

**FFA's talk CDEs, speech**

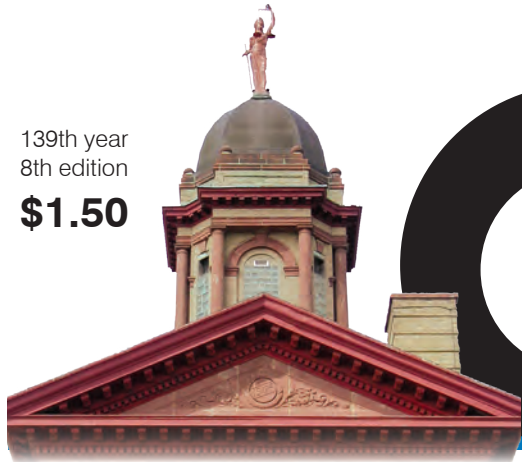
Two Career Development Event teams, speaker prep for state convention

■ Page 9



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**Battle tested**

Girls drop final playoff tune-up

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022

**WHAT'S INSIDE**

**WAMS to present show**

Thirty-two students involved in 37 skits for annual production

■ Page 4

**Hospital partners with TeleHealth**

Hospital board identifies retaining medical staff as a strategic priority

■ Page 12

**ONLINE POLL**

**Last Week's Results**

Have you ever tested positive for COVID-19?

- No, never had need to... **48%**
- No, but might have had it.... **26%**
- Yes, a long time ago..... **15%**
- Yes, recently..... **11%**

**Next Week**

How concerned are you about Russia potentially invading Ukraine?

Vote at [www.windomnews.com](http://www.windomnews.com)

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Winter sports winding down**

It may seem like the winter sports season just started, but the end of the winter season has already come for some teams and is drawing near for the rest.

Section individual wrestling is scheduled for Saturday.

Section boys hockey and girls basketball get underway this week. Playoff pairings for boys basketball will be determined Friday.

Brackets for the upcoming boys hockey and girls basketball tournaments appear in this week's Citizen sports section.

**WEATHER**

**A look back...**

|        | H  | L  | P       |
|--------|----|----|---------|
| Tues.  | 39 | 12 | —       |
| Wed.   | 24 | 0  | —       |
| Thurs. | 16 | -1 | —       |
| Fri.   | 44 | 1  | —       |
| Sat.   | 33 | 0  | —       |
| Sun.   | 50 | 18 | —       |
| Mon.   | 24 | 3  | .10 sn. |

**The COVID fallout**



SUBMITTED

**GREG WARNER** hands a surgical mask to a visitor at Windom Area Health after the visitor answered screening questions. The hospital has seen increased ER activity and longer wait times during the COVID pandemic.

**Windom Area Health navigates front line**

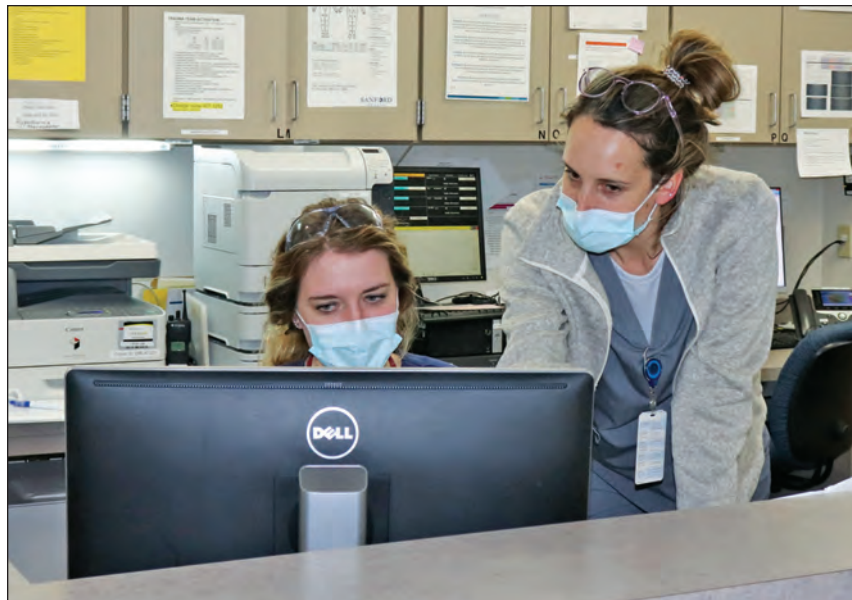
The ER at Windom Area Health has seen a major uptick in activity.

By **JOEL ALVSTAD**  
joela@windomnews.com

It has been two years since the first cases of the COVID-19 virus were confirmed locally.

In the time that has followed, the health care industry, worldwide, has been inundated. Workers at hospitals, clinics and pharmacies have put in long hours, trying to keep patients in the area healthy, while hoping to do the same for themselves.

COVID fatigue and apathy continue to be the largest sources of concern for



SUBMITTED

**REGISTERED NURSES Annie Stoesz (seated) and Rachael Fast look over a patient's file at the nurse's station. WAH has implemented several programs to try to reduce stress and burnout among the staff.**

many health care providers — even as the number of cases again appear to be on the decline.

The issues being seen at health care facilities

in large cities ultimately trickle down to rural areas like Windom Area Health, which does not have an intensive care unit.

The pandemic also has

meant long hours and an “all hands on deck” mentality at all medical facilities, including the local hospital.

SEE **FALLOUT** • PAGE 2

**Taking FFA to the next level**

**FFA President Franz looks to help Windom FFA grow, succeed**

■ **Taylor Franz is upbeat about the Windom's young FFA officers.**

Taylor Franz was just a youngster, maybe 8 years old, when she first got involved with FFA.

As the niece of then Windom ag instructor Darcy Dahna, Taylor helped out at the FFA Petting Zoo during the Windom Farm & Home Show. It's an experience she'll never forget.

“I knew then that this was where I would end up (as an FFA member),” Franz recalled.

She has helped keep the petting zoo well-stocked through the years, bringing cattle, sheep and goats to the event.

Franz, a senior at Windom Area High School, is the daughter of Todd and M.K. Franz of rural Bingham Lake. In addition to helping out at the family's small farm, she has worked at the State Theater in Windom, picked rock at Roll Farms and is currently employed at Smith Automotive.

In her spare time, she helps out at the family farm, does crafting and gardening. She is also active in the student senate, National Honor Society, band, choir, fall play, winter musical, Minnesota Youth Swine Series and she's part of the church outreach series at First Baptist Church. Also, she is president of the Loyal Lakers/Carson Climbers.

**Q What made you decide to run for president?**

**A FRANZ:** I had a lot of hopes and ambitions for what I wanted FFA to become. I felt that I needed to step up to the job to see that those could be achieved.

**Q What were some of those goals?**

**A FRANZ:** Well, we were at the county fair last year with the petting zoo. I asked that we (the FFA chapter) step up and do that.

Through FFA I also want to see more childhood development with agriculture. Some of the other FFA members came up with some good ideas.

This week, we are going to

the second grade classrooms and doing demonstrations on how ag is important to their lives. On Thursday, we are demonstrating how to make butter.

**Q What FFA offices have you held and what FFA degrees have you achieved?**

**A FRANZ:** The degrees I've achieved are my green-hand degree, discovery degree and chapter degree.

My freshman year, I was sentinel. As a sophomore, I was secretary and then vice president as a junior and now president.

**Q What are some judging teams and career development events you've been**

**involved in?**

**A FRANZ:** I started out in general livestock judging and veterinary science is one that popped up in the past couple of years.

Currently, I am doing ag sales. We just had an invitational (at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall) and did better than expected. Our team ranked fifth. Three out of our five members made it to the top 20 and all of us were in the top 30.



Taylor Franz

SEE **FRANZ** • PAGE 9

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## FALLOUT/ Pandemic created financial stress at hospital

FROM PAGE 2

Much of that financial stress has to do with additional supplies. WAH Materials Manager Jeanna LaCanne said the hospital has seen a major surge in purchases of personal protective equipment. "In 2019, we ordered seven cases of surgical masks," LaCanne said. "In 2021, we ordered 27 cases, which are 3,500 to 13,500 masks per case. Now that guidelines have changed, that number will certainly go up. "Before COVID, we didn't inventory N95 masks. We kept them on certain isolation carts and maybe went through a box per size per year. Now, we keep multiple boxes of each size in stock and go through two or three boxes of each size per month. We have three sizes of N95 masks and staff is fitted to which one will work best. "In 2019, we ordered 16 cases of isolation gowns, with 100 gowns per case. In 2021, we ordered 34 cases." LaCanne added that certain IV solutions and tubing also have increased in usage. "A high-usage tubing went from 37 cases in 2019 to 55 cases in 2021," LaCanne said. "An IV solution went from 126 cases in 2019 to 148 cases in 2021. "In general, I keep more stock on hand of high-use items than I did prior to 2020. I never know exactly what will go on backorder, so I set my reorder points pretty tight to make sure that I can get through a backorder if it happens. Sanford also has been very diligent in keeping track of what is on backorder and coming up with substitute items if they know something will be on backorder long-term." LaCanne's efforts have been appreciated by the nursing staff. "Jeanna has really been on top of what the staff wants as far as PPE is concerned," Bennett said. "She's asked what the staff likes, what the staff doesn't like and has really done a great job of keeping everything stocked. She really wanted to know what worked for us." To help fund the additional purchases, Chief Financial Officer John Peyerl said that the facility has been

fortunate to receive support from the federal and state levels. "Funds have been received to cover expenses associated with the pandemic and also to reduce the effects of lost revenue," Peyerl said. "Most of the funds received have fallen into this general distribution category. WAH also has received targeted funds for more specific purposes, such as supporting vaccination and testing efforts." Peyerl added that health care facilities as a whole have had new challenges when it comes to insurance. "Because of the variety of insurance products available, it has been difficult to specifically determine what is covered and what isn't," Peyerl said. "Some insurers have covered COVID-related expenses very well, while others have not. It really depends on the individual insurance products."

**All hands on deck**  
Throughout the pandemic, the hospital has had something of an "all hands on deck" mentality. Early in the pandemic, several areas were closed to general service, such as the fitness center and the cafeteria. As a result, employees in those areas were temporarily given other assignments. Abby Kipfer is a registered dietician at the hospital. However, throughout the pandemic, she also has been in charge of scheduling screeners. "The screeners are really the first line of defense for the hospital," Kipfer said. "Things have evolved so much since we first had to screen. With COVID, the speed things have changed is pretty amazing, and it's been such a learning curve. "When we first began screening, the Wellness Center was closed, so those

employees served as screeners. We had only one door to the facility open. We also borrowed staff from the kitchen. My office location, which is fairly close to the main entrance, and the fact my staff were involved basically is how I ended up being put in charge of the screeners. "Once our Wellness Center reopened and things started getting more back to normal, we hired part-time help to be screeners." Kipfer added that when the hospital began doing testing and vaccinations, that put even more stress on screeners and the staff as a whole. The hospital currently no longer administers vaccinations. And people seeking a general COVID test are referred to primary providers or to public health. Meanwhile, Kipfer added that all health care facilities are still required to screen people entering the facility. "As much as the screening process can be annoying and a pain for our patients and visitors, it is required and important," Kipfer said. "It makes sure we are communicating and helping keep people with COVID symptoms as isolated as possible. Those people are shifted differently, to different waiting areas and are more isolated. "There are still a pretty significant number of people who are very concerned about COVID and the screening process helps those people feel a little more comfortable. "But the list of possible symptoms for COVID is very long, and can resemble any number of other ailments. You could think to yourself you ate something that didn't agree with you and you have a stomach ache, but it could be a COVID symptom."

**The frustration factor**  
Kipfer added that there are many people who have had the sense of fear from the pandemic wear off. And that has led to anger being directed at the screeners. "As a health care facility, we're required to screen people coming in, and people coming in are still required to wear face masks," Kipfer said. "We know it's frustrating. We know people are getting tired of COVID. People feel so strongly about their opinions and beliefs. On a daily basis, the screeners get some level of harassment. But our staff is just trying to do their jobs and follow the guidelines we're supposed to as a health care facility." That frustration from patients has also trickled into the ER at times. "There's been unruly patients even before COVID, but now we're seeing some instances where people don't want to wear a mask in the ER," Andrews said. "People have their beliefs on what works and what doesn't, and

they are very vocal in those beliefs. We're just trying to follow the rules that are imposed on us, so we can keep our doors open. Everyone here is just trying to do a job." "And with the ERs being busier and busier, we have to try to triage patients as best we can, and some people are having to wait longer," Bennett said. "In Windom, it hasn't been common to wait hours in the ER. Sometimes, now, it might be because of the challenges we're dealing with—more people coming to the ER and a harder time transferring critical patients out. But if someone is waiting in the ER, that's probably a good sign that you're a more stable patient. If someone is waiting, it means that someone else has a more life-threatening condition that needs to be treated first."

"There are many times we've been faced with challenges," Kipfer said. "Just recently, we had almost half of our nutrition department staff out sick. It's been cool to see different people step up. We've trained people in different areas to be ready to step into another area if needed. A lot of times, the staff in your department might work longer shifts or altered hours if someone else is out. Burnout is definitely a concern, especially at times we're short staff. But the hospital has done a very good job of taking care of employees and providing opportunities and resources. "As challenging as it's been, it's been cool to see everyone step up and serve our purpose. But everybody out here, to some extent, has been impacted by COVID." **Editor's note: This is the first of a two-part series on the pandemic's impact on health care in the area. The next part will look at the impact on clinics and pharmacies.**

**Meeting challenges**

Likewise, the pandemic has brought several challenges to the staff at the hospital.



**Getting Involved**  
The City has 14 volunteer boards/commissions where there are over 80 seats filled by citizens. There are current openings on the following:

- Charter Commission • Telecom Commission
- Planning Commission • Nuisance Board
- Community Center Commission

Interested persons may contact the mayor or City Hall at 507-831-6129 or via email at windommayor@windom-mn.com

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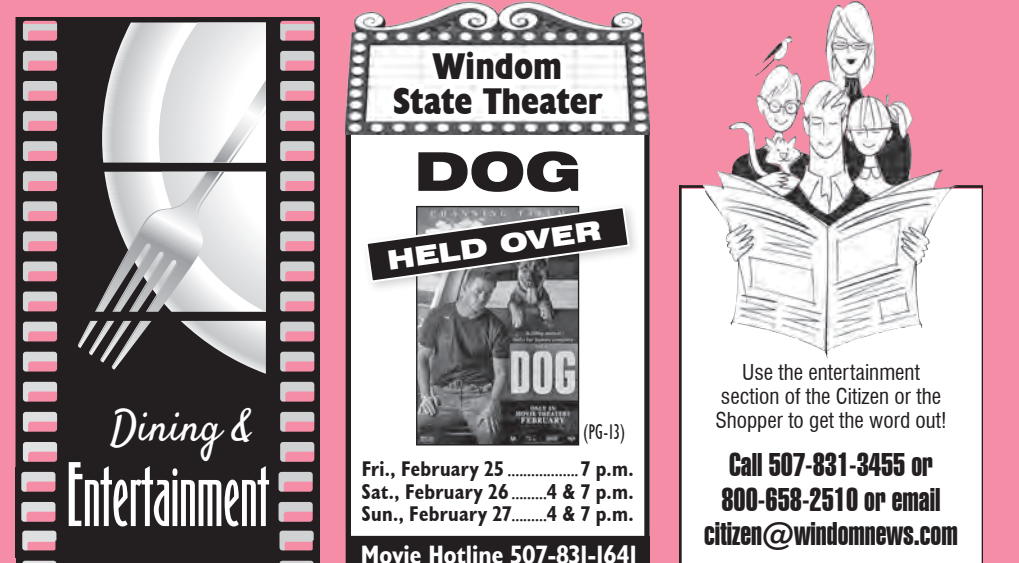
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## Jackson Farm and Home Show

SATURDAY, FEB. 26 • 9:00 A.M. TO 1:30 P.M.  
Jackson County Central High School Auxiliary Gym • 1128 North Highway, Jackson

| EDUCATIONAL FORUMS |  | ENTERTAINMENT STAGE |                 |
|--------------------|--|---------------------|-----------------|
| 9:00 a.m.          | How to Make a Modern Postage Stamp Quilt Block, Lori Kokoruda from Old Alley Quilt Shop                                | — 9:30 a.m. —       | V Notes (Polka) |
| 9:30 a.m.          | History of Jackson: What You May Not Know, Dr. Mark Titus  | — 11:00 a.m. —      | Zoo Man         |
| 10:15 a.m.         | 10 "Rules of the Road" for investing and Retirement with Q&A, Wyman and Rebecca Fischer from Edward Jones              | — 12:00 noon —      | Zoo Man         |
| 10:45 a.m.         | Informational CBD Presentation, Adam and Julia Weets from Alpha's Alternatives   |                     |                 |
| 11:30 a.m.         | City of Jackson and Economic Development Q&A, Matt Skaret and Dave Schmidt   |                     |                 |
| 12:00 noon         | "Using Ice vs. Heat and All About Feet: Back Talk," Dr. Kerri Henderson from Optimal Health Chiropractic & Acupuncture |                     |                 |
| 12:45 p.m.         | Who Pays the Bills After You're Gone?, Megan Hesper from State Farm Insurance  |                     |                 |

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**Free Blood Pressure Testing 9 a.m. to noon**  
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**Free Vision Screening for Kids (6 mos. & up)**  
Jackson Lions Club—Sponsored by Lions Kidsight USA

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Served all day

**Vendor Craft Fair**

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**Tigermans in at Shalom Hill Farm**

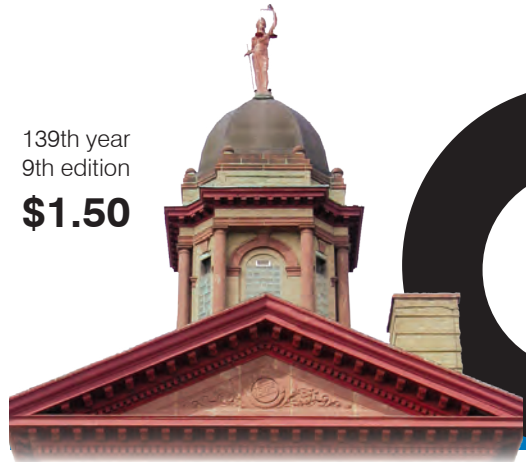
Idaho couple makes big move back to Midwest to head up local retreat

■ Page 4



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# CITIZEN

Cottonwood County



**High-scoring finale**

Eagles put up 100 in regular season finale

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022

**WHAT'S INSIDE**

**Hage to leave EDA post**

Windom Economic Development Director Hage to leave in April

■ Page 2

**Windom speech bounces back**

Windom sees strong turnout for speech program after pandemic

■ Page 6

**ONLINE POLL**

**Last Week's Results**

How concerned are you about Russia invading Ukraine?



**Next Week**

Do you support sending U.S. troops to the Ukrainian border in Poland?

Vote at [www.windomnews.com](http://www.windomnews.com)

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Grain changes in the county**

Types of grain raised in Cottonwood County has changed over the years, according to a 1970 Citizen story.

After the breaking of prairie sod, the first crop was flax, followed by wheat. Little barley was found here and oats were only raised for horses.

Corn was introduced around 1900. Skeptical farmers tried just a few acres. Hastened by the two-horse planter and check wire, corn acreage increased. White corn was grown early on, but by 1910, yellow corn was more common.

Hybrid corn was introduced in the 1930s.

**WEATHER**

**A look back...**

|        | H  | L   | P                |
|--------|----|-----|------------------|
| Tues.  | 4  | -10 | 2" <sup>sn</sup> |
| Wed.   | 5  | -10 | —                |
| Thurs. | 6  | -7  | 1" <sup>sn</sup> |
| Fri.   | 13 | 4   | —                |
| Sat.   | 34 | 10  | —                |
| Sun.   | 42 | 24  | —                |
| Mon.   | 52 | 29  | —                |

## Friday Olympic fun



ONE OF THE last legs of the relay was doing a barrel race while "riding" a stick horse. Drew Rothenberger (left) tries to stay a step ahead of Job Ogeka as the two sprint to the start of the relay's final event.

JOEL ALVSTAD 3/2 Ag Olympics 33

*Ag Olympics puts bow on festive FFA Week*

Windom Area High School students assembled in the Blue Gym to wrap up FFA Week Friday with a special event.

Teams representing each class, grades 9-12, took part in the Ag Olympics relay race to close out the day.

The relay started with an egg-and-spoon race, followed by a nut-and-bolt race. The next group had to find a crochet needle in a stack of hay. The fourth group had to "milk" a plywood cow cutout. Group five had to throw a hay bale from one side of the gym to the other. The sixth group rode on stick horses to run a barrel race, with the top two finishers in the barrel race having to ride a pedal tractor from one baseline of the gym to the other.

At the end of the event, the sophomore class took top honors, with each participant in the class receiving a small prize.

ERIC BUSS carefully carries a plastic egg on a spoon during the first leg of the relay.



3/2 Ag Olympics 2



BRYAN MACARIO (left) and Elham Yusuf work to put a nut on a bolt while wearing gloves during one leg of the relay.

3/2 Ag Olympics 4



LANDON PILLATZKI winds up to toss a hay bale during the Ag Olympic relay last week.

3/2 Ag Olympics 25

## Farm & Home Show returns for 38th year Saturday

■ After a one-year hiatus, the Windom Farm & Home Show returns pretty much intact on Saturday.

Until last year, it seemed as though only a few guarantees existed in these parts: death, taxes and the Windom Farm & Home Show.

However, like everything else, COVID came along and changed the rules. Ultimately, the decision was made to cancel the 2021 event. But this Saturday, the big show returns to Windom Area Middle High School, as good as ever.

The event runs from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and will again feature such favorites as the Zoo Man, farm-related seminars, a robotics demonstration and, of course, great food.

"We are at 55 vendors, which is down about five or 10 from what's typical," said the show's chairman, Mike LaMaack.

"But we typically pick some up in the days leading up to the show. They can get a booth right up to the start of the event."

Through the years, the show has been a big hit for youngsters, mainly because of an appearance by The Zoo Man, Brent Mielke, who owns the Adrian Zoo. Mielke gets children laughing and cheering as they get close-up views and even handle a few reptiles.

People rarely leave the event hungry. And, in the past few years the food has received rave reviews. This year's vendors

SEE **SHOW** • PAGE 7

## Two from area advance to state

Two area wrestlers will head to St. Paul Friday for the State Wrestling Tournament.

Windom-Mt. Lake senior Micah Holmberg advanced to state after taking second at 182 pounds at Saturday's Section 3AA Tournament in Redwood Falls.

Red Rock Central junior Vander Mathiowetz advanced after finishing second at 182 pounds at Saturday's Section 3A Tournament in Wabasso.

Each will be making their state tourney debut.

A full recap appears in this week's sports.



JOEL ALVSTAD 3/2 wrestling 135 MICAH HOLMBERG was the lone Cobra wrestler to advance to the state tournament after placing second at 182 pounds in the Section 3AA Tournament.

# Lingering frustration on the COVID front

COVID fallacies have created frustration for pharmacies.

By **JOEL ALVSTAD**  
[joela@windomnews.com](mailto:joela@windomnews.com)

The role of the local pharmacy during the COVID pandemic has increased greatly.

Rather than simply providing treatments and giving treatment advice, pharmacies have also been the primary source for people to receive the COVID vaccine and subsequent booster.

Pharmacists also have a unique perspective on the

pandemic, because they see the after-effects. They see the treatments that patients are receiving to treat the virus.

The frustration has been with the level of distrust people have displayed regarding the vaccine.

**Herd immunity?**

Joel Luitjens, pharmacist at Lewis Family Drug in Windom, said the pandemic has slowed considerably over the past couple of weeks, but that the level of concern is still high.

The pharmacy has 10

full-time and eight part-time employees. Since the start of the pandemic, five staff members have missed time due to COVID, with four of them in fairly short order in the early stages of the virus.

"That was an absolute nightmare," Luitjens said. "If we were down one more person, it would have been difficult to keep going. And, more recently, we had one get exposure through a non-vaccinated person away from work."

Since the vaccine became readily available, it has been available at the pharmacy.

Luitjens noted that the goal of any pandemic is to achieve what is considered "herd immunity," or, basically, the level of immunization

where it would be unlikely to contract an illness.

"Herd immunity is a term that gets thrown around and most people think that it's around 70%, but that number is actually a little low," Luitjens said. "Eighty percent is a more accurate indicator and is a standard we use all the time."

"For example, there are some kids who can't get the measles/mumps/rubella shot, but they're considered protected because just about everybody else does get the shot. There aren't enough people bouncing it around."

That's why Luitjens feels the vaccine has been important.

But, he adds, that public perception of the vaccine

has been shaky.

"It's terribly frustrating to see the number of unvaccinated," Luitjens said. "On my staff, we've been administering the vaccinations. We never had any mandate to be vaccinated, but I think everyone could see what the vaccine was doing."

**Getting the facts**

When people question the fact the COVID vaccine was developed so quickly, Luitjens is quick to point out that it really wasn't.

"Coronaviruses have been around for a long time," Luitjens said. "It's just that this strain became deadly. A lot of people question how

SEE **FALLOUT** • PAGE 7

**Hy-Vee pharmacy**

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# REFLECTIONS

## 10 YEARS AGO

*Feb. 29, 2012*

In the wake of last week's unveiling of Minnesota's new Congressional Districts, Windom and Lake of the Woods suddenly have something in common: The 7th Congressional District. The new district map moves Windom out of the 1st District, while follows Interstate 90 across the south half of the state and into the 7th District, which stretches from Canada to near I-90.

After more than 20 years as Windom city attorney, Dan McDonald has decided to retire. His retirement takes effect March 15.

The name hasn't changed, nor has the focus on service, but Windom Floor & Sleep is under new ownership. Jim "Crunch" Rosenkranz has purchased the business from his father, Jim Rosenkranz.

Ashley Watkins, an eighth-grader at Mt. Lake Public School, finished in third place at the 2012 Regional Spelling Bee held at South Central College in Mankato.

Sheri (Foth) Hall, a 1986 graduate of Windom Area High School, has knitted "Oscar the Slouch" hats that will be boxed and inserted into Oscars celebrities' gift bags at this year's Academy Awards.

Morgan Malakowsky's poster captured first place in the Community Day Poster Contest, while Samantha Hiniker's poster received second place. Both are sixth-graders at Windom Area Middle School.

Top speakers in Windom's third-place finish at the Martin County West Invitational include Brady Ysker-Giefer, first in poetry; Tom Hacker, first in humorous

and second in prose; Morgan Potter, second in drama and poetry; Emily Axford and Eli Yackel-Juleen, third in dramatic duo.

Rachel Wilson took first place in original oratory and informative speaking to lead Mt. Lake Christian to a third place finish at the Minnesota State University-Mankato speech tournament.

Karschnik, Trista Goldie, Rachel Voehl and Trenton Anderson.

Ingrid Peterson, a senior at Windom Area High School, won the Region 9 sub-section Triple A title. She shares the title with A-nder Kopperud of Westbrook-Walnut Grove.

Nicole Nesseth and Danielle Smith of Windom were winners at the Knights of Columbus regional free throw shooting contest in Redwood Falls.

The Windom Bowling Association held its annual Women's Nine-pin City Tournament at the Sun Bowl in Windom. Negen Construction won the team competition. Team members include Phyllis Ludvigson, Donna Bennett, Arlene Johnson, Evelyn Barton and Joan Negen. Laurie Behrens won the singles competition, while Tracy Arndt and Faye Green teamed up to win doubles and Diane Vellema was the all-events champion.

## 25 YEARS AGO

*March 5, 1997*

The Windom Junior Mid-gets hockey team celebrated a 5-3 win over Moorhead to win the Outstate Regional Tournament in Worthington. The victory secured the team's sixth straight appearance in the state playoffs.

Lindsay Nesmo, a fifth-grader at Mt. Lake Public School, advanced to the regional spelling bee after winning the school title. Finalists included: fifth-graders Brady Fast, Sarah Kratovil and Alison Gohr; sixth-graders Mitchell Schroeder, Stacie Krahn, Holly Dodge and David Bucklin; seventh-graders Jesse Hiebert, Nicole Hiebert, Dan Henze and Rachel Morin; and eighth-graders Justin Anderson, Amber Rinderle, Julie Nelson and Gretchen Krause.

Andrew Suderman, a Mt. Lake Christian School sixth-grader, was awarded second place in the Lions Club District Peace Poster Contest.

February's Terrific Kids at Windom Area Schools included Mike Temme, Ashton Pankonin, Dereck Whelan, Brady Towlerton, Jordan Struck, Mark Jenniges, Drew Riese, Sarah Ray, Jaclyn Stuckenbroker, Ashley Hopf, Scott Woizeschke, Jenny Southivong, Sarah Pohlman, Sam Voth, Travis

Don Reed, 38, of the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks, has accepted assignment as a Medex trainee with Dr. James Doken at the Windom Clinic.

A Minnesota Highway Department survey crew is making a preliminary study for a new bridge over the Des Moines River in Windom. To be replaced are two old bridges over the river on Highway 62 (Sixth Street) between Island Park and Rolling Green.

A Cottonwood County state and federal aid highway project ranks as the best of such bituminous paving projects completed

## 50 YEARS AGO

*Feb. 29, 1972*

Don Reed, 38, of the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks, has accepted assignment as a Medex trainee with Dr. James Doken at the Windom Clinic.

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A Cottonwood County state and federal aid highway project ranks as the best of such bituminous paving projects completed

in Minnesota last year. The lauded construction project is County State Aid Highway 8, from Highway 30 to the north county line, about a mile east of Comfrey. Sherm Wagnild, county engineer, and Hugo Schulz Road Contractor Inc., of Lakefield were presented plaques in St. Paul.

Topper Burgess, first-year student at Pipestone Vocational School, reigned as the king of the school's winter carnival. Topper, a 1971 graduate of Windom High School, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Sartorius of Windom.

Members of the 1972 Windom boys basketball team who will represent the school in the District 7 Tournament include: Jim Bolin, Mitch Paulson, Steve Ratzlaff, Jim Larson, John Daggett, Randy Even, Travis Finstad, Mike Spielman, Dan Fossing, George Miller, Doug Miller, Mike Anderson, Lew Olson, Bruce Earlewine and Gary Erpedast.

## SHOW/Dairy Assn. to offer free milk Saturday

FROM PAGE 1

are Plaza Jalisco and Hy-Vee. In addition, guests will receive free milk this year, compliments of the American Dairy Association.

Among the big changes in 2022 is that the FFA petting zoo will not return. However, the robotics demonstration is back and there have been a few additions, including Eagle Path Manufacturing, which is located at Windom Area Middle High School. Guests will get a chance to tour the school's new manufacturing area and possibly even purchase

some of their items. Another new event involves the Windom Fire Department which will do presentations geared toward children. Details of those presentations have not yet been ironed out.

Also returning for 2022 are a number of offerings from Windom Area Health, including:

- Glucose blood sugar testing.
- An inflatable walk-through colon.
- Spirometry breathing and testing.

Admission to the event is free and people can enter through either the east or west entrance. At the entrance, there will be a tribute to longtime Farm & Home Show volunteer and board member Melvin Wojahn, who passed away in the summer of 2021.



## FALLOUT/Pharmacist explains how vaccine works

FROM PAGE 1

the vaccine came about so quickly. Well, a lot of the work to develop a vaccine has been done over years.

"The vaccine against shingles actually was tested on fewer people than the COVID vaccine. With COVID, it took so little time for people to get infected and get sick."

The job of the vaccine, he said, is to essentially teach the rest of the body how to protect itself against the virus. As a result, the actual vaccine itself is not in the body long-term.

"This vaccine doesn't stay in the body that long," Luitjens said. "Within a couple of weeks, there's no trace of the vaccine in the body. It isn't going to cause trouble down the road because it's not going to be in the body down the road."

The vaccines also have helped lessen the severity of COVID with each different variant.

"Even influenza changes every year," Luitjens said. "Basically, how our flu vaccine is made is they look at what happens in South America during our summer, because that's winter down there. That's their high season for influenza. And there are always mutations."

"We knew that COVID would mutate. Delta was a very harsh variant. Omicron isn't as potent, but it's been much more catchy, so the number of infections has gone up. The hope is that every mutation becomes less and less severe."

States. If something was going to show up, it would have shown up by now.

"As a person working in health care, the frustration to me is so many people could have just helped themselves by getting a vaccine for free. That frustration is evident across the health care field. And the volume of people who are having treatment delayed because of the lack of availability of hospital space is tragic."

But the pharmacy is often where the results of vaccination versus non-vaccination are seen.

"In the pharmacy, we see the consequences of people not getting the vaccine," Luitjens said. "We're the ones who see people getting steroids. We've had some people getting ivermectin. Even though it's not been proven as a treatment, they're having their doctor write prescriptions for it."

"Then, those people are upset when it isn't covered by insurance. Insurance doesn't cover a medicine being used in a manner that isn't an approved use. I guess I don't understand the logic of not trusting the vaccine, but being willing to trust ivermectin."

"If someone has fairly mild symptoms, they're probably just getting something over the counter. But if someone is coming in for imitrex or some kind of steroid, that means their symptoms were pretty severe. That's something the general public really doesn't see."

Luitjens said in a normal year, he sells six prescriptions of ivermectin, at most. In the past year, he's kept eight boxes of ivermectin on hand at all times.

Pharmacies are also seeing significant supply chain issues.

"We all know how difficult it was to get toilet paper when the pandemic first started. But over the last year, Tylenol has been very hard to get," Luitjens said. "We'll have stretches where we can't get it for a week and a half. Our cough and cold section sometimes looks like someone cleared off the shelves. Keeping over-the-counter medications in stock

has been a major challenge."

### Added stress

When a patient comes in to receive the vaccine or a booster, an employee takes their information, administers the shot and checks on the patient after 15 minutes.

"It adds stress to our staff," Luitjens said. "Things have slowed down a bit over the past month. Before that, we were doing 20-plus vaccinations a day. On Fridays, we were doing over 40 vaccinations a day because people would have the whole weekend to recover. Now, it's down to eight to 10 per day. But that's been an add-on to our work day, because someone has

"The vaccine against shingles actually was tested on fewer people than the COVID vaccine."

**JOEL LUITJENS**  
LEWIS FAMILY DRUG PHARMACIST

to come administer the shot and check on the person 15 minutes later. They also have to do billing and report it to the state immunization website.

"You give out an immunization card to people, but the state also has an app so you can have a digital record of your vaccinations."

But Luitjens believes that the vaccine is doing what it's supposed to do, which is limit the severity of COVID.

"There's a wide range of medications that we've seen people get," Luitjens said. "Some people who aren't vaccinated have only mild cases. But we've seen that people who haven't gotten the vaccine are more likely to have a severe case."

"Typically, with a vaccinated person, the symptoms are mild. Maybe they lose their sense of taste or smell. Maybe they have an upset stomach. That might be the only thing that registers with them as a COVID symptom."

"The Sanford website lists the numbers of people hospitalized, in ICUs and on ventilators who are vaccinated versus non-vaccinated. The other week, it was 38 people in ICU where non-vaccinated, and none who were vaccinated. That tells me the vaccine is working."

*Editor's note: This is the second of a three-part series on the pandemic's impact on health care in the area. The next part will look at the impact on clinics.*

## Dining and Entertainment Guide

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38th Annual Windom Area Chamber of Commerce  
**Farm & Home Show**  
Saturday, March 5  
9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Windom Area Middle High School  
TASTE OF WINDOM EVENT  
11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Food will be served by...  
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• HyVee  
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Live animals with The Zoo Man!

**ENTERTAINMENT | 60+ EXHIBITORS | SEMINARS**

**SEMINARS**  
9:00 a.m. — Market update with Cliff Huot, POET Grain Regional Marketing Manager  
10:30 a.m. — "Fair Isn't Always Equal" discussion on family farms with Cassandra Lustfield, Ford Law Office Attorney

- Windom Robotics Team Performances
- Free milk
- \$2,000 in Robotics Raffle Prizes, including a BlackStone 36" Griddle!
- Family-friendly activities
- Fire Department Demonstrations
- See Hydee the HyLife Pig Mascot
- Health screenings with Windom Area Health
- Tour Eagle Path Manufacturing

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## Skaters ready for 'Monsters Rink'

Windom Figure Skating Club to present annual weekend Ice Show

Page 4

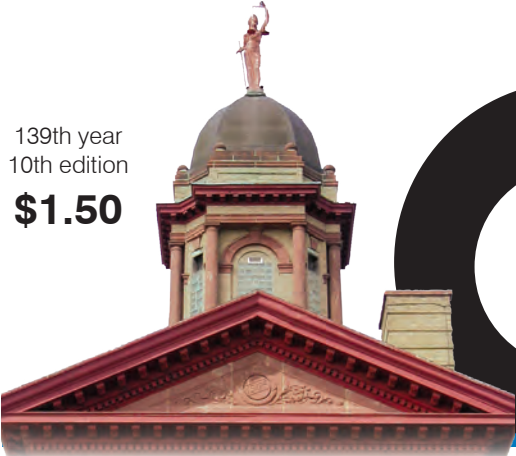


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## WHAT'S INSIDE

### Veterans memorial update

The Windom veterans memorial project remains \$12,000 short of its goal

Page 2

### Robotics team gets World Invite

Windom's Pineapple Posse gets official invitation to World meet

Page 6

## ONLINE POLL

### Last Week's Results

Do you support sending U.S. troops to the Ukrainian border in Poland?

Yes ..... **55%**  
 No ..... **45%**

### Next Week

Should Minnesota add sports betting at casinos and online?

Vote at [www.windomnews.com](http://www.windomnews.com)

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Enduring a chilly, but dry February

It was an unusually cold February for Windom area residents.

The mercury averaged just 27 degrees for high temperatures during the month with an average low of 2 degrees.

While there were no high temps below zero, there were lows at zero or below on 14 days. The high temperature for the month was 50 degrees on Feb. 21 and the low was -14 on Feb. 2 and 3.

Despite the cold, the month stayed relatively dry with only 3.4 inches of snow falling during the month, with .31 inches of precipitation. Two of those 3.4 inches were recorded on Feb. 23.

## WEATHER

### A look back...

|        | H  | L  | P   |
|--------|----|----|-----|
| Tues.  | 42 | 31 | —   |
| Wed.   | 43 | 25 | —   |
| Thurs. | 30 | 23 | —   |
| Fri.   | 42 | 28 | tr. |
| Sat.   | 35 | 23 | .61 |
| Sun.   | 29 | 16 | —   |
| Mon.   | 33 | 17 | —   |

# Area clinics seeing ripple effect

## Pandemic puts preventive care on hold

**Cancer and diabetes screening saw a decline due to COVID.**

By JOEL ALVSTAD

A full two years after the first cases were reported, the COVID-19 pandemic appears to finally be heading toward the ending stages.

Statewide and nationally, the number of cases of COVID have decreased significantly in the past month, raising hopes that the "endemic" point of the pandemic has been reached,

where the ongoing impact on society is limited.

But while the pandemic may be nearing its end point, the medical field is still, in many ways, playing catch-up.

The pandemic has had several impacts on health care throughout the nation and locally, whether it be crowded emergency rooms, empty pharmacy shelves or short-staffed clinics.

But perhaps the most overlooked side effect of the pandemic is the impact

seen at the area's clinics for routine preventive care.

### On the back burner

Dr. A.J. Yusuf, a physician at Sanford Clinic in Windom, noted that the past two years have seen a decline in the number of routine preventive procedures.

Much of that was due to the nature of COVID.

"Everyone was so con-

SEE **SCREENING**  
• **BACK PAGE**



JOEL ALVSTAD 3/9 Sanford Clinic 07

DR. A.J. YUSUF (seated) and Registered Nurse Natalie Karschnik review a patient's file. Routine care is starting to catch up as the pandemic winds down.

## Farm & Home sees busy Saturday

The Windom Farm & Home Show returned after missing 2021, due to the pandemic.

The booths were buzzing with guests, just like old times, at Saturday's Windom Farm & Home Show.

The event, which was cancelled due to COVID in 2021, brought back many of the longtime favorites, including the Zoo Man and tasty food options.



RICHARD BARNETT 3/9 farmhome 08

**AMONG THE POPULAR** attractions at Saturday's Farm & Home Show was the giant inflatable walk-through colon sponsored by Windom Area Health Outreach.



AT THE ENTRANCE OF the show was a tribute to Mel Wojahn, a longtime event committee member who passed away in 2021.



**THE ZOO MAN** was a big hit for the youngsters at Saturday's Farm & Home Show, as usual.

3/9 farmhome 06

## Election details begin to take shape

**So far, two people have announced they will seek the area seat held by retiring Rep. Rod Hamilton of Mt. Lake.**

The 2022 election is still eight months away, but key details are fall-

ing into place, including candidates and districts.

In recent weeks, residents have learned:

- Longtime District 22B Rep. Rod Hamilton of Mt. Lake will not seek re-election.
- Two candidates have

already emerged for Hamilton's seat — Larry Liepold of Okabena and Marj Fogelman of Fulda. Both are Republicans.

• In January, the District 22 line moves east, bringing the entire county under District 21

senate seat and splitting the county for the House. Windom, Bingham Lake, Mt. Lake, Butterfield and Odin will be represented by District 21B. The rest

SEE **ELECTION**  
• **BACK PAGE**

## Windom council calls for hearing on TIF spending plan

Windom's new South Cottonwood Lake development is expected to be set in motion by April.

It appears the final pieces of the South Cottonwood Lake development puzzle are falling into place.

Agreements have been reached on the purchase of the south Cottonwood Lake property and also Cemstone's new site in North Windom Industrial Park. In addition, two developers are in place for both the apartments and housing section. All that remains is to finalize Tax Increment Financing for both aspects of the project.

Last week, the Windom City Council took a big step in wrapping up final TIF details voting 5-0 to call for a March 15 public hearing (at its regular meeting) on a TIF spending plan for the south Cottonwood Lake project. The proposed development is at the current Cemstone ready mix plant, which lies directly south of Tegels Park, across Cottonwood Lake Drive from Windom's east water tower.

The overall plan calls for the EDA to buy a 34-acre site for \$1.15 million. Voss Plumbing & Heating would then purchase the site from the city after agreeing to pay \$230,000 and develop the site at a projected cost of more than \$1 million (including sewer, water, street, electric and storm sewer).

Excluded from that part of the deal is an apartment project site, to be purchased by Apollo Development.

Voss Plumbing & Heating would develop and sell seven lake lots, plus six to eight back lots.

The remaining undeveloped lots and quarry area would be donated back to the city once the plat is finished. Doing it this way simplifies the process.

Voss Plumbing & Heating requested \$150,000 in TIF for property development, which includes development of a lift station and backup generator.

Apollo's TIF request for the 40-unit upscale apartment complex is \$594,000.

## Award winner puts customers, employees first

HyLife's Windom plant has an annual payroll of roughly \$60 million.

The HyLife officials who accepted the Exceptional Achievement Award at last fall's Windom Chamber Gala didn't need to say a word.

Happiness and appreciation were written all over their faces.

It isn't often a company with one year of history in a community comes away with this award. This fact is not lost on Chief Financial Officer Tom Seigfreid and other HyLife leaders.

"We were thrilled about it and, at the same time, surprised," Seigfreid said. "Reflecting and thinking about others who were nominated,

### AWARD WINNER

any of those would have been an excellent recipient of the award."

Now at 1,030 employees, HyLife is Windom's largest employer. The plant is at the northeast edge of town.

The company started in Manitoba, Canada about 25 years ago, when two family farms joined forces to share their knowledge and passion to produce the best pigs.

Headquartered in La Broquerie, Manitoba, HyLife operates in the following locations: Windom, Neepawa and La Broquerie, Manitoba; Salvatierra, Mexico; Shanghai, China; and a sales office in Tokyo, Japan.

**Q** How does HyLife try to have an impact on Windom and the surrounding area?

**A** SEIGFREID: To be engaged in the community has great meaning for us.

We are always looking for ways to support and be involved. Last year, we were involved in things like Riverfest, the county fair, Railroad Days in St. James, the Regatta in Worthington and other things.

The first big one we did was Riverfest in Windom. We had more than 200 employees, all in blue HyLife shirts. It was cool to see.

**Q** What is HyLife's payroll, locally?

**A** SEIGFREID: Our compensation is in excess of \$60 million per year.

**Q** What makes HyLife want to do so many good things locally?

**SEIGFREID:** One of our key things, going back to our mission statement, is that we take care of our employees, our customers and our communities that we live in.

The employees, our people, are a focus for us. Obviously customers are important, we need their business. The way to keep driving our business



Tom Seigfreid

forward is to take care of customers by listening to their valued feedback.

**Q** What is HyLife's local trucking impact?

**A** SEIGFREID: It is around 75 trucks per day. That's hogs coming in and product going out. And then there are the materials, the packaging material and other supplies.

**Q** What were your impressions of the Gala after seeing it for the first time?

**A** SEIGFREID: The event is a celebration that comes together at the end of the

SEE **AWARD**  
• **BACK PAGE**

**HyVee pharmacy**

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### SCREENING/ Regular visits decline for diabetic care

FROM PAGE 1

cerned about COVID that we saw a drop in regular preventive visits," Yusuf said. "People were hesitant to go see their providers because they didn't want to risk coming into contact with COVID."

"We saw the number of regular visits for diabetic care, high blood pressure screenings and procedures, like colonoscopies and mammograms, go down."

Much of that hesitance by patients was unnecessary because of safety measures put into place by the clinic, including drive-thru testing and protocols for patients exhibiting COVID symptoms.

"In our clinic setting, we've done our best to prove a safe environment for all our patients," Yusuf said. "Our testing for COVID has been drive-thru testing behind our building. It was a nurse-driven program with guidance from the providers. If a person either had symptoms or had an exposure, the nurse would put on their PPE and conduct the test out back."

"If a patient was symptomatic and sick, then we

would bring them into the clinic, but we would get them into an exam room right away, so they wouldn't be in the waiting room."

Now, Yusuf is optimistic that COVID numbers are heading in the right direction and that recent variants have been less potent.

"With COVID numbers finally trending in the right direction, hopefully we can get caught up on all of the screenings that have been missed over the last two years," Yusuf said. "We definitely hope we don't see another big spike in COVID, but hopefully it isn't too late to catch up on that screening and we don't see a big spike in cancer cases."

Echoing that sentiment was Josh Sammons, Clinic Director for Sanford Clinics in Windom, Mt. Lake, Westbrook and Tracy.

Sammons added that the fear of COVID has subsided greatly, which has prompted many to return to scheduling important screenings.

"I think what has been really missed over the past two years has been the various screenings and preventive care," Sammons said.

"I understand that the fear of COVID kind of made it so people didn't want to go see their doctor for preventive care. But those measures—colonoscopies, mammograms, managing diabetes—are just as important as anything COVID-related. We're just now starting to see that care that was missed catch up."

Unfortunately, Sammons said, some of the preliminary data is showing that the hesitance of some patients to undergo routine preventive screening during the pandemic is, indeed, leading to more severe diagnoses now.

"My concern is that we're going to see a significant increase in the number of cases of colon cancer or breast cancer, because people weren't having those tests done the last couple of years during the pandemic," Sammons said.

"Some of that data is already starting to come out. Hopefully, we're able to provide a safe enough

My concern is that we're going to see a significant increase in the number of cases of colon cancer or breast cancer, because people weren't having those tests done the last couple of years during the pandemic."

**JOSH SAMMONS**  
CLINIC DIRECTOR FOR SANFORD CLINICS IN WINDOM, MT. LAKE, WESTBROOK AND TRACY

experience that those people can have those preventive measures done."

#### The clinics' role

Throughout the pandemic, the role of a primary care provider at a clinic has been critical to treatment of patients.

Sammons noted that if a patient suspects they have COVID, calling their primary care provider is a necessary first step toward treatment.

"Typically, if someone suspects they have COVID, we would rather have them contact their clinic, rather than the emergency room," Sammons said. "The ERs can get overwhelmed at times, and that isn't to say that we haven't had an influx of patients. But contacting their primary care provider is the best first step someone can take."

And calling the clinic, rather than stopping in, has also been critical to the safety of other patients and staff.

"One of the things we implemented very early is that if someone suspects they have COVID, they call us instead of walking into the clinic," Sammons said. "That allows us to protect our other patients and our staff, and allows our staff to put on their PPE. That also allows us to set up to do a drive-through test behind our clinic. It just greatly reduces the risk of further transmission."

"Sometimes, providers want to see a patient, to listen to their heart and lungs. But we want to minimize the risk of transmission."

As a provider, Dr. Yusuf noted that with milder symptoms, providers typically

recommend conservative treatment.

"If the symptoms are mild, we'll recommend taking Tylenol or ibuprofen, hydration and rest," Yusuf said. "It's viral and has to run its course. But if it settles in your chest, you can get pneumonia."

"So if someone is immunocompromised, has other underlying conditions or is over the age of 65, we'd give them a home monitoring kit and would walk them through symptoms to watch for, with the main ones being chest pain or shortness of breath. That would require further evaluation with X-rays or, if it's more severe, it would warrant an ER trip. Most mild cases, we'll keep here to treat."

With the recent decline in cases, Sammons noted that Sanford Clinics have changed procedure, in that they no longer administer tests to people who are asymptomatic.

"Our leadership provides

We saw the number of regular visits for diabetic care, high blood pressure screenings and procedures, like colonoscopies and mammograms, go down."

**DR. A.J. YUSUF**  
PHYSICIAN AT SANFORD CLINIC IN WINDOM

### Lions Club orders materials for shelter

■ **Current plans are to begin construction on the new shelter at Tegels Park in late June, or early July.**

Officials from the Windom Lions Club announced Friday that the Tegels Park shelter project is moving forward.

Erik Haken of the Lions Club told the Citizen that materials prices have increased substantially in recent weeks. Consequently, the Lions Club decided during a recent meeting to lock in a price. He added that the plan is to begin construction in late-June, or early-July. A four-week construction process is planned.

"This is exciting news and we know people want to know our progress," Haken said. "Fundraising is ongoing and we still have a ways to go."

The Windom Lions Club shelter fund drive continues to pick up donations as the public learns more about the project.

The 50-by-80-foot shelter, which is targeted for Tegels Park at Cottonwood Lake, would be designed to hold a stage and larger community events. Initial plans are to provide more cover and protection from the weather elements.

The goal is to raise \$250,000 for the project. So far, the Lions have collected \$147,500 in donations and pledges. Organizers say it will take about two months to build.

Once the project is fully funded, it will be owned and maintained by the city of Windom.

People can make donations at city hall, or by contacting Lions Club members. Watch for updates in the Shopper.

### AWARD/ Segfreid: 'Our number of local employees has already grown'

FROM PAGE 1

year.

It's a wonderful opportunity to get to know the business owners and leaders of the community. It was a fun time.

Also, Tyann Marcy (executive director of the Chamber) does a good job. She is energetic and enthusiastic, a great ambassador for the city of Windom.

**Q** **The We Care Team was a key addition at HyLife. Tell us about it.**

**A** **SEIGFREID:** The We Care Team was developed in June of last year.

It is a way to strengthen the relationship with our employees, a way to support them.

There are things that just naturally come up and with 1,000 employees, you can't get to every employee every day. The We Care Team is a small group, six total, and they are easy to find—they're wearing bright pink helmets and bright pink vests.

If you (as an employee) need help with something, or if there is information you need, or you have a question, the We Care Team can help. They can respond quickly, sometimes in just minutes and sometimes in a day or two.

It's a team that helps resolve matters quickly. It has been greatly received by the employees. They are just thrilled to have that resource there.

I think this has helped employees realize their importance to the company and that we really do care about them as individuals.

**Q** **In what ways do you see HyLife helping the community in the future?**

**A** **SEIGFREID:** We are going to continue to expand.

Our number of local employees has already grown. When HyLife started in Windom, our employee count was about half what it is today. We were able to double our number of employees and increase to two shifts.

We were able to warmly welcome 375 employees from Mexico as well as from the Philippines. That has helped us get to the fulfillment of two shifts and now there are plans to grow our business even more.

You will see some capital expenditures in 2022 and 2023 and we hope to also see an increase in capacity at the plant. We will also continue to support community through events and by bringing our We Care culture beyond the plant.

**Editor's note:** This is part of a series on local Chamber award winners that were announced at the fall Chamber Gala.

### ELECTION/ Mt. Lake moves to 7th Congressional district

FROM PAGE 1

of the county will be under the District 21A House seat. Rep. Joe Schomacker and Sen. Bill Weber, both of Luverne, currently live in what will be the new District 21A and District 21, respectively.

The U.S. House 7th District line also moved east, meaning Mt. Lake residents will fall under the umbrella of the seat currently held by Rep. Michelle Fischbach of Paynesville. Under the new alignment, all of Cottonwood County will now be in the 7th Congressional District.

Meanwhile, city officials have learned that the population changes in Windom are limited enough that there is no need to adjust the lines for city precincts. Local resi-

dents will continue to vote in the same precincts for future elections.

Cottonwood County's districts will change slightly, depending on what occurs at a public hearing scheduled for later this spring. At this point, it appears likely that Great Bend Township will move from the third district (represented by Donna

Gravley) to the first district (represented by Larry Anderson).

Watch windomnews.com and future editions of the Cottonwood County Citizen and Citizen eEdition for updates on candidates for all local, state and national races involved in the 2022 election.

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 CITY OF WINDOM

**Did you Know?**

**In 2021 River Bend Liquor —**

- Generated gross sales of \$2,297,136. (53.5% of that was beer sales and 32.6% was liquor sales and 11.3% was wine sales)
- Top items sold include: Busch Light (4,128 cases), Michelob Golden Light (2,831 cases), Coors Light (2,279 cases), Karkov Vodka (1,259 bottles), Phillips Vodka (1,222 bottles) and Windsor (1,075 bottles)
- Had 114 attendees during the annual wine tasting event held at the Windom Community Center and had 261 bottles preordered from the event
- Our municipal liquor store contributed \$100,000 to the city to off-set general fund expenses



507-831-6129 | 444 9th Street | Windom