



Relay for Life

The Le Sueur County Relay for Life raised more than \$42,000 at this year's event. P.2

School Referendum

The Le Sueur City Council was updated on the current condition and need to replace Park Elementary School. P. 5

Legion baseball

The Le Sueur-Henderson Giants are still in the sub-state tournament after a big 12th inning win over TCU. P. 11



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How to save a life

Civil Air Patrol practices search and rescue at Rush River Park

By Josh Wilson
Independent intern

“Walk the line” is what Civil Air Patrol cadets heard on Saturday, July 16, as they responded to a simulated Search and Rescue Exercise at Rush River Park in Henderson.

A Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) is a routine training that the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) facilitates around two to three times a year in the state of Minnesota. During the day-long training, Civil Air Patrol Cadets and Senior members, local police, fire, county sheriff, Minnesota State Patrol, and Minnesota Search and Rescue trained together to assist in a simulated plane crash.

Deputy Commander for Cadets Major Randall S. Knox, from the Stanton Composite Squadron, served as the Public Information Officer at Saturday's event and provided insight into the Civil Air Patrol and simulation.

The Civil Air Patrol is an Aux-

iliary branch of the United States Air Force, consisting of 52 wings in the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Specifically for Minnesota, the wing is in Inver Grove Heights and has a count of 806 adult members, 710 cadets, 136 aircrew personnel, and 927 emergency responders.

“When the Air Force gets asked to do a Search and Rescue within the continental United States, they rely on the Civil Air Patrol to do that,” Major Knox said.

“At last count, we had members from 13 different squadrons, that's out of 24 in the state of Minnesota,” Major Knox added.

The CAP serves in multiple capacities throughout the nation and often assists with incidents that do not involve a plane crash. In June, Yellowstone National Park experienced catastrophic flooding and the Civil Air Patrol played a part in the Search and Rescue missions during that incident.

“The Civil Air Patrol was tasked to assist in that and the Montana wing and surrounding

wings,” Major Knox said. “We were credited with 88 saves on that one incident alone.”

To train for a devastating occurrence such as the June Yellowstone flooding, the SAREX events are facilitated to train Cadets, adult members, and the local municipal services.

“The Civil Air Patrol is made up of both Cadets, that's youth between the ages of 12 and 18 and then we have adult members, senior members,” Major Knox also said.

Under the Cadet program, students between the age of 12 to 18 are trained to assist in emergency service and learn skills that apply to all paths of life. They are educated in aerospace, physical fitness, character, and leadership.

In a brief conversation with a Cadet, we learned about SAREX and the role that they will assist with at the plane crash simulation.

“Every SAREX is different be-

AIR PATROL
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PHOTO BY JOSH WILSON

A member of the Civil Air Patrol lifts the “victim” up in the air to safety as part of the mock plane crash that was held at Rush River Park in Henderson on Saturday afternoon.



LS-H focuses on expanding CTE opportunities

By Rachel Miller
Editor

There is no shortage of open jobs in trade fields, but although there is plenty of opportunity, finding a way to connect the next generation is key.

Le Sueur-Henderson has been blessed to have a talented and experienced Industrial Technology educator in Mark Vrklan. Vrklan has spent his entire 42-year teaching career at Le Sueur-Henderson and teaches three levels of welding classes and power mechanics. He is aided by fellow Industrial Technology educator Jared Ronningen, who typically gets underclassmen for home maintenance, power tools, woodworking, and the new mechatronics class.

On Tuesday, Aug. 9, Le Sueur-Henderson residents will be headed to the polls to vote on a new school referendum. While the main priority is hopefully passing a referendum to build a new elementary school onto the Middle/High School site, there is a secondary question related to the fu-

ture of Career and Technical Education (CTE) at LS-H.

The third question on the ballot will ask residents whether they would support spending up to \$5.65 million to build a third gym and expand the space for CTE programming.

Vrklan's power mechanics students would be directly impacted by the expansion. Vrklan said if the bond passes, they will have space to add a car lift. His first-year students have to take an engine apart and put it back together, while second year students can bring in a motorcycle or snowmobile to work on.

But many of Vrklan's students have trucks, and he said they like to bring them into the car port for repairs. Having a car lift will make that work easier, but also provide students with more real life experience that will be valuable to employers.

Vrklan said if a student plays it right, they can pursue higher education in a trade field and graduate debt free.

TRADES IN SCHOOL
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This graphic shows what the Le Sueur-Henderson CTE space could look like if the third ballot question passes. If it passes, LS-H will renovate 6,500 square feet of existing CTE space and add 1,100 square feet for an auto lab/engines.

Le Sueur County Relay for Life raises almost \$43,000

This year's Le Sueur County Relay for Life, held Friday, July 8 at the Le Center Fairgrounds, was highly successful and surpassed its \$40,000 goal. A total of \$42,708.84 was raised, and top fundraisers include The Warriors team with \$8,379, followed closely by Winged Warriors with \$8,352. Rachel Short was the top individual participant with \$3,541, while Julie Harmon was a close second with \$3,132. Funds raised from the event support cancer research and patient care programs.

Clockwise from left: Relay for Life participants take off for the first lap; Montgomery Kolacky Days Royalty 2nd Princess Ronnie Smith and Queen Grace Barnett helped serve food; and the Murry brothers sang the National Anthem.



PHOTOS BY BRENDA KOTASEK



AIR PATROL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cause they all have their own little scenarios," the Cadet said.

"I will be part of the setup where the crash is, so I'll be a victim and we'll have the ground teams find us," they added.

The Cadet has attended previous SAREX simulations and was prepared to engage with the other CAP members and municipal services.

"I kind of know what's going on but at the same time, I'm always kind of ready for something to be thrown my way," the Cadet said.

When the simulation began, the CAP and municipal services took part in a variety of tasks. They started the training by walking in a horizontal line and following commands

that would eventually lead them to the scene of the mock plane crash.

The search and rescue teams located the 'victim' of the simulation, followed CAP protocol, and airlifted the 'victim' on the patrol helicopter.

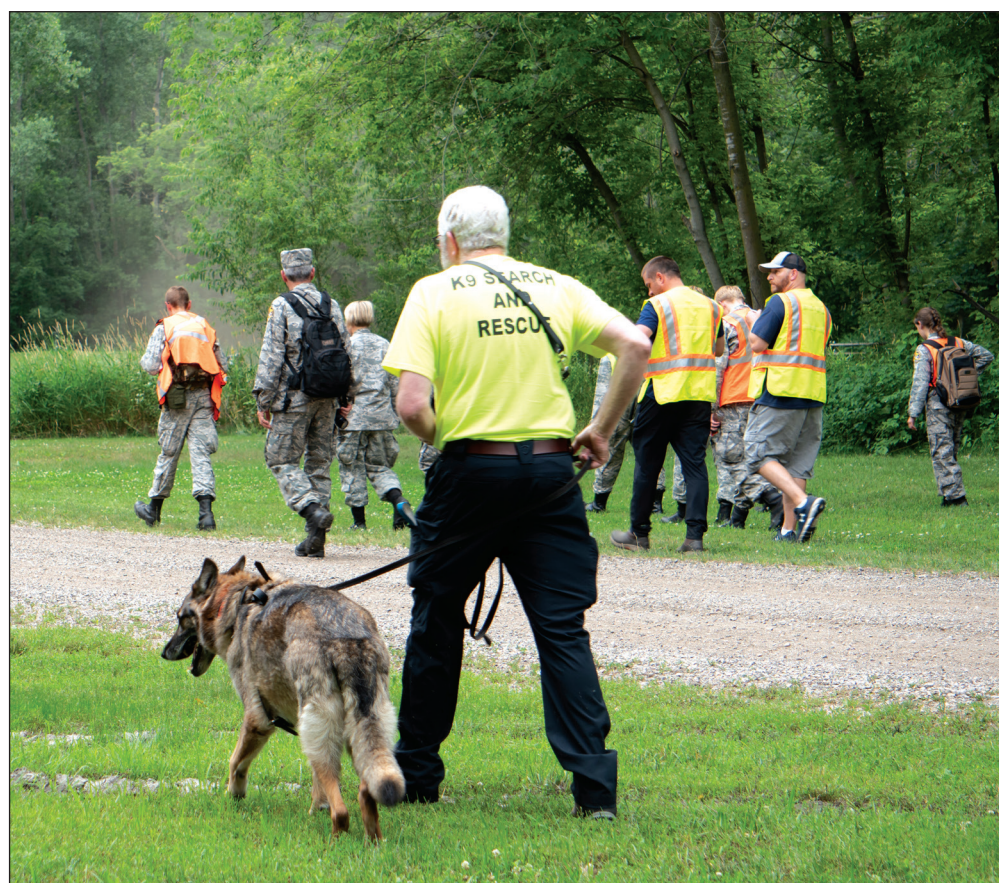
The training continued throughout Saturday, prompting a joint effort between the Civil Air Patrol and local first responders. While they often assist with air searches such as this simulation, the public should know that the Civil Air Patrol responds to numerous other search and rescue incidents.

"Air searches to ground teams that might assist in looking for someone or for traffic and crowd control," Major Knox said.

The sounds of the helicopter winds and Cadet commands were vocal as training continued until 4 p.m. on Saturday at Rush River.



PHOTOS BY JOSH WILSON
Major Randall S. Knox, Deputy Commander for Cadets with the Civil Air Patrol (center, in camo), works with Civil Air Patrol members to prepare the "victim" for liftoff.



A group of Civil Air Patrol members, including a K-9 unit, walk the grounds at Rush River Park to search for evidence as part of the mock plane crash.

TRADES IN SCHOOL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Keegan Straub, who graduated this past May, is one example. Straub has been working for Kibble Equipment out of Mankato, and they have agreed to sponsor his education at Lake Area Technical College in Watertown, S.D. While Straub will have to pay for his housing, Kibble Equipment has given him a scholarship valued at more than \$20,000 to pay for his books, tools and tuition over the next two years. In exchange, Straub will work for them for three years after graduation.

Straub credits LS-H and Vrklan's courses with teaching him self-sufficiency, in addition to the welding classes he has enjoyed.

James Loewe will be starting his senior year at LS-H this fall, and said he wanted to take Vrklan's welding classes so he knew how to repair things on the family farm. Although he does not know exactly what he wants to do post-graduation, he is considering something in the agricultural field.

Henderson's Jake Miller is one of LS-H's success stories. Miller, 37, graduated from LS-H in 2003. He said he "took every shop class I could get my hands on." He said Vrklan leaned on him hard to come up with a plan after high school, and he wound up attending Ridgewater College in Hutchinson and graduated with a one-year degree in industrial welding. He worked a number of welding jobs over the years, and opened Wingnut Welding in town in 2006, and has been in his current building since 2016.

No matter what path a student chooses, they will not leave Vrklan's class without learning valuable skills. "Failure is not an option," Vrklan said, and he does not give up on any of his students. However, many of his students love being in the shop and actually come down more than their scheduled hour.

Hutchinson finds success in Tiger Path

By Rachel Miller
Editor

After a successful school referendum that expanded its CTE area, Hutchinson High School launched its TigerPath Academies back in 2015. TigerPath Academies has four branches: STREAM, Sci Hi, Business and Human Services, and each pathway has electives specific to jobs in those areas.



Andrea Moore

Andrea Moore was hired as the TigerPath Coordinator four years ago, and has been able to provide increased exposure to jobs in the local community thanks to a big investment from the community and local businesses.

Following the expansion of the school's CTE area, the Hutchinson superintendent and city economic development director teamed up and received input on a school "wish list" for new equipment. The economic development director then went to businesses and shared what the school would like to do, and the end result was roughly 30 businesses donated \$1.56 million in equipment and financial support, including \$500,000 from 3M.

Those businesses are willing to invest because they can see the value and have a big need for employees. According to Moore, 58 percent of seniors are planning to attend a four-year university...but just 17 percent of jobs in the region require a four-year degree.

That support allowed for Moore's position to be created, and pays for things like donuts and pizza for their trimester mentoring meeting, to additional opportunities to connect students to potential jobs.

For example, Moore said she had a student this past year who was interested in a career in marine biology. Moore started by contacting the Minnesota Zoo, but they were still limited in their offerings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Moore was able to set up a virtual tour for \$100, and 20 students signed up to participate.

Moore was also able to schedule an in-person tour with Construct Tomorrow in St. Cloud, and had 80 students participate to learn about the construction trade.

One of Moore's most recent success stories was a female student who just was not connecting with a potential career path...until she showed an interest in how waste water is cleaned. Moore arranged for her to tour their wastewater facility plant and as it turned out, she was fascinated to see how waste and other materials were treated. The next step was a six-hour job shadow. Moore said that student applied and secured a summer internship, and is enrolling at St. Cloud Technical & Community College to study waste management.

Henderson ATV permits available

Henderson ATV permits are now available from the Henderson Police Department. Anyone with a golf cart, ATV or side-by-side is required to purchase a permit. The permits cost \$10 and are good for three years. A downloadable form is available at www.hendersonmn.com.