



## Bench for Jessica

Friends of Jessica Manthei dedicated a new bench outside Henderson Wine and Spirits on Monday. P. 2



## Century Farm

The Quast Family Farm out of Buffalo Lake was this year's celebrated Century Farm at the Sibley County Fair. P. 7



## Final fair

Don't miss the Le Sueur County Fair this Thursday-Sunday! P. 7



# The Henderson Independent

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## General election filing period closes: meet the candidates

By Rachel Miller  
Editor

The makeup of the Henderson City Council could change next year. Unlike the 2018 election when just one candidate filed, Henderson closed the filing period Tuesday

afternoon with three candidates: incumbent Randy Tiegs and challengers Mary Kay Burger-Wento and Crystal Thomas.

Janet Boese, who was a write-in candidate in 2018, did not re-file, so there will be at least one new face at the council table in 2023.

Keith Swenson previously said he would file for mayor if no other candidates emerged, and followed up on that promise and will be the only candidate on the mayoral ballot on Nov. 8.

### SCHOOL BOARD

Five candidates had filed for the

Le Sueur-Henderson School Board as of the filing deadline on Tuesday afternoon. Incumbents Matt Hathaway, Gretchen Rehm, Brigid Tuck and Jennifer Burns had all filed for their seats, along with challenger Burger-Wento.

However, Burger-Wento's filing

raised some questions, as her paperwork for the school board race was filed on Thursday, Aug. 11 — two days after she filed for the Hender-

CANDIDATES  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Hurrah for hummers!

Henderson Hummingbird Hurrah returns Saturday

Charms of hummingbirds, a kaleidoscope of butterflies, beautiful flowers galore and plenty of pollinators are ready for your enjoyment during the Henderson Hummingbird Hurrah on Saturday, Aug. 20 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The annual festival offers free fun for the whole family and the chance to purchase yummy beverages, snacks and lunch, as well as the chance to browse local artisan wares to buy a souvenir.

The Henderson Hummingbird Garden will showcase licensed hummingbird banded Don Mitchell between 9 a.m. and noon, when he will be catching hummingbirds, banding them, collecting data such as weight and length, and then releasing them. The birds are not harmed!

Gardener Larry Pfarr of television fame be on hand with his bee display. Mitchell, who is also a master gardener, will speak later in the day, as will renowned Minnesota humorist Al Batt.

Especially for children of all ages will be crafts to make and take. Bring your creativity — lots of fun ideas and materials will be provided for you to make whatever you can dream up. An artist will be on hand to paint a design on your hand or arm between 9 - 11 a.m.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

During a past Hummingbird Hurrah, Don Mitchell holds a hummingbird that he is about to release, after he has weighed, measured and banded the bird.



A monarch sips from a tall coneflower in the Henderson Hummingbird Garden.

HUMMINGBIRDS  
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## Road closed ahead

Youth trade experience is hard to come by

By Rachel Miller  
Editor

As previously chronicled in the Henderson Independent's "Trade Power" series, there is no shortage of jobs in skilled trade industries, and connecting students to those pathways starts in school.

But there is still one major barrier facing youth who may be interested in a trade career: job experience.

The federal government does allow 16 and 17-year-olds to work in the construction industry and on construction sites, but does limit the tasks they can do. For example, roofing is considered a hazardous occupation and prohibited for anyone younger than 18 years old. Power-driven woodworking machines, metal-working machines and power-driven equipment is also considered too hazardous.

However, a construction site includes lots of other jobs not considered hazardous. Plumbing, HVAC and even putting up drywall all fall under the construction umbrella.

Minnesota, however, has taken a more restrictive view on the construction industry. According to the Minnesota



Adam Hanson

Department of Labor and Industry, minors are prohibited from working "in or around logging or lumbering operations; paper, saw, lathe and shingle mills; mines, quarries and sand or gravel pits; construction or building projects; and ice harvesting operations; among others.

According to Adam Hanson, chapter president for the Associated Builders and Contractors of Minnesota and North Dakota, the construction umbrella causes issues when trying to connect youth to careers because it prohibits easier tasks like painting or hanging drywall.

"You can do that in shop class, but not on a construction site," Hanson said.

Across the border, Wisconsin

allows 16 and 17-year-olds to work construction jobs, and even includes a detailed list of which equipment they are permitted to use. For example, students younger than 18 are prohibited from operating a forklift, but those at least 16 can operate a hydraulic press, drill press, deburring machine, CNC router, pipe threader, computerized plasma table, welder and more.

In Minnesota, people younger than 18 can only work on a construction site if they are 17 and already graduated from high school; are working on a family-owned construction company; or if they apply and get an exemption from the state.

Hanson would like to see Minnesota model its youth employment laws after the federal government, which provides some allowances.

"Construction workers are not getting any younger — the greying of the industry is not happening slowly, and if we cannot open the pipeline fairly quickly, things are going to cost more and take a lot longer," Hanson said.

One thing Hanson is glad to see is trade careers are getting more acceptance in schools, and there is a more positive attitude toward the trades as a viable job field.

## LE SUEUR-HENDERSON SCHOOL BOARD

# LS-H considers Honeywell changes in light of new terms

By Rachel Miller  
Editor

The Le Sueur-Henderson School Board held a special meeting and work session on Monday night, to canvass the Aug. 9 primary election results, discuss next steps for the bond and a new change to the Honeywell agreement.

The board officially canvassed the Aug. 9 primary

votes, which reflected 1,219 "Yes" votes to build a \$39.9 million K-5 school on the existing Middle/High School site, against 1,080 "No" votes.

Superintendent Jim Wagner shared the district will be putting together a focus group to look at designs and take tours of other schools to get ideas. Wagner said the goal is to put together a "real detailed, finite blueprint to go out for bids right after Christmas, with the

idea we will start construction as soon as we can punch a hole in the ground."

Wagner also said he is working with a few local businesses to see if they can raise the money to build a third gymnasium that was part of the failed Question 3 on the ballot.

### HONEYWELL UPDATE

During the special meeting, the board approved a \$4,486,148 lease-purchase

agreement with Honeywell which will address some building maintenance issues at the Middle/High School site, including new lighting, water, building envelope and building management systems.

During the following work session, Wagner shared with the board that he recently learned lease agreements cannot be for a period to exceed 15 years.

As this is a change from the

20-year lease agreement previously discussed with Honeywell, Wagner presented five possible 15-year term scenarios to consider.

The five scenarios had varying up-front contributions, ranging from \$100,000/year to \$564,870, and similarly varying annual contributions.

Wagner told the board he was in favor of either Scenario C or D.

Scenario C involved a

\$300,000 up-front contribution and an annual contribution of \$106,006 in year one, which would increase to \$123,261 for the following 14 years.

Scenario D involved a \$375,000 up-front contribution and an annual contribution of \$99,420 in year one, which would increase to \$116,675 for the following 14 years.

SCHOOL BOARD  
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# BELLE PLAINE BULLETIN



## Belle Plaine students find personal growth, passions in CTE courses

By Josh Wilson  
Independent Intern

*Editor's Note: This story is part of a series the Henderson Independent is publishing around the need for skilled trade workers in the Minnesota River area. All stories in this series are noted with the above "Trade Power" logo. The students featured in this series were all interviewed before the end of the 2021-22 school year.*

Construction, small engine, and Career and Tech Education (CTE) classes are building the foundation for future career possibilities for the local Belle Plaine High School students.

In recent years, Belle Plaine High School (BPHS) has continued to evolve its CTE and Agriculture classes. The effort aims to perk students' interest in a trade or agriculture profession and teach valuable skills that reflect all careers and areas of life.

The Belle Plaine Bulletin sat down in the creative CTE classroom space with BPHS students Kyra Eohm, Kiya Williamson, Cole Eggars, Julian Xiong, Wyatt Friendshuh, Carter Eiden, and Caleb Wermerskirchen, and Teacher Todd Anderson to learn about the connection between the CTE program and a future career in a trade profession.

At the beginning of the Bul-

letin's classroom conversation, we asked each student to tell us about the CTE classes they've taken and what sparked their interest in the class.

Small Engines and Construction are the primary courses that come to mind as students recall their initial interest in Belle Plaine's CTE program. For some students, their motivation lies in being able to take courses with their friends.

Caleb Wermerskirchen, a 10th-grader at Belle Plaine High School, took Small Engines I and II. His motivation to take the course came from the influence of his friends who allowed him to engage in hands-on learning.

"I did small engines because friends were in it and the hands-on aspect," said Wermerskirchen.

Kiya Williamson, another 10th grader, took Intro to CTE to stay involved with extracurricular involvement, Future Farmers of America (FFA). Williamson was excited to engage with the course as it creates opportunities to learn about the different career paths that relate to Agriculture.

"Through the classes I have taken, it's led me into other opportunities of figuring out what I do like and don't like and sort of narrowing down a career path for me," Williamson said.

Wyatt Friendshuh, an 11th-grader, loves the oppor-



PHOTO BY JOSH WILSON

From left to right, Kyra Eohm, Kiya Williamson, Julian Xiong, Cole Eggars, Carter Eiden, Caleb Wermerskirchen and Wyatt Friendshuh in the classroom where they spend most of their time. This group will be juniors and seniors in the fall and are regular faces in Belle Plaine High School's Career and Technical Education program.

tunity to work on his problem-solving skills. The CTE classes he has taken have enabled him to transfer skills to the school's Robotics team.

Friendshuh's greatest takeaway from CTE classes has been the growth in responsi-

bility, time management, and problem-solving skills.

"Overall, unlocking the creativeness to yourself and thinking about how you can make it come to life," said Friendshuh.

Julian Xiong, another 11th-grader, told the Bulle-

tin that his favorite stores are Home Depot and Menards. Since he grew up looking at the construction materials in these stores, he was motivated to take Construction I and II to use the materials hands-on.

Xiong has learned valuable

skills from the courses that he will extend to a possible career in human services.

"Teamwork is a big part of it, and you have to rely

BELLE PLAINE CTE  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## BELLE PLAINE SCHOOL BOARD

# Talks begin about fine arts, CTE expansion referendum

By Rachel Miller  
Editor

As neighboring Le Sueur-Henderson successfully passed a new school referendum, the Belle Plaine School District is beginning to mull over a referendum of their own that could expand agricultural and Career and Technical Education (CTE) teaching and provide the district's prominent One Act Play program with a nice 550-seat auditorium to perform in.

Superintendent Ryan Laager raised the idea during the Belle Plaine School Board's Monday, Aug. 8 work session meeting. The possible referendum would take place at the current district office, located at 130 S. Willow St. The idea could involve tearing down part of the building and renovating/rebuilding, or a complete tear-down and new construction. At this point, all discussion is preliminary, and the school board is expected to provide direction on whether or not to proceed with the loose concept and a community survey at its Monday, Aug. 22 meeting.

Belle Plaine High School has one of the best theater programs around, and the hardware to back that statement up. Since 1979, Belle Plaine has made 18 trips to the State One Act Play Festival, and received a Star performance 17 times — making them the #1 school in Class A competition, and the second of any class. They have proved they are the school to beat, as the Tigers have received 13 Star awards in the past 16 years.

Despite that, the auditorium

they rehearse and perform in is small, seating 250 people. The current concept would include a fine arts facility with a performance arts center and new band and choir spaces.

"We have one of the best fine arts programs...and we are the only district that does not have a fine arts space," Laager said.

A potential referendum could also include expanded space for woodworking, agriculture and a new small gas engine program under the district's CTE program. Laager said there is also potential to set up community garden plots on the ground and potentially tie that into supporting the local food shelf or selling to the community.

The school board will have to decide whether they want to proceed with the process and send out a community survey to gauge community interest and aptitude. If the board decides to proceed, and if community residents are in favor of the project, the board would look at a November 2023 referendum vote.

The good news is that one way or another, taxes will be decreasing in 2026. The \$34.17 million Oak Crest Elementary bond is dropping off the levy in 2025, and the final payment will be made in 2026. Laager said once that bond drops off, taxes on a \$250,000 house should drop by \$400/year. If a referendum passes, they will still decline, but it could be by as little as \$60.

Belle Plaine agricultural property owners can also benefit from the Ag2School tax credit, which is increasing to



PHOTO BY RACHEL MILLER

Belle Plaine Superintendent Ryan Laager shared preliminary information about what a potential school referendum in November 2023 could look like. The district is considering renovating and/or rebuilding the facility at 130 S. Willow St. as a performing arts center and expanded Career and Technical Education space, and could also potentially include community garden plots for agricultural learning.

70 percent on school bonds in 2023.

### POLICIES

As part of the work session, the board also reviewed a handful of policies that are required to be reviewed annually, and fall in line with policies adopted by the Minnesota School Board Association. Most of the changes were relatively minor.

**Policy 410: Family and Medical Leave:** The biggest change was the addition of multiple methods to determine a 12-month period for 12 weeks of FMLA leave. Options include the school calendar year, a fiscal year, a year starting from the employee's

anniversary date, or from the start date an employee uses FMLA leave.

**Policy 413: Harassment and Violence:** the references to "race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age,

marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability" were removed and replaced with the words "Protected Class."

**PILLOW CLEANING**  
American Legion Auxiliary invites everyone to  
**CARLSON'S PILLOW CLEANING SERVICE**  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 7 AM-3 PM  
VET'S CLUB 221 N. MERIDIAN ST. BELLE PLAINE  
FOR AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT 144  
Pillows cleaned, deodorized, sanitized and fluffed. Mobil Unit - SAME DAY SERVICE - while you wait. Custom-made NEW pillows and down comforters for sale.  
Proceeds go to local and district veteran programs.  
CONTACT RUTH WESTPHAL 612-839-8141

**Policy 414: Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse:** "Mental injury" was added to the list of definitions; the words "neglected or physically or sexually abused" were changed to "maltreated" under the mandated reporter definition; growth delay was removed from the neglect definition; and the provision stating that submitting a good faith report will not adversely affect the reporter's employment or the child's access to school was changed to "An employer of a mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the person for reporting in good faith maltreatment against a child with respect to whom a report is made, because of the report."

**Policy 415: Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults:** Most of the changes involved adding definitions for "abuse," "caregiver," "common entry point", "financial exploitation," "immediately" and "school personnel" to the policy.

**BELLE PLAINE CITYWIDE GARAGE SALE DAYS**  
Sept. 8 - 10  
To sign up mail \$10 to:  
Jen Winter/Jessica Nagel  
205 N. Cedar St.  
Belle Plaine, MN 56011  
Must be received by 9/1/22

BELLE PLAINE CTE  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

on yourself to do your part,” Xiong said.

The Belle Plaine CTE courses have inspired students of all ages to pursue a career in the trades. As students ponder their future careers, aspirations lie in a multitude of fields including mechanics, welding, and construction.

Carter Eiden, a 10th-grader, began his journey towards a trade profession by taking Small Engines I and II. These courses allowed him to work with metals, learn takeaway skills, and even operate his own business.

Eiden mentioned a simple life skill that the Small Engines classes provided him:

“Being able to take apart a lawn mower and being able to put it back together,” said Eiden.

While he isn’t interested in a trade profession, doing the various CTE courses has helped form his idea of being in law enforcement.

Cole Eggars, an 11th grader, took a construction class in 9th grade and was inspired by the possible connection to a future career in the area. He comes from a family background of welders and was eager to help build things for the school’s new courtyard.

Eggars told the Bulletin that the CTE courses he has taken have taught him teamwork and personal responsibility.

As Eggars looks to a future career in the trades, he wants to continue the legacy of his father and grandfather who are both welders.

Kyra Eohm, another 11th grader, got involved with Agriculture courses before high school and has continued to stay involved with FFA. The involvement in FFA has enabled her to try new things and develop what to look for in a future career.

“Taking these classes has shown me that I can try a lot of new things and be interested in a lot of new things,” Eohm said.

Anderson just completed his first year as a CTE instructor for classes such as Construction I, Construction II, Small Engines, and Metals. With an experienced background as a CTE teacher in Shakopee, Anderson’s career brought him to Belle Plaine with a plan to develop a CTE program and build upon its strengths.

Anderson would like to see Belle Plaine’s CTE program get equipment that is currently in the industry. As technology advances, he thinks it’s important that students are learning how to use what is current.

“The district is supportive. This lab has changed dramatically since last year,” Anderson said.

Further, Anderson believes that the school should focus more on robotics and animation as the two topics apply to all trade professions.



PHOTO BY JOSH WILSON

Caleb Wermerskirchen (left) and Carter Eiden work on a digital rendering in the CTE classroom at the end of the school year in May.

“Technology changes quickly and we have to make sure that the opportunities we provide for the students reflect those changes,” Anderson finished.

Students that take these courses gain knowledge that extends to all areas of life, regardless of if they pursue a career in the trades.

“A lot of what these guys and gals have gotten out of the courses is something that I call more soft skills,” Anderson said.

Students learn critical thinking, collaboration, teamwork, and develop their character. As a CTE teacher, Anderson strives to push the soft skills that will benefit students in any career path they decide.

“I think CTE courses are a wonderful, real-life way that we can develop these skills,” Anderson said.

“Whether it’s law enforcement, whether it’s in a public relation, communications, human resources, welding, mechanics — it’ll serve any one

of these people, very well, for many years to come,” Anderson also said.

With a new courtyard being built at the high school, the CTE students are using the class to learn, but also give back to the school community. The courtyard construction is designed in a way that is accessible for all students that struggle with disabilities.

The new high school courtyard is being worked on by the CTE students and will comply with the guidelines set in the

Americans with Disabilities Act. Under the current design, the courtyard has a cement path so that wheelchairs can make it around the entire complex.

The connection between providing a service to the fellow school community and learning construction skills along the way demonstrates skills that apply to any future ambition. While multiple students mentioned interest in a future in trade, it is clear CTE courses provide skills that apply to all careers.

## Belle Plaine Police Report

The following are among the calls the Belle Plaine Police Department responded to between Aug. 1-7:

### MONDAY, AUG. 1

An officer was called for a welfare check in the 800 block of Sunrise Lane. The officer made contact and determined the male was fine.

An officer responded to the 100 block of Main Street E. for a bicycle vs. vehicle accident. A juvenile riding a bicycle was transported to the hospital for minor injuries. Witnesses told the officer the juvenile failed to yield when riding through the alleyway.

### WEDNESDAY, AUG. 3

Officers were dispatched to a burglary alarm in the 1000 block of Enterprise Drive E. Upon arrival, officers discovered forced entry was made and several display cell phones were missing. The case is currently under investigation.

An officer was called to the 100 block of Aspen Lane N. for suspicious activity in the parking lot. The officer made contact with a female, who was on the phone with a male attempting to scam her out of money. The male hung up as soon as he was aware police were on

scene.

An officer was dispatched to Highway 169 and 263rd St. W. for a vehicle swerving all over the roadway. The vehicle was located and stopped, and the driver stated he was tired.

An officer responded to the 500 block of Forest St. W. and assisted a male party with a report of fraudulent activity. The case is currently under investigation.

### THURSDAY, AUG. 4

An officer responded to the 400 block of Ash Street S. for a report of an assault that occurred earlier in the morning. A report was sent to the Scott County Attorney’s Office to review for charges.

### SATURDAY, AUG. 6

An officer responded to Highway 169 and Belle Plaine Trail for a physical domestic. After an investigation, a male driver, 33, from Le Sueur was arrested for domestic assault, second-degree DWI and driving after revocation.

### SUNDAY, AUG. 7

An officer reported a lot of smoke coming from the area of Orchard Street E. and Ash Street S. The Belle Plaine Fire Department responded and located a controlled burn, and advised the homeowner.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

## Belle Plaine Class of ‘66 reunites

A group of Belle Plaine Class of 1966 classmates recently gathered for some food, drink, camaraderie, stories etc. Pictured above are (back row, left to right) Tom Johnson, Richard Baumann, Keith Anderson, Orin Westphal, John Bailey, Ed Carney, Don Koepf and Pat Spellacy; (middle row) Renee (Renneke) Compo, Elaine (Busse) Carney, Irene (Glynn) Carlson, Diane (Zellman) Koepf and Joan (Kahle) Fries; and (front row) Gary Kroells, Robert (Bob) Mager, Pam (Ediger) Pint, Cheryl (Otto) Nagel, Janice (Thomason) Walerius, Sandy (Mager) Kroells, Linda Ernst-Ziehwein, and Bonnie (Koniarski) White.

### TOWN BALL

# Final wave brings Tigers’ season to dramatic end

By Brett Kruschke  
Contributor

The Town Tigers’ season ended this weekend at the Region 6C Tournament in Belle Plaine. On Tuesday the Tigers were blanked 6-0 by the Jordan Brewers — the No. 1 seed from the River Valley League — before falling 5-4 on Saturday to the Waterville Indians — the No. 1 seed from the 13-60 League.

The Tigertown Express ends the season with a 17-14 (8-6 RVL) record, a sharp turnaround from their 7-18 (1-7) record a season ago.

Thanks to the players, umpires, fans, media, and volun-

teers for coming out this season and making it go. Keep in touch during the offseason at bptigertown.com and enjoy the upcoming state tournament over the next three weekends at Faribault, Dundas, and Miesville. The best place to get updates is at mnbaseball.org. See you next season at the ballpark!

**Jordan 6 @ BP 0 (Tuesday, August 9 – Region 6C Playoffs)**

Rainouts the previous weekend pushed this state-clinching contest to Tuesday at Tiger Park. Our lads took the field against the No. 1-seeded Brewers and before the biggest crowd of the season, likely unaware that Jordan entered with

23 consecutive wins in the series — including 31 of the last 32.

Jack Kruger, a June graduate from the halls of Belle Plaine High School and one of the finest arms the varsity program has ever produced, took the ball against one of the league’s best pitchers, Nate Beckman.

Beckman showed dominant form early on, memorably striking out three straight Tigers in the second inning after Jake Mercado tripled. Meanwhile, Kruger had to fend off baserunners throughout the early innings but trailed just 1-0 after 4 1/2 frames (Jordan was the home team due to its higher seeding).

The Brewers finally broke through in the fifth, with the key blow a bases-loaded double by Jonathan Draheim to score a pair of runs. Jordan tallied four runs total in what was Kruger’s final inning of work.

Beckman kept the pedal down, going the distance on a three-hit shutout with 14 strikeouts and nary a walk. Besides Mercado’s triple, the other Tigers with hits — both singles — were Jared Miller and Brody Curtiss.

**Waterville 5 @ BP 4 (Saturday, August 13 – Region 6C Playoffs)**

St. Peter, the No. 4 seed from the RVL, upset No. 1 seed Waterville in the opening round,

sending the Indians to the loser’s bracket. That’s where the Tigers met them, with the loser calling it a season and the winner advancing to play later in the day for the region’s final state tournament berth.

Curtiss got the ball from Tiger manager Jason Ladd in this do-or-die contest, opposed by Waterville’s Dalton Grose. The Tiger Train was once again visitors on the scoreboard at their home park, and cobbled together a first-inning run. Waterville responded with runs in the second and fourth innings, grabbing a 2-1 lead, and they added an insurance run in the seventh.

Things got real in the eighth, as Curtiss drilled a two-run

bomb to tie the score at 3. After Derek Hoffman singled and was bunted to second base, Jake Brandenburg dunked a base hit into right field to give the Tigers a 4-3 lead.

Curtiss needed six outs to clinch the comeback victory, but with two outs in the eighth Ben Boran belted a double to tie the score. Shortly thereafter, Shane Sellner drove in Boran with a double of his own for a 5-4 advantage, drilling a hole in the hearts of Tiger fans.

Luke Sellner came on to close it out, but two runs and an error loaded the bases for Belle Plaine. A second rally was not to be, as a groundout ended the game and the season.