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Skateboarders ride the ramp Sunday at Worthington's local park.

Roberta Fultz / The Globe

Storm prompts emergency declaration

By Kari Lucin
The Globe

WORTHINGTON — The Nobles County Board of Commissioners declared a state of emergency for the county during an emergency meeting Monday, following last week's storms.

The storms toppled about 40 power poles, causing an estimated \$500,000 in damage to Great River Energy and Nobles Cooperative Electric property and far exceeding the state's \$45,600 threshold requirement for an emergency to be declared, said Tawn Hall, emergency management director and deputy county administrator.

"We do have some individuals that have reached out to me with some (damage to) hog barns, cattle sheds and greenhouse business effects. That would be individual assistance, that wouldn't qualify for the public assistance that we're declaring for right now," she added.

The state's threshold for declaring an emergency is \$9 million in damage, which was also met and exceeded, so the state of Minnesota will be requesting assistance at the national level for the disaster, Hall said.

State funds for the disaster would cover 75% of damages, with a local match of 25%. Should the disaster reach the federal level, the federal government would pay 75% of the costs, the state would pay

STORM: Page A9

HOPEFUL FOR NEW PARK

Local skateboarders wish to breathe new life into space

By Emma McNamee
The Globe

Worthington

Worthington's skate park has sat largely unchanged since its construction nearly 20 years ago, but it could get an upgrade if local

skateboarders can secure funding to breathe new life into the space.

The only skate park in Worthington, the current park consists of a collection of structures — including quarter pipe ramps and grind rails — that sit on

a slab of concrete along the walking path near the Centennial Park water tower. It's not uncommon to see skateboarders attempting tricks on the ramps on sunny days, but even when the weather permits, the park poses challenges.

"I know probably three people who can actually skate the park really well," said Erick Rivera, a local skateboarder who is advocating for updates to the park. "But for most people,

PARK: Page A8

Community, family grieve the loss of 26-year-old Sarah Wass

By Kari Lucin
The Globe

WORTHINGTON — Sarah Marie (Huls) Wass, a happy, hardworking woman with endless smiles, a giving spirit and a strong love for her family, cats

and coffee, died April 15, 2022, after sustaining injuries in a rollover in March.

She was 26.

Sarah was a familiar face in Worthington, where she worked for 10 years at the coffee shop in HyVee, both at the Caribou Coffee and later at the Starbucks, and many people remember her smile.

"She was always happy, always had a smile on her face," said her mother, Wendy Huls.

"She always had a smile for people, wherever and wherever she ran into them," said her husband, Eli Wass, who works at Bedford Industries. "She was always fun to be around."

Sarah's unexpected death hit her family

hard, particularly given that her uncle, Danny Huls, died only a few hours before she did. At the same time, Wendy said, the community has rallied around her and Sarah's father, Richard, as well as the rest of the family.

"So many people have just reached out and said what a wonderful person she was, what a great

personality she had," Wendy said. "I really appreciate all the people that have reached out to us, that have sent cards, brought meals, that are there for us when we need them, because there's been a lot of outpouring of love in the community."

A life

Sarah graduated from Worthington High

School in 2014, and while she initially planned to become a nurse, she decided after a year that college wasn't the right fit for her and returned to Worthington to work.

"She wanted to be a wife and mother," Wendy said. "She had a good work ethic, so after college she just worked full-time."

WASS: Page A9

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Involvement is key to Mazariegos

WHS senior to graduate May 27

By Kari Lucin
The Globe

WORTHINGTON — Worthington High School senior Alex Mazariegos likes to get involved, and not just in school but in church and in the community too.

"I've always been a person who's open to anything, getting involved in anything I can get into," he said.

As a post-secondary enrollment option student, Mazariegos graduated from Minnesota West Community &

Technical College with an associate's degree in business management last week, and will graduate from WHS next week.

In the fall, he'll head to Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, where he intends to double major in business management and marketing, with a concentration in entrepreneurship.

He wants to start a business.

"I'm still brainstorming some ideas on what I want to do," Mazariegos said. "It'd be something locally, something for my community to always

give back to them."

He plans to spend a few years working after college while he develops his business idea and maps out a plan for it.

Mazariegos has always been involved in his community, and he's always been good at staying organized and scheduling out his time. That's been almost a necessity given the number of activities he's participated in over the years.

Take FFA, for example, which Mazariegos has been a part of throughout high school. He took an agriculture class in eighth grade and enjoyed

SENIOR: Page A9



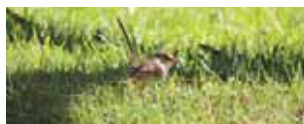
Kari Lucin / The Globe

Alex Mazariegos stands on a trail Friday at the Nobles County Fairgrounds. He has volunteered at the FFA building during the Nobles County Fair, as well as serving as a volunteer with many other groups in many capacities over the years.

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HIGH 78°
LOW 54°



INDEX

Agriculture	B4	Lifestyles	A7
Classifieds	B7	Obituaries	A5
Deaths	A5	Opinion	A4
Diversions	A6	Sports	B1
Education	B3	Weather	A2
Faith	A4		

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1st District special election will take on clarity in a week

By Matthew Stolle
Post Bulletin

ROCHESTER — A congressional special election race that was as clear as mud when it started two months ago will take on clarity in a week.

On Tuesday, May 24, voters will head to the polls to pick major party nominees for Congress who will advance to an Aug. 9 1st Congressional District special election. A field now made up of 19 candidates will be winnowed down to four.

Gov. Tim Walz called the special election when Rep. Jim Hagedorn, a two-term Republican from Blue Earth, died on Feb. 17.

The primary is almost certain to be a low-turnout affair, meaning the candidates most capable of energizing their base of supporters will have the best chance of winning their party's nomination.

With nine Republican candidates and seven Democratic candidates, a low plurality of votes could secure the nomination for the winning candidate.

There have been no polls to suggest which candidate enjoys front-runner status in each respective party. But recent conventions to endorse candidates for Congress in the new 1st Congressional District as a result of redistricting suggest several candidates with inside-track strengths for the special election.

On the GOP side is state Rep. Jeremy Munson, a Crystal Lake, Minn., businessman. Munson won 55% of delegates at a GOP endorsing convention two weeks ago where candidates were vying for the nod from their party not for the special election but for the endorsement for the general election in November.

While Munson's total was short of the 60% needed to secure the party's endorsement, it showed Munson with possible front-runner status of the nine GOP candidates.

Munson has also touted the endorsements of U.S. Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Rand Paul of Kentucky and Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio as well as former congresswoman Michele Bachman. Munson is perhaps best known for proposing legislation that would let Minnesota counties secede from the state and join border states such as South Dakota.

Brad Finstad, a three-term state representative from New Ulm, also finished strong at the GOP convention with 35 percent of delegates. Finstad served as former President Donald Trump's state director for USDA Rural Development in Minnesota.

In a district where the Trump name and message has resonated strongly, any claimed association to the former president could confer



gguy44 / Getty Images / iStockphoto

political benefit.

On the Democratic side, former Hormel Foods CEO Jeff Ettinger won the DFL endorsement for Congress in the new CD-1. Ettinger won 65% of delegates and the endorsement after two ballots. Sarah Brakebill-Hacke, a Rochester Community and Technical College graduate, came in second with 25% of delegates.

The special election will be taking place at a time of strong public disenchantment with inflation, high gas and diesel prices and rising grocery bills. Empty shelves of baby formula have also added to the anxieties of parents. All this has taken place on the watch of Democratic leaders in Washington, D.C. and St. Paul and is likely to benefit of GOP candidates.

"The current political climate clearly favors the GOP — inflation, immigration, crime all work in that party's favor,"

said Steven Schier, a political analyst and former political science professor from Carlton College. "The Dems have a chance if they mobilize superior resources — voter contact, volunteers, advertising — and employ them well before election day.

"Even with that, it's a challenge for them," Schier added.

Other candidates include Republicans Bob "Again" Carney Jr., Ken Navitsky, Kevin Kocina, Roger Ungemach, Matt Benda, J.R. Ewing, Jennifer Carnahan and Nels Pierson; and Democrats Richard Painter, George Kalberer, Warren Lee Anderson, James Rainwater and Candice Deal-Bartell. The two marijuana party candidates are Richard Reisdorf and Haroun McClellan.

Republican and Democratic candidates offer divergent prescriptions for strengthening the

country. GOP candidates say taming inflation, securing the country's southern border, and energy independence are their priorities. Democrats list expanding healthcare, strengthening and defending voting rights, and developing renewable energy at a time of climate crisis.

Munson said he is the only candidate in the race to vow not to raise the debt ceiling when the need arises.

"The first step to addressing and containing inflation is to admit its cause," Munson said. "We are experiencing a drastic increase in inflation because both Republicans and Democrats have agreed to cut taxes while increasing spending," Munson said. "The resulting massive annual deficits have created over \$30 trillion in debt and runaway inflation."

State Rep. Nels Pierson, R-Rochester, identified fixing the country's porous border as a priority. Further work on building a wall on the southern border needs to be done. And immigrants who follow the country's immigration laws should be rewarded with a quicker path to citizenship.

"Merit-based immigration qualifications should be broadened, and quotas increased to alleviate backlogs and pressures at the border," Pierson said.

On the Democratic

side, Ettinger has framed his campaign as defending mainstream values that are being trampled on by Republicans intent on limiting voting rights and aggravating climate change. For Ettinger, a pivotal moment in his decision to run for office was the Jan. 6 riot that suspended the certification of President Joe Biden's election victory.

"I've heard several of the GOP candidates say they would not have certified the election," Ettinger said. "To me, that's just not a mainstream principle."

Brakebill-Hacke said health care is one of her top priorities. She notes the vast sums of public and private dollars being spent to develop Rochester into a Destination Medical Center, a hub for attracting people globally to Rochester to get well.

"What people of this district want to hear about is health care," she said. "We also have an obligation to provide quality care to all our citizens."

"I believe a system with global budgeting that preserves choice for patients, profit for hospitals and compensation for the world's greatest healthcare providers in Rochester would create a boom for our region and makes us one of the world's most attractive places to visit, live and do business," Brakebill-Hacke said.

PARK

From Page A1

it's not really easy. It's a hard park to learn on and hard to skate well.

According to Rivera, between the steep cut of the ramps, the cramped layout, and the lack of variety, there are a lot of shortcomings to the prefabricated skate park. He points at the concrete pad the park sits on, which sports more than one crack. The rough texture is hard on equipment and wears down the skateboard wheels, and is even harder on the body when skaters take a tumble.

"When you get hurt, you don't want to come back," said Edgar Padilla Garcia, another skater, noting he had a hard time staying motivated when he first took up skateboarding, due to the challenges the park presented. "The park could have more kids, I think if it was a little more friendly to beginners — and bigger."

The size of the park is a concern, both skaters agree. On a busy day, they have to be extra cautious about younger kids on the equipment and take care not to crash into one another with the way the park is laid out.

"You want to make things as safe as you can," Rivera said, looking over the existing structures. He describes his "dream park" as having good lighting and plenty of space, with obstacles for all skill levels. Now, skaters in Worthington will go wherever they can find the obstacles, like the stairs by the Nobles County Government Center or the space by the Worthington Fire Hall, a conflict that would be alleviated if they had more available at the skate park.

"Variety is great," Rivera added. "A skate park should be for everyone to enjoy."

They're some of the



Special to The Globe

Nineteen-year-old Erick Rivera, recently hired as a marketing intern for The Globe, hopes to make the local skate park better for all.

same aspects he brought to Todd Wietzema, Worthington's Public Works Director, on a trifold board alongside a list of the issues with the current park.

Much like the efforts on behalf of Worthington's skateboarders today, the skate park was built after a group of local skateboarders began to advocate for the building of a skatepark in Worthington, back in the early 2000s.

Costing a total of \$32,743 and secured through a series of grants, donations, and city funding, the skate park's concrete pad, and equipment were in place by 2003. Today, with most skateparks being fully concrete, the costs have increased substantially.

"We're in the very beginning stages, so we're not sure what we're doing quite yet, but I want to put in something that's going

to get used," Wietzema said. "From a city standpoint, I always want to see our facilities upgraded to the best of our abilities."

By 2023, Wietzema notes the city will have set aside \$30,000 to go toward the skate park — funds originally reserved for the necessary maintenance costs. It's only a portion of the funding necessary to build a new skate park and fully address the concerns Rivera and

other skaters have, but Wietzema is willing to see where this goes.

"We're looking for the same involvement from the skateboarders now," said Wietzema. "If they can help raise funds and tell us what we need, we love to work with groups like this. If we can get grants and help with funding these things, we're more than happy to build them."

It's a situation not unique to Worthington, and one that Minnesota skateboarding enthusiasts hope will be addressed through the Minnesota Skate Park Grant program — if the program can secure the support it needs to be included in the 2022 bonding bill.

"There's always been a really strong skateboard culture here (in Minnesota)," said Paul Forsline with City of Skate, a public skate parks advocacy group. "Unfortunately, it hasn't had a great public infrastructure to support it."

Modeled after the Mighty Ducks grant program, this grant will be dedicated to the construction and renovation of skate parks, through matching funds available at three different levels. Of the \$15 million the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission is hoping to secure, \$8 million would be designated towards funding community

parks, with up to \$350,000 available in matching funds for grantees.

The program received \$250,000 in bonding funds during the 2020 legislative session, not nearly enough for the list of over 30 skate park projects being considered in Minnesota cities. The full funding would allow for at least 25 different grants, according to Forsline.

"We're trying to hopefully show these communities that it's OK to spend more on a skate park. If you build it well, it can be one of the most used spaces in a community," Forsline said. "It's really a rallying point with a lot of value, especially when you can get to the point where it's really a multi-generational thing, with all sorts of people taking part."

While this grant program is the first of its kind, Forsline said they've seen a lot of interest from other states, and that Minnesota has a chance to really grow the skateboarding world, should the program receive funding.

"I hope senators and legislators really take note of what this means for communities and their youth and advocate for this bill," Forsline said. "Your community is asking for it, they see the need, and I hope they take the opportunity to follow through."

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FUNDS AVAILABLE

Minnesota Housing is setting funds aside to make mortgage loans to first time home buyers in certain census tracts located in the following counties: Aitkin, Beltrami, Cass, Crow Wing, Freeborn, Hennepin, Hubbard, Mower, Nobles, Olmsted, Ramsey, Rice and Saint Louis. Borrowers and properties must meet Minnesota Housing's maximum income and purchase price limits as well as normal, mortgage industry accepted underwriting requirements. To get a map of these census tracts and details as to funds available, please contact Sondra Breneman at Minnesota Housing at sondra.breneman@state.mn.us or 1-800-710-8871

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