to honor those fallen heroes and the others who died that day.

Free virtual event aims to work to end deaths by suicide among veterans

The most recent data from the National Veterans Suicide Prevention's annual report shows the total number of deaths by suicide among veterans remains at very high levels. After reaching an all-time high in 2017, the numbers declined in 2018 and 2019. Despite that, 6,261 veterans still died of suicide in 2019.

"Just as suicide has no single cause, no one strategy can end veteran suicide," writes the Veterans Affairs Department.

That's why Crow Wing Energized is giving veterans a platform to speak to the community. They will be hosting a free, virtual event so veterans can share their experiences to help people better understand their experiences and showcase ways people can help.

The theme of the event is "To end suicide rates among veterans, we must work together."

Speakers include Erik Flowers, Marty Halverson, Connie Herman and Jim

Newgord, who are all veterans. There will be a showing of a short video titled 15 Things Veterans Want You to Know, followed by a panel discussion. Join in the conversation to make a difference.

The event is online via Zoom Monday, Sept. 20, from 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. While there is no cost, registration is required.

Register online at <https://crowingenergized.org/events>.

SWCD begins spot buffer checks

Courtesy of the Morrison County Soil and Water Conservation District

Minnesota's Buffer Law requires perennial vegetation of up to 50 feet along lakes, rivers and streams and up to 16.5 feet along Public Ditches.

Vegetated buffers help to filter out phosphorous, nitrogen and sediment from entering Minnesota waters.

Buffers are critical in maintaining clean water, critical aquatic habitat and stabilizing the shoreline.

The Morrison Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is required to do random spot checks to ensure landowners are in compliance with the Buffer Law. These spot checks will be conducted starting this September and continue into October. If the spot check

cannot be conducted from a public road, the landowner will be contacted for permission for the SWCD to access and inspect the buffer area.

If the buffer is not compliant, the SWCD will work with the landowner to get the parcel into conformity.

Those with questions regarding the Buffer Law, can contact the Morrison SWCD at (320) 631-3551

Motley City Council Briefs

In other business Monday, the Motley City Council:

- Approved a renewal for membership in the Minnesota Mayors Association. Membership dues are \$30 per year;
- Approved a renewal for membership in the League of Minnesota Cities. Membership dues are \$900 per year;
- Heard a presentation from Sherry Frisk from the Motley Lions Club to hold a Christmas in Motley event, Dec. 4;
- Approved a reimbursement of \$53,167.52 from the Emergency Management Assistance Compact

for sending two firefighters to Oregon to assist with the Slater Fire in October 2020;

- Approved a Peace Officers Standards and Trainings (POST) mandated policy update for official misconduct;
- Approved a new police for the Motley Police Department for use of the opioid overdose medication, Narcan;
- Terminated the contract of part-time officer Josh Pesta, who had remained in that position until a full-time replacement could be found after he resigned earlier this year;
- Approved a property abatement request from

Police Chief Jason Borash for city officials to clean up a property within the city that was in violation of city ordinance at the owner's expense; and

- Approved a resolution to set the preliminary 2021 tax levy, collectible in 2022, at \$407,994, for both Morrison and Cass counties. The levy can be decreased before it is finalized in December, but not raised from the preliminary amount.

The next meeting of the Motley City Council is at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 11, at Motley City Hall.



Submitted photo

LF Lions support Habitat for Humanity

The Little Falls Lions Club recently donated \$1,000 to Habitat for Humanity of Morrison County for the next house to be built in Little Falls. On hand for the presentation are (from left): Lion Don Feige; Habitat for Humanity of Morrison County Executive Director Kathy Lange; and Habitat Financial Adviser and Lion, Mel Eutenauer.

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Kern participating in statewide corrections initiative

By ZACH HACKER
Staff Writer
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Morrison County is on the front lines of how community corrections might be funded throughout the state in the near future.

Tuesday, Morrison County Community Corrections Director Nicole Kern told the Board of Commissioners that the Justice Reinvestment Initiative is coming to Minnesota. Spearheaded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance — part of the U.S. Department of Justice — the initiative is a data-driven process to improve public safety by helping jurisdictions make more efficient use of criminal justice resources.

The Justice Reinvestment Initiative has already worked with 15 - 20 states, according to Kern, and is currently assisting six more, including Minnesota. Morrison County was selected to be one of four Community Corrections Act (CCA) counties to participate in the study. Kern is one of five community corrections directors who are on the state's Justice Reinvestment team.

"They look at, where can we save money on dealing with offenders?" Kern said. "In typical states like Wisconsin, that involves reducing prison population, because they are the opposite of us. We're say,

"What I do know is that Morrison County is doing well for what we have funding-wise. We're offering great programs."

— Nicole Kern

75% - 25% community; they are the opposite. They went into Wisconsin and reduced the prison population and moved that prison funding out to community supervision."

She said studies have shown that it is better for taxpayers if offenders who are not an imminent danger to public safety to remain in the community. This is because they can get and maintain jobs, contribute to the local economy and pay taxes.

Minnesota is different from other states, however, in that it does not have a high prison population. According to the Minnesota Department of Corrections, in 2016, approximately 110,837 offenders were on supervised release, probation or parole compared to 9,559 who were incarcerated in state prisons.

The initiative, in coming to Minnesota, she said is instead focusing on how a better funding model can be achieved within the state.

"For the last 10-plus years, anyone who's been on the Board has heard Community Corrections in the state of Minnesota is severely underfunded compared to

the Department of Corrections, which has seen biennial increases in their budget," Kern said. "One of the reasons for that is, Community Corrections is under the Department of Corrections budget line. We don't have an independent budget."

In Minnesota, there are some counties — Morrison County included — that have entered the (CCA), which was passed by the state legislature in 1973. In these jurisdictions, funding for community supervision is provided by state subsidies and county tax dollars. All offenders except those on intensive supervised release can be supervised locally.

Other counties use county probation offices (CPO) that supervise juvenile offenders and adults guilty of misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors. The Department of Corrections (DOC) is responsible for the supervision of felons from these counties.

"They're looking at, what do each of the delivery systems do differently?" Kern said. "What can we take from them that are really great things and what can we show them that maybe they don't need to be wasting money on?"

As part of the initiative, four CCA counties, four CPO counties and four DOC counties will be examined. The Justice Reinvestment Initiative representatives

will look at crime numbers, the amount of people in community supervision, caseload sizes and what the organizations are doing to help offenders turn their lives around. They are also conducting interviews with community corrections directors and staff, community providers and offenders on probation.

Following the study, they'll put a final report together offering suggestions on how funding and resources can be better allocated to help improve community supervision and reduce recidivism. Kern said this will also look at how funding can be provided in a way that ensures someone being supervised in a CCA county, like Morrison, has the same opportunities for services as someone in a DOC or CPO county.

"The outcome that we are hoping for is that corrections gets a pot of money," she said. "With that pot of money, counties decide what kind of probation supervision they want. Morrison County would get this chunk of money and, hopefully, you'd say 'Here you go, Nicole. What do we need? How do we best serve our

clients with this money?"

Right now, she said the state pays for felony supervision along with that for targeted misdemeanors. It does not, however, pay for misdemeanor DWIs or juvenile supervision.

The Minnesota state legislature, which enacted the Justice Reinvestment Initiative within the state, gave a December deadline for the final report.

"Our existing funding is guaranteed through the biennium, but this report will direct if funding is changed," Kern said. "Which sounds scary, but this was done in the 90s, and that's where the CCA model funding came in."

Commissioner Greg Blaine asked if the state's funding formula was set up so that a certain amount of dollars go to particular counties, or if all CCA counties get the same amount.

Kern said the funding formula was developed in the "70s or 80s." It looks at property tax values, net capacity, how much the county can invest and how many people are in the county among a certain age group.

"What I do know is that, Morrison County is doing well for what we have funding-wise," Kern said. "We're offering great programs. Our Think for a Change is free to people who meet our criteria. I don't mean financially. If they're at a certain risk to re-offend, we put them in the program. It doesn't matter, financially."

"I know we're staying on top of our cases and we're able to manage our cases right now," she continued. "I ran our numbers from 2019 until today. We fluctuate about 50 - 80 offenders each year, but it's manageable where it's at right now."

Commissioner Jeffrey Jelinski asked if it would be easier to put each of the state's 87 counties under one umbrella in how supervision is handled. Kern said that has been discussed, but then counties are not able to choose deliveries that work for them and are instead having them dictated by the state.

She added that 70% of all adult offenders in the state are supervised by CCA counties. This is despite the fact that CCA funding has remained the same for 10 years while DOC and CPO money has increased.

"We're hoping that the easiest answer is a single funding formula, or one formula for all counties and then they can decide how they do things," Kern said. "Then there will be minimum supervision standards or basic services that need to be provided."

Residents invited to event about access to local, high-speed internet

Everyone relies on the internet for school, business, government, recreation, healthcare, and more. This became even more evident over the last year with students in distance-learning and companies, large and small, that shifted their employees to working remotely — retirees even scheduled Zoom telemedicine appointments for the first time. If internet connections weren't reliable 24/7, residents and businesses scrambled to find

"We want residents in our five-county region to bring their stories about internet access, frustrations and ideas to our broadband event."

— Cheryl Lee Hills

Those who live or work in Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd or Wadena counties, and whose area lacks internet access or does not have the high-speed internet needed to succeed, are invited to discuss these issues and more.

Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) is holding a virtual Zoom event about local broadband access Thursday, Sept. 30, from 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Residents may also attend in person at one of five locations. The purpose of the event is to get organized as a region to secure federal funding for local, high-speed internet. All who live or work in the five-county area are invited.

"We want residents in our five-county region to bring their stories about internet access, frustrations and ideas to our broad-

band event," said Cheryl Lee Hills, executive director of R5DC. "A key factor in improving access to regional broadband is finding out what the needs are and learning how people are managing — or not managing — to access the internet."

Several regional broadband events will be held statewide, leading up to Blandin Foundation's "Building on Broadband" annual meeting in October that will focus on the need for reliable, high-speed internet across the state.

"American Recovery Act funds are available for broadband expansion in areas of our five-county region where high-speed internet is currently unavailable, but we need to be organized in order to access and utilize the funding," Hills said. "Meeting together on Sept. 30 and hearing the stories of others who have struggles accessing the internet is a good start. It will help to highlight the need for reliable high-speed internet for so many residents across our five-county area and beyond. It's possible to improve regional broadband when we all work together."

Those who wish to join the broadband event can register and a link will be emailed to them. The event

is open to anyone interested in discussing current high-speed internet in their area and ways to expand it by accessing federal funding.

To attend the event, either virtually or in-person, register at: <https://r5fiber.eventbrite.com>. To attend in person, select one of these locations when registering:

- Brainerd: Central Lakes College, 501 W. College Dr.;
- Little Falls: Sprout MN, 609 13th Ave. NE, Door 8;
- Long Prairie: Country Club, 406 Sixth St. SE;
- Staples: Central Lakes College, 1830 Airport Road; or
- Pine River: Happy Dancing Turtle, 2331 Dancing Wind Rd. SW, Ste 1.

Along with R5DC, the collaborative event is co-sponsored by the Blandin Foundation, Sourcewell, Initiative Foundation and local telecommunication companies: Crosslake Communications, CTC, ECTC, and West Central Telephone.

About Region Five Development Commission

The Region Five Development Commission is a high-performing, regionally focused partner committed to enhancing the vitality and quality of life in Region 5 through resilient, collaborative, and inclusive approach to regional community development, economic development, and transportation initiatives. Visit regionfive.org to learn more.

Wildlife-related burning restrictions lifted in 14 counties

Courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources

Continued favorable weather has improved wildfire risk for much of northern Minnesota. In response, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is removing fire restrictions in 14 counties.

Beginning 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 15, burning restrictions were lifted in Beltrami, Becker, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, Mahanomen, Ottertail, St. Louis, Roseau and Wadena counties.

However, the wildfire risk in remains in the northeastern tip of Minnesota. Therefore, Class III burning restrictions remain in effect for in Cook and Lake counties. Under Class III restrictions:

- No campfires are allowed for dispersed, remote or backcountry camping on all state, county or private

lands. Camping stoves are permitted.

- Attended campfires in established fire rings associated with a home, cabin, campground or resort are allowed.
- No fireworks may be ignited on any public or private land outside city limits. People should check with their local community for any additional restrictions.
- Open burning permits are restricted.
- An Area of Closure around the Greenwood Fire remains in place and is not affected by the updated burning restrictions.

According to DNR acting Wildfire Prevention Supervisor, Allissa Reynolds, "These changes reflect reduced wildfire risks for much of the north, while also recognizing that wildfire danger remains high in Cook and Lake counties."

She also cautions, "Until we have a few inches of snow on the ground, we all need to continue our efforts

to reduce wildfires; fires can start easily in dry grass and leaves."

Forrest Boe, director of DNR's Forestry Division, appreciates the continued support of all Minnesotans in following wildfire-related restrictions.

"Everyone's efforts to prevent wildfires are helping. Thank you and let's keep it up through the fall," he said.

The DNR will continue to monitor conditions and adjust county-specific burning restrictions as necessary. Of utmost importance is protecting the health and safety of Minnesotans, firefighters, and resource managers.

These state restrictions were developed in conjunction with tribal and federal partners and are consistent with restrictions for the

The DNR wildland fire information webpage includes information on all restrictions and a list of affected state forests and parks.

Board of Commissioners Briefs

In other business Tuesday, the Morrison County Board of Commissioners:

- Gave Sheriff Shawn Larsen the go-ahead to begin seeking replacements for upcoming vacancies in the positions of Morrison County Jail administrator and jail kitchen coordinator. Both current occupants are set to retire before the end of the year;
- Briefly discussed the Randall patrol contract with Larsen. He reported the current system is working well, and the Sheriff's Office would enter another one-

year contract with the city of Randall; and

- Provided feedback to Land Services Director Amy Kowalzek on the ongoing zoning district project. The Board advised her to move forward within the existing framework and attempt to collect more feedback from township boards within the county.

The next meeting of the Board of Commissioners is at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 21, in the Board Room at the Morrison County Government Center.

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Motley man's request to keep dog denied by Council

By ZACH HACKER
Staff Writer
zach.hacker@apeccm.com

The Motley City Council was tasked with making a difficult decision Monday, regarding a resident and his dog.

Dale Czechowicz made a request to the Council to allow him to keep his dog, Jack, at his home within city limits. He had previously been issued a dangerous animal notice by Police Chief Jason Borash. Motley City ordinance states that any animal deemed a threat to public safety is not allowed to be kept within the city.

"My dogs are basically kids to me," Czechowicz said. "I don't know how you guys feel on that, but my animals are my kids."

He said his dogs recently escaped from his yard through a weak spot in his fence that he had not noticed. Borash picked them up as dogs at large. While they were in the back of the squad car, Jack bit Borash.

Czechowicz said he had taken the dog to a friend's house out of town after receiving the dangerous animal citation — which he said was logical and was not arguing — but wanted to bring him back to his home in Motley. He said having to care for Jack has been a burden on his friends, since they also have dogs, and that he wanted to use him for breeding.

"He doesn't bite anymore," Czechowicz said. "He was trained. I've got a muzzle for him now, so when I do take him out he'll be muzzled and in the back yard. The back yard's all fenced up, fixed, filled in the holes with rocks and concrete and I buried wire under my fence so they can't dig out. I'd like to be able to keep my dog back in town. My kids are pretty devastated that the dog's gone."

Borash said, on the day in question, he picked up the dog while it was running loose on the street with another dog that belongs to Czechowicz. He said Jack was initially friendly and jumped into the back of his squad car without any coercion.

Feeling comfortable with the dogs, he reached for the other dog's collar, at which time Jack growled and snapped at him.

"Luckily I was pulling my hand back fast enough that the teeth just glided across the blade of my hand," Borash said. "If I had been

just a hair slower, it probably would have caused some pretty significant damage."

He said he later received a call from the veterinarian to whom he had taken the dogs. Borash and an officer from Staples were called to the vet to help the vet take control of Jack because "she couldn't do it by herself."

He later learned the dog attacked the vet while Czechowicz was there picking him up.

"That was my fault, because I was holding him and she was trying to look at the other dog," Czechowicz said. "She asked me to grab that dog and then he jumped over to me. I tried to grab him and she had her hand trying to push him back and he got ahold of her."

Borash issued a dangerous dog notice to Czechowicz and explained to him that the dog was no longer allowed within city limits. However, he had learned that, after the dog had been staying out of town, it was back living with Czechowicz.

Borash said he advised Czechowicz to meet with the Council to ask for permission to keep the dog in town.

"It also should be noted that in the past, over the last few years, I've had 15 other documented complaints regarding that same dog being vicious, keeping others at bay, not letting them off their property and so forth," Borash said. "It's come from more than one person, not just one sole complainant."

Council Member Amy Hutchison, who was acting mayor Monday, as Mayor Al Yoder was absent, said one big concern with the request was that, if the Council allowed Czechowicz to keep the dog, it would have to change the dangerous animal ordinance.

She clarified with the rest of the Council and with Borash that the ordinance only stipulates the dog can't be kept in town, not that it has to be euthanized. Borash said that was correct.

"My biggest fear and concern is that it's going to get loose again at some point, a little kid's going to come up to it and try to pet it and it's going to do the same thing and get ahold of a young child or something and cause serious damage or death," Borash said.

Hutchison added that, if the Council allowed Czechowicz to keep the dog and such a scenario as described by Borash came to fruition,

the city would be held liable. Council Member Steve Johnson said it would be a big risk for the city to open itself up to that kind of liability. He also feared the Council would be setting a precedent in which other residents would be asking to keep animals that had been deemed dangerous within the city.

"I do understand what you're saying, they can become family. I understand that," Johnson said. "But I think we have to go with our chief. To really kind of back that up was the 15 separate complaints, documented."

He said it was his opinion that the Council should deny Czechowicz's request. He added that he hoped it could work for the family to keep the dog at the friend's house and that the kids can visit him there.

Council Member Pat O'Regan agreed. He said he is Czechowicz's next door neighbor, and that he did not make the decision lightly. However, he would be concerned about public safety if the dog was allowed to move back into his home.

"It would bother me if I said, 'Yes you can have that dog,' after it's attacked peo-

ple and then the dog should get out," O'Regan said. "I know you've tightened up the fence; I know that. But if that dog does get out again, which it did when the chief picked it up, and should it come across one of these seniors coming down the street walking with a cane or a walker, we could have some serious harm done. Then I've got to deal with that; I've got to live with that. That's what you're asking me to open this up to. And there's a lot of kids on the street, as well."

"My dogs are no danger to children," Czechowicz replied. "They love kids."

"I know where you're coming from, and I've thought this through pretty hard," O'Regan said. "I don't feel good about telling you you can't bring your dog into town. But, I feel even a lot more about the safety of the people in town. The dog's only gotta get out once."

He added that he didn't want to see any harm done to the dog, he just believed it should not be allowed to live in Motley.

Hutchison said she felt it was a hard decision, but (Continued on Page 12A)

Advance tickets for BooFest available now

Pine Grove Zoo has announced BooFest to be held Saturday, Oct. 23, from 3 p.m. — 6 p.m. This family fun event is a unique combination of Pine Grove Zoo's infamous Zoo Boo and its previous ZooFest event.

Along with some local businesses and organizations handing out candy to kids during the event, there will also be a 35-foot inflatable obstacle course, inflatable football throw, three-hole inflatable mini golf course, 45-foot adventure crawl, jump houses, games, activities and so much more.

The Zoo has also increased the size and spookiness of its Haunted House.

The cost for all these activities is \$5 per person (free for ages 1 and younger). Because this is a fundraiser, memberships do not apply.

To avoid lines the day of the event, people can pre-purchase tickets at (320) 616-5595 or by stopping in the admissions office Thursday — Sunday, from 9 a.m. — 4 p.m. through Oct. 17.

People can also purchase tickets online by following the link on pinegrovezoo.com.

Pierz Dining Site now open for in-house meals

The Pierz Dining Site on Main Street in Pierz, next to City Hall, is now open to in-house dining, meals to go or home delivered.

Mondays, the meal is served at 11:30 a.m.

Tuesdays, bingo is played at 10:30 a.m., with the meal at 11:30 a.m.

Wednesdays, the meal is at 11:30 p.m., followed by four-point smear at 1 p.m.

Thursdays, an evening

meal is served at 5 p.m., with musical entertainment before the meal, starting at a later date.

Fridays, the meal is served at 11:30 a.m.

Call (320) 468-2160 to make a reservation for the meal at least one day ahead of time.

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Benefit set for Bartkowicz and family

A benefit has been planned for the Rodney Bartkowicz family Saturday, Sept. 25, at 1 p.m. at the Royalton American Legion Post 137.

Bartkowicz and his wife, Lynn, grew up in the Little Falls and Upsala/Bowlus areas and call the Bowlus area home. They have three children, Josh, Candace and Zach and four grandchildren.

Bartkowicz was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer in September 2020. He began chemotherapy in October 2020 and continued to fight like the warrior he was. Unfortunately, he was also diagnosed with liver cancer and in combination with the pancreatic cancer, surgery was not an option. He fought this battle until his death, Sept. 6.

Bartkowicz served in the Army National Guard for 30 years, completing his service as a first sergeant. During that time, he fought for Americans' freedom through many deployments. This included Kuwait and Iraq during the Operational Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom campaigns. His dedication and commitment to keep Americans safe was recognized with many deserved awards, including Terrorism Expeditionary Medal/Global War on Terrorism Service, Iraq Campaign Medal with two Campaign Stars, Army Achievement Medal and many others. He was



Submitted photo

A benefit will be held for the Rodney Bartkowicz family Saturday, Sept. 25. Rodney, diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer and liver cancer, passed away Sept. 6, while plans were underway for the benefit. He is pictured with his wife, Lynn.

an exemplary leader and was instrumental in shaping young men and women in the Armed Forces.

In addition to God and country, Bartkowicz's main focus in life was his family. It is through this benefit, that friends and community can assist in taking care of his family, as he would have liked, and to show appreciation and honor for the sacrifices he and his family made.

A silent auction will be held from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. that day, as well as a live auction at 5 p.m.

Those with questions or who have donations to be

picked up, can call or email Shelli Struzyk at (320) 333-3326 or stsh0901a@gmail.com; Kara Kloss at (320) 309-8287 or karakloss@gmail.com; Missy Bartkowicz at (320) 630-8722 or missyhedin@gmail.com; or Bonnie Czech at (320) 360-4944 or bonnieshouse.afc@gmail.com.

Donations can also be dropped off at the Royalton Legion Post, 103 North Maple Street, Royalton or the 10 Spot in Royalton. Send cash donations to Pine Country Bank, c/o Rodney Bartkowicz Benefit, P.O. Box 25, Royalton, MN 56373.

Living Bread Pantry food distribution set in Pierz at Borntreger's place

The Living Bread Pantry food distribution at the Lizzy and Felty Borntreger residence, 25632 285th Ave., Pierz, is the fourth Saturday of every month, from 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., which this month is Saturday, Sept. 25.

Directions: eight miles north of Pierz on Highway 25, turn right on County Road 48 for 2 3/4 miles and watch for signs.

People pay \$20 for a basket of food. Those who attend are asked to bring their

own baskets to carry the wide variety of food offered.

For more information, call (320) 250-9599 or (320) 468-2140.

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Saturday, September 25, 2021

(Inclement Weather, Sunday, September 26, 2021)

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Phone: 320-632-4895

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MC Genealogy Society presents webinar 'Essential Portals for Genealogy Research'

Nancy E. Loe, MA, MLS, will kick off a new year for the Morrison County Genealogy Society celebrating its 15th anniversary with her presentation of the webinar "Essential Portals for Genealogy Research" Tuesday, Sept. 21, at 6 p.m.

Starting at 7 p.m., Loe will present search strategies and websites that can help genealogists of all skill levels find some of their most difficult to find ancestors.

After a long professional career in academic archives

and genealogy libraries, Loe is now a genealogy educator, researcher and writer. She specializes in U.S. and European research, and provides expert guidance on organizing research and family papers.

Her website, sassyjanegenalogy.com, offers a blog, free monthly newsletter, and e-books on research topics. Loe has appeared on PBS's American Experience, at National Genealogical Society, RootsTech, and numerous genealogy conferences

and webinars in the U.S., Canada and Australia. Recently, Loe has been on a genealogy pilgrimage to visit the eight European villages of her great-grandparents.

All are welcome to this presentation and celebration of the Morrison County Genealogy Society's 15th anniversary. The evening will start at 6 p.m. with a meet and greet, with refreshments served followed by a short welcome back meeting prior to the presentation.



Staff photo by: Jimmy DeRogatis

Doug Case winner of the 2021 Sears Craftsmanship award

Doug Case sits inside his 1969 Chevy Chevelle 369 alongside his wife Toni, who's holding the Sears Craftsmanship trophy. Pictured (from left): Sears owner Dan Drilling and Lone Eagle Auto Club members Karen and Wayne Hansmann look on. The car was selected during the 46th annual Lone Eagle Auto Club Car Show and Swap Meet at the Morrison County Fairgrounds

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Pierz raises preliminary County's portion of library budget reduced in 2022 levy by 3% for 2022

By **TERRY LEHRKE**
Editor
terry.lehrke@apgecm.com

The Pierz City Council voted 3-0 to increase the city's 2022 preliminary levy by 3%. Council Member Lynn Egan and City Clerk Kyle Bednar were absent from the vote.

The increase amounts to \$10,088, all of which will bolster the city's general fund. In 2021, the city increased its levy by 3.5%, or \$11,371.25.

Nothing changed drastically in the budget, said Mayor Dave Fischer.

"We've raised our prof-

it and income for the golf course each year, but very little was done to the budget," he said.

In 2021, the general fund levy was \$242,256. For 2022, that increases to \$252,344. The remaining funds, fire - \$49,000, parks - \$22,000, capital projects - \$18,000 and the Robert Street/Park Avenue Project - \$5,000, all remained the same as in 2021.

Fischer said the \$10,088 increase, divided by the number of households, he estimated 700, in the city, is just over \$14 each for the year.

By **ZACH HACKER**
Staff Writer
zach.hacker@apgecm.com

Morrison County's contribution to the Great River Regional Library's (GRRL) 2022 budget will be reduced from what it paid in 2021.

GRRL Executive Director Karen Pundsack and Accounting Coordinator Amy Anderson informed the Morrison County Board of Commissioners of the decrease during a Sept. 7 presentation. In all, Morrison County will pay \$491,598 toward the 2022 budget; \$11,403 less than what it contributed in 2021. GRRL operates the public libraries in Little Falls, Pierz, Royalton, Swanville and Upsala.

Anderson said GRRL receives the majority of its operating and capital funding from the six counties it serves. The library's board of trustees adopted the 2022 budget in July.

"Several goals were set by our trustees as part of the process," Anderson said. "Keeping county shares as flat as possible, and the use of reserves in the overall 2022 budget. To keep contributions flat, shares are calculated using the library's 2021 operating budget and a reflection of each county's population, registered user numbers and net tax capacity."

To reach its total \$9.733

million budget, \$315,218 in unsigned funds from the library's reserves will be incorporated in 2022.

Pundsack said the library does have a "fairly healthy" reserve at this point. It has been a point of emphasis for the board of trustees to spend down that reserve to help offset county shares. She said this year, because of fluctuations in the state funding formula, there were some counties that paid more than 2021, and others which paid less.

"Morrison County was one of the ones that paid less," she said. "Our goal is to get that reserve down over time. But, as Amy mentioned, we also see a lot of fluctuations in our state aid."

The 2022 GRRL budget also supports the expansion of the library's fines-free initiative. The program was started in 2019 and does exactly what it says — there are no fines for late materials that have been checked out from the library.

Anderson said late material fines make up only about 1% of the library's overall budget. They are also not guaranteed, so planning for a significant reduction actually made it easier to calculate that line in the 2022 budget.

Patrons are, however, still responsible to replace items when they are not returned.

"The goals of expand-

ing this idea are to reduce financial barriers that may prevent patrons from accessing library materials and to increase the amount of time our staff can spend assisting library users in a positive way," Anderson said.

She said library staff are researching how libraries in other cities and counties have set their policies when adopting similar programs.

Another program that the GRRL is highlighting as school is back in session and it prepares to head into the new year is its WiFi2GO project. Started in 2020 with the help of state telecommunications aid grants, the program means all five libraries within Morrison County — as well as throughout the GRRL system — will have WiFi hotspots that are available to check out.

A WiFi hotspot is a device that allows the user to access an internet connection from anywhere. The hotspot works off of cell towers to provide a signal, and any device can be used to go on the web after connecting via the hotspot. The devices are available to check out for one week at each of GRRL's locations.

Pundsack said, so far, the program has been well received.

"There's no limit to the amount of data that you can use on those hotspots so, we have a lot of people that

kind of rotate it," she said. The expansion of the program has evolved from the success of a pilot project that started with fundraising in Pierz. Additional support has led to more funding, allowing for the program to be implemented system-wide. Each library has at least five hotspots available for check-out. Patrons can call ahead and see if there is one available during library hours.

"That sounds good for the people out there," said County Board Chair Mike Wilson. "I would say that's a pretty hot item."

One other project the library is looking to implement at some point also aims at expanding broadband connectivity. With funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, GRRL is working with some cities that have a parking lot outside of their building to have WiFi available 24 hours a day, seven days per week outside of the library.

"We're actually looking at putting something on a light pole out in those library parking lots," Pundsack said. "Our patrons definitely use the library for a lot of different things, and broadband is one of those things."

"That's a great idea, because I know of people who go to McDonald's or whatever and sit in the parking lot so they can hook onto their WiFi," Wilson said.

Pierz City Council Briefs

In other business at Monday's meeting, the Pierz City Council:

- Approved a business assistance application for Tyler Kloss to start his cabinet business in the Industrial Park. City Administrator Bob Otremba said the city typically sells the lots in Industrial Park for \$1, with stipulations on when building will begin. This was upon the recommendation of the city's Economic Development Authority (EDA). Kloss said his vision for Legacy Cabinets LLC is to, at some point, work with the school to bring on students to the learn the trade. In addition, since he graduated from college with a degree in CNC, which he said is very specialized, he felt introducing students to that work would be beneficial as well. "You don't get exposure to it unless you know someone who does it, because CNC is so specialized and super expensive to get into. I feel like that would be something unique to expose kids to and show them that it's another field to get into and that you can combine woodworking and CNC to work better and faster;"
- Approved a quit claim deed to transfer the Industrial Park land to Kloss;
- Approved three concrete permits, one to Bednar Trucking to replace a driveway on County Road 39; one to Brian Gronsberg, to replace his driveway on Ed-

ward Street; and the third to Jeff Virnig on Vincent Street to replace steps;

- Approved building permit applications for Tim Diederichs on Vincent Street South for an addition, contingent upon the owner not adding any other accessory structure due to lack of green space; and one for Tyler Kloss to build on Lot 4, Block 1 on Industrial Park Road, with a check on the actual place of the boundary lines to make sure Kloss gets the property setbacks;
- Approved a \$1,400 donation to the Initiative Foundation;
- Approved an exempt permit for St. Joseph's Church to host bingo Oct. 24;
- Approved transferring \$100,000 from the golf course fund, \$100,000 from the electric fund and \$100,000 from the solid waste fund, to help pay for the Pierz Park Complex expansion. The estimated cost for the coming year is \$700,000 and with the additional \$300,000, the city will have enough to cover those expenses; and
- Approved contracts with Scott Hoffman, designer of the golf course addition and Dan Bieganeck, who is the shaper in the project.

The next meeting of the Pierz City Council is Monday, Sept. 27, at 7 p.m. at the Pierz Dining Center.



Submitted photo

St. Gabriel's Hospital Advocates donate more than \$17,000 for equipment

The St. Gabriel's Hospital Advocates presented St. Gabriel's Hospital with a check for more than \$17,000 to use to purchase much needed equipment for the hospital. The Advocates raised the funds through various fundraisers and the Hospital Gift Shop. On hand for the presentation of the donation were (from left): Hospital Advocates Diane Tamm, Julie Richgels, Robin Smieja, Pearl Wilson, Linda LeBlanc, Alice Fink, Helen Neudecker, Janet Berendt, Mary Uhlhorn and Pat Toschak and Tom Miller, manager Ops-Central Stores St Gabriel's Hospital and Steve Smith, CEO St. Gabriel's Hospital.

Free Medicare 101 webinar offered

Seniors are invited to learn the basics of Medicare at "Medicare 101," a free, virtual seminar Wednesday, Sept. 29, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The presentation is for those who know little to nothing about Medicare and want an overview before digging deeper. During this presentation, participants will learn the basics of: coverage gap, eligibility for extra help with prescription drug costs, Medicare enrollment process, enroll-

ment options and timeline, Medicare.gov website and Health Care Choices.

The program is being offered in collaboration with Cuyuna Area Connections. Register

at <https://form.jotform.com/212424288890158> or call the Senior LinkAge Line at 1 (800) 333-2433 for assistance. For more information, contact KariLee Pietz at (218) 545-5361.

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EI Board meets Sept. 21

The Employment Enterprises, Inc. (EEI) Board of Directors will meet Tuesday, Sept. 21, at 5 p.m. This meeting will be at EEI's main site, 307 Ninth Ave. NW, Little Falls.

Those who wish to attend will be asked to wear a mask and comply with social distancing requirements.

Motley man's request

(Continued from Page 7A) she agreed with Johnson and O'Regan. She said the Council had to look out for the residents of the city as a whole.

Czechowicz said he understood the Council's decision.

"I did a little research and there are some places that will require euthanization," Hutchison said. "Thankfully that is not us. My apologies, Dale."



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Benefit planned for Jerry Brill and family

A benefit has been planned for Jerry Brill of Pierz and his family.

Brill was diagnosed with stage 3 pancreatic cancer. Since then, he has been hospitalized three times.

The benefit will be held at the Pierz Ballroom Saturday, Sept. 25, with a sloppy joe dinner, silent auction and live auction.

There is also a GoFundMe page set up and an account set up at Farmers and Merchants State Bank in Pierz.

Doors at the event open at 2 p.m. and supper will be served at 4:30 p.m. The auctions will follow.

To help with a donation, contact Jenny Lardy at (320) 249-7162; Chris Lardy at (320) 761-6769 or Amy Rybaski at (320) 630-1032.



Submitted photo

A benefit will be held for the Jerry Brill family Saturday, Sept. 25. Brill was diagnosed with stage 3 pancreatic cancer.



Submitted photo

Randall VFW donates \$6,000 to playground at Dr. S.G. Knight

Randall VFW Curtis-Olson Post # 9073 donated \$6,000 toward the creation of a new playground at Dr. S.G. Knight Elementary School in Randall. The Randall-Cushing Area Lions Club also donated \$1,500 to the this playground in August. The preschool playground equipment will be designed specifically for children ages 3 - 5. Pictured are (from left): Stacy Gold, School Early Childhood director, VFW member Danny L. Noss, and Dr. S.G. Knight Elementary School Principal Larry Edgerton.

RMCEP offers beneficiary outreach event

Many people on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Social Security Insurance (SSI) don't know what benefits they are entitled to or the resources they have.

They also are not aware that:

- People who receive Social SSDI benefits can work for up to 12 months with no earning limit and keep their SSDI cash benefits.

- Anyone who receives either SSI or SSDI disability benefits is entitled to assistance in the return to work, including career counseling and job search assistance through the Ticket to Work program.

- Those who receive SSI disability benefits can keep their Medicaid health insurance, even if they are not entitled to an SSI cash benefit due to earnings.

Those who would like to know more about these and other resources that can help them plan for the future and become more financially self-sufficient, can learn more about work incentives through the Social Security Administration. They can learn how they can return to work successfully, as well as additional programs and services they may be eligible for.

This information will be presented at an event at the Little Falls CareerForce, 609

13th Ave. NE, Suite 5, in Little Falls, Thursday, Sept. 23, from 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

This event is geared toward Social Security disability beneficiaries, human services providers, Medicaid service coordinators and human resource professionals who wish to know more about Social Security disability benefits and available work incentives.

To register, call Char at (218) 850-1453 or email charh@rmcep.com.

If an accommodation is needed to attend this event due to a disability, make a request 10 days before the scheduled date by contacting Char at (218) 850-1453.



(091921-Carshow-owen)

Staff photo by Terry Lehrke

Young car fan picks his favorite at Lone Eagle Auto Club show

Owen Johnson, 6-year-old son of Chad and Tawni Johnson of Zimmerman, posed with his favorite car at the Lone Eagle Auto Club Car Show, held Sept. 12. It was a Dodge pickup, in the All Rat Rods class, owned by Roy Hyten of Minneapolis. Owen's family camped out in Little Falls to take in the Little Falls Arts and Crafts Fair and stopped by the Car Show before heading out of town. His mom, Tawni, said the crafts fair was awesome.

Lutheran Social Service Senior Nutrition Program

Monday, September 20 — Salisbury steak with gravy, mashed potatoes, green beans, dinner roll, pudding, milk.

Tuesday, September 21 — Teriyaki chicken, rice pilaf, vegetable, bread, dessert, milk.

Wednesday, September 22 — Tuna pasta salad, three-bean salad, orange, dessert, muffin, milk.

Thursday, September 23 — Barbecue chicken, bun, coleslaw, potato salad, Jello, vegetable, milk.

Friday, September 24 —

Baked fish, macaroni and cheese, vegetable, peaches, milk.

Call the Senior Center in Little Falls at (320) 632-8200 and Pierz at (320) 468-2160. Call (320) 468-2160 for information on meals in Randall and Royalton.

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www.ourlifennwmetro.com

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Tuesday, Sept. 21

DRESS: Decade Day

Dress in your favorite decade

Wednesday, Sept. 22

DRESS: Costume Day

Thursday, Sept. 23

DRESS: Color Wars Day

Spirit Pepfest during Pioneer Time

Friday, Sept. 24

DRESS: Spirit Day

Dodgeball Tournament during Pioneer Time and Homecoming dance after the football game until midnight

Hall of Fame is Presented during halftime. Pierz Hall of Fame – At halftime of the Sept 24, 2021 Homecoming football game vs Rockford Pierz High School will be introducing their latest members of the Pioneer Athletic Hall of Fame.

The new members include: Craig Luberts - Class of 2004; Kyle Bednar and Jamie Talberg - Class of 2006; Kristin (Sczublewski) Egan - Class of 2007; Kaari (Jensen) Epperly - Class of 2009; Clint Poster - Class of 2011; Leo Pohlkamp -Coach

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