



INSIDE: ALEXANDRIA AREA HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS LITTLE WOMEN, LIFE 8



INSIDE: ARE YOU PREPARED FOR SNOW? SPECIAL SECTION, 17-20

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Thalen Zimmerman / Alexandria Echo Press
Traffic buzzes on Broadway Street in Alexandria.

Pedestrian vs. car accidents double the last two years

Rise in pedestrian crashes prompts special meeting

By Thalen Zimmerman
Alexandria Echo Press

In 2019 and 2020, there was a combined total of five pedestrians vs. car accidents in Alexandria. This year, there have been nine.

"We don't have a great awareness of pedestrians in our community," said Alexandria Police Chief Scott Kent. "Even though we are growing in pedestrian and bicycle traffic, people are not used to looking for pedestrians in our busy and robust streets. I am not trying to make excuses. However, when you are driving and being aware of traffic, pedestrians are not always the first thing drivers are focused on."

Kent compared Alexandria to larger cities like New York and Chicago; Cities

that are accustomed to seeing large volumes of pedestrians crossing roadways at one time.

"Although we have enough pedestrian traffic where pedestrians are being hit, we don't have enough groups of people crossing the roadway at once. It is not like downtown Chicago or New York where you have a large group of people crossing at one time," said Kent.

Kent doesn't place sole blame on either pedestrians or drivers. The accidents have occurred from a combination of unaware drivers and negligent pedestrians not following traffic signals.

"It is a shared responsibility. If you are going to share the roadway, then you have to share responsibility," said Kent.

"My suggestion for drivers is to be more aware of pedestrians, focus on the roadways when approaching

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GROWING GAINS

Development brings big changes for eastern Alexandria

By Karen Tolkkinen
Alexandria Echo Press

Drive along the west side of Lake Victoria any given day, and odds are you'll see signs of Alexandria's expansion. Movers unloading boxes. Workmen smoothing a new concrete driveway. Carpenters nailing down shingles on a new home.

Census data show that Douglas County didn't grow as much as expected between 2010 and 2020, but Alexandria added about 3,300 new residents during the decade, both because the city expanded its boundaries and because of an influx of new residents.

"Alexandria has been my favorite community to develop in, so much that I moved my family here," said developer Sam Herzog, who built apartments with 189 units during that decade and who is adding more. He said he appreciates the "energy and life" in Alexandria, and that he and his wife enjoy the couples they have met.

According to data from the city, the population was 11,070 in 2010 and in 2020, it's 14,335, up 29.5% in a decade. Alexandria finished annexing Alexandria Township in 2012, when it added about 1,383 to its population. The decade also saw about 2,000 new people being born here or moving to town, drawn by the lakes, jobs and what they heard about the city.

Jeanette Horn moved to Alexandria from Brainerd in 2019 after a divorce. Her daughter played summer basketball in Alexandria, so they were familiar with the community. Horn works remotely, so she is able to work anywhere that has a good internet connection.

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Photos by Karen Tolkkinen / Echo Press

Top: A work crew builds a driveway for a new home on Rosewood Lane near Lake Victoria, where Alexandria is seeing much of its growth. **Above:** Riley Kruger unloads a box for a new resident moving into Alexandria on Rosewood Lane.

BRANDON-EVANVILLE SCHOOL BOARD

B-E School Board approves new amendment for expansion project

By Travis Gulbrandson
Alexandria Echo Press

The Brandon-Evanville School District's voter-approved expansion project is in its earliest stages.

The district's school board held a special meeting Tuesday, Nov. 9, at which they approved a resolution to sign an amendment

between the district and ICS Consulting.

Lori Christensen, an account executive for ICS, explained that ICS would provide single source accountability for the project.

"What that means is we have a program management model where you have one contact with ICS and we will

hire all the engineers, architects, construction managers, and manage them under our umbrella," Christensen said.

A project oversight committee will be formed, as well, she said.

According to the amendment, the expansion will involve multiple renovations and improvements.

At the Brandon site, the following items are listed:

- ▶ New secured main entrance.
- ▶ New office suite attached to the secured entrance.
- ▶ Renovation of existing CTE area into new classrooms.
- ▶ Renovation of existing office area into classroom/small group/flex space.
- ▶ Renovation of existing main entrance

into learning commons.

- ▶ Renovation of existing locker rooms.
- ▶ 21st century learning spaces.
- ▶ Flexible classroom spaces.
- ▶ New gymnasium, bathrooms and lobby area.
- ▶ New community fitness center.
- ▶ New career and technical shop.
- ▶ New parking lots.
- ▶ New vehicle storage shed.

At the Evansville site, the following items are listed:

- ▶ New secured main entrance.
- ▶ New office suite attached to the secured entrance.
- ▶ New classroom addition.
- ▶ Renovation of existing office area into classroom/small group/flex space.

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Echo Press file photo

Alissa Smith holds a sign along Broadway Street in Alexandria at last year's Cardboard Brigade, which is designed to bring awareness of poverty and homelessness in the community.

Cardboard carries powerful message

By Al Edenloff
Alexandria Echo Press

A homeless man holds up a tattered piece of cardboard that says, "Have you ever felt invisible before?"

An effort will take place in Alexandria on Tuesday, Nov. 16 to shine a light on homelessness. It's the West Central Minnesota Communities Action's "Cardboard Brigade."

Residents are encouraged to help spread awareness about homelessness, poverty and hunger in the Douglas

County area by meeting with Communities Action staff at the Big Ole Statue on North Broadway, starting at 3:30 p.m. Participants will receive cardboard signs with statistics and messages. Call Amber Holmstrom at 320-304-3458 with questions or to volunteer.

Those in the brigade will stand along Broadway until 5 p.m., hoping to catch the attention of drivers and passers-by about just how serious

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