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THE RED OAK Express

WEDNESDAY

July 20, 2022
 Red Oak, IA
 Volume 155, No.29
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Students 'diggin' summer in Essex

Tess Nelson
 The Red Oak Express

School's out for the summer, but that isn't keeping several Essex students and teachers away from the district's grounds. In fact, several mornings per week there is a flurry of activity with volunteers working on the district's garden.

Located in the east corner of the high school parking lot, different tomato varieties, gourds, mini-pumpkins, cantaloupe, peppers, zucchini, and several varieties of berries have been planted.

Once harvested, the crop will be used by the district's culinary arts program and school lunch program. The fresh fruit and vegetables not used right away will be canned or frozen to be used later. What isn't needed will be donated to those in need.

Garden volunteer and freshly retired Essex teacher Tammy Johnson said the plan to have a district garden came about several years ago but was put on hold because of COVID.

"This is year three of the project, but we're in phase one," said Johnson. "This year our goal was to get things in the ground."

Johnson said there are numerous positives that come from a district garden besides fresh produce. Students learn where food comes from and can take pride in helping it grow. Plus, they might make better food choices if they've put in the time and effort on a particular product.

She added there is something to be said for "dirt therapy" -- being outside in the fresh air and sunshine, working with your hands and forgetting about anything else for a moment. Working together on a collaborative project also builds relationships among the students.

"Not all life lessons are found in a book," said Johnson.

Three volunteers at the garden Tuesday, July 12, were Emma Jo and Garrett Harris and Renly Sandahl, along with elementary teacher Robin Verkade.

The Harris siblings worked in the compost piles and then planted more tomatoes. Sandahl also planted tomatoes and was in charge of watering them once in the ground. Johnson was using the garden tiller prepping new spaces for planting.

This past school year, planter boxes were constructed by students in John Leininger's industrial technology class.

Next year each class in elementary will decide what vegetable they'd like to plant in their own planter box and start the seeds. Plant stakes will be made during Friday Makerspace classes. The school's horticulture and ag classes will help with larger garden projects.

Johnson said numerous community members have volunteered or donated toward the garden -- one of the many things that makes Essex a wonderful community. Additionally, she said members of the Class of 2021 donated \$2,000 towards the garden. The funds were from their junior prom, which they didn't have due to COVID.



From top to bottom: Tammy Johnson, Emma Jo Harris and Renly Sandahl work on the Essex Community School District's garden. (Tess Nelson/Red Oak Express)

MidAmerican Energy agreement discussed, fundraiser approved

Nick Johansen
 The Red Oak Express

The Red Oak City Council is prepping to renew its franchise agreement with MidAmerican Energy.

The council met with MidAmerican Energy franchise manager Mark Reinders, who said both the city's electric and natural gas franchises are up for renewal in May 2023.

"A franchise may be an unknown entity for most, but basically it's a legal agreement that lets us use the public right of way for all of our electric and natural gas utilities, and so this is a preliminary meeting to discuss the agreement before the renewal next year," Reinders said.

The previous agreement was finalized 25 years ago, in 1998. During discussion, Reinders advised community members that were in attendance that if they had issues with streetlights, to visit midamericanenergy.com to report an issue.

"On the homepage, it allows you to report the location of the outage; an order is automatically created at the service center and the team gets out and fixes it as soon as possible," advised Reinders.

City Clerk Mary Bolton told residents to call city hall first, to make sure the streetlights out were not city owned.

Reinders told the council it took around three months to finalize a franchise agreement renewal, and he was usually involved in around 25 renewals per year. Additionally, a new option



MidAmerican Energy franchise manager Mark Reinders discusses franchise renewal options during the council meeting July 18. (Nick Johansen/Red Oak Express)

for the renewal was for cities to implement franchise fees to generate additional revenue.

"More and more communities are looking at it because they're all struggling financially and have more needs than are financially feasible," said Reinders. "The time to implement those fees is usually when they do a renewal. In Red Oak, a 1% franchise fee would generate \$70,000 in revenue, and you can post up to 5%, so a total of \$350,000 per year. If you do one, you have to have a revenue purpose statement and a reason to do it to collect the money."

Council member Brian Bills clarified that if the council approved a franchise fee, they would no longer be able to collect the Local Option Sales Tax dollars, and it would be replaced by the franchise fee.

Reinders proposed another 25-year franchise fee agreement. The council took no action, and further dis-

cussions are anticipated at a future council meeting.

The council also heard a request from the Red Oak Eagles Lodge to close north 2nd Street from Washington Avenue south to the bridge from noon to midnight, Aug. 13.

Eagles representative Sandy Reich said the Eagles were hosting a charity fundraiser for 6-year-old Gannon Vandewall, a first-grader currently battling cancer.

"Gannon has been diagnosed with leukemia. It's traveling extremely fast and it's being extremely aggressive. So we'd like to block off the street and put fencing around so it is attached to the building at two different locations," Reich explained.

Reich added the fundraiser will feature live music from a country western artist and dancing, food will be available for purchase, and merchandise will also be for sale.

COUNCIL, Page 2A

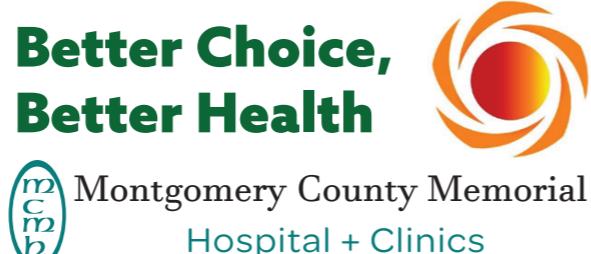


Crayons and crowns

Jade Jensen, Kalisa Straight and Aubree Cully work on the fashion designs of the future, while wearing crowns, at the Red Oak Child Development Center Thursday, July 14. This past week at ROCDC was Disney week with Thursday being Prince and Princess camp. A class photo is on page 8A. (Tess Nelson/Red Oak Express)



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Red Oak's Mann installed as BPO Elks District Deputy

Tess Nelson
The Red Oak Express

Justin Mann, a member of Red Oak Elks Lodge No. 1304 was recently installed District Deputy at the BPO Elks National Convention in Atlanta. Mann will serve the southwest Iowa lodges in Atlantic, Creston, Des Moines, Indianola, Newton, Red Oak, Shenandoah, and West Des Moines for one year.

"A district deputy is a liaison or contact between a local lodge and grand lodge. If any issues arise during the year, the lodge will contact me and I will communicate with grand lodge to try to find a quick resolution to the issue or problem," explained Mann, who has been an Elk for nearly nine years.

At the national convention, Mann said they visited numerous attractions, such as the National Center for Civil and Human Rights.

"The convention lasted four days. I think the biggest highlight was being in an auditorium with nearly 6,000 people at the convention center," Mann said. "It was a very big crowd."

Mann said he enjoys being an Elk because he's able to meet so many interesting people, some who have become good friends.

At the Red Oak Lodge, Mann has held the positions of Exalted Ruler, Loyal Knight, and Lecturing Knight. He is currently in his third year as treasurer. At the state level, he was the Southwest Vice President for two years and served as the Esquire to the District Deputy last year.

"Usually, you hold an office at the state level for a year, and assist a district deputy for another year, and then you are installed as a district deputy for a total commitment of three years," explained Mann.

The BPO Elks is one of the premier patriotic and charitable organizations in the United States. In the 154 years since the Order's founding, the BPO Elks has made charitable donations totaling approximately \$12 billion.



Red Oak Elks Lodge No. 1304 member Justin Mann, right, shakes hands with Grand Exalted Ruler Bruce Hidley during the BPO Elks National Convention in Atlanta recently. (Photo provided)

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Stanton's downtown facade project begins

Tess Nelson
The Red Oak Express

In October 2021, the city of Stanton received roughly \$445,000 for its downtown revitalization project. The funds came from a Community Development Block Grant, with the project renovating eight buildings in downtown Stanton.

Work on the project began last week and is to be completed in 10 months.

Stanton Community Development Director Jenna Ramsey said the project includes the restoration of the front façade of select downtown buildings on the east and west sides of Broad Ave.

The side façade of four buildings will be included. Buildings are not within a historic district, however, the city is seeking a historic

district designation. All buildings will require special attention with work including, but not be limited to: new storefront window systems, tuckpointing, awnings, new/repared upper level windows, and upper level entry doors.

The buildings include Underdog Design and Drawing, the former gun shop at 318 Broad Ave., the former toy store at 324 Broad Ave., the former Stanton Senior Center at 326 Broad Ave., Great Western Bank, the Pershin Laundromat, and Pershin Service.

Including local contributions and owner matches, the overall total for the project is just over \$762,000.

Additional contributors include the Iowa West Foundation, the Ripple Effect Program, the Rural Innovation Grant, the Power of Connection, and the Montgomery County Community Foundation and Curtis Architecture and Design.



A conceptual drawing of Stanton's downtown following the facade project by Curtis Architecture and Design. The program started last week and will be completed next year. (Photo provided)

Supervisors show support for NPI housing project

Nick Johansen
The Red Oak Express

The Montgomery County Board of Supervisors is backing Nishna Productions, Inc. in their plan to construct affordable housing.

Supervisor Donna Robinson said she was contacted by Nishna Productions executive director Sherri Clark requesting a letter of support to seek a grant through the Nonprofit Innovation Infrastructure Fund.

"They are getting support from other county boards, in Mills County, specifically also some legislators and other entities," said Robinson. "The funding is for the construction of three family homes that are totally accessible to individuals with disabilities who have mobility impairments."

According to Robinson, Nishna Productions has received between 20 and 25 referrals of current residents of the Glenwood Resource Center who need to transfer to a community provider and setting as a result of the center's closure. The grant would assist Nishna Productions, as it is having difficulty locating affordable housing for the individuals.

"According to information from Nishna Productions, housing prices are extremely high and it is not able to compete with current market prices. By using the grant funding to construct new houses, Nishna Productions would be able to provide an affordable option for residents leaving the Glenwood Resource Center with extremely

low Social Security benefits, sometimes in the range of \$841 per month," commented Robinson.

The plan calls for one of the four-bedroom homes to be constructed in Red Oak, a measure supported by Nishna Productions. The organization is dedicated to the agency's mission: Delivering high-quality support and assistance to those individuals whom require it 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

The supervisors unanimously approved the request by NPI to submit a letter of support for the grant funding request.

The supervisors also re-approved a letter of support for the Iowa DNR County Creek Sign grant application request. Assistant to the engineer Barry Byers said the letter had to be redone as they are adding to the additional signage request.

"We had to revise our estimate, as they have a \$5,000 minimum for their funding application. We had to add signs to our request to meet that threshold. We're essentially doubling our signage request," said Byers.

The supervisors approved the letter as presented in regards to the signage grant request.

- In other business, the supervisors:
- Approved the sheriff's report of fees for June, in the amount of \$14,033.
 - Approved the recorder's report of fees for June, in the amount of \$29,147.
 - Approved the treasurer's ending fund balance for June, in the amount of \$11,737,532.

COUNCIL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Reich confirmed alcohol would be available for purchase, and that their insurance carrier advised they would be covered if purchased alcohol was taken outside. City administrator Brad Wright urged Reich to verify that their plans for alcohol sales didn't need any further documentation for approval.

The council approved the request from the Eagles for the street closure as presented. Reich said the event will begin at 3 p.m.

In other business, the Council:

- Approved a request from the Montgomery County Fair Board for fireworks use on the evening of July 23 at the demolition derby.
- Approved a request from the Classy Chassis Car Club for street closures, a supply of barricades, and the use of the empty lot on the northwest corner of the square for Old Car Day on Aug. 20.
- Approved resolutions for economic development grants to the Red Oak Chamber and Industry Association and the Montgomery County Development Corporation.
- Approved the first reading of an amendment to city code for amending provisions pertaining to parking regulations. The amendment created a no-parking zone from the intersection with Inman Drive for 60 feet on the east side of north 8th Street. The council then approved a motion to waive the second and third readings of the ordinance amendment and approved a motion to adopt.

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Former Red Oak instructor Dan Black was named Instructor of the Year at the Council Bluffs Community School District. (Photo submitted)

Former RO instructor honored by Council Bluffs district

Tess Nelson
The Red Oak Express

Dan Black, who taught in Red Oak from 2012-2017, was recently named the Licensed Staff Member of the Year for the Council Bluffs Community School District. Black is the orchestra director at Abraham Lincoln High School and Kirm Middle School in Council Bluffs.

While in Red Oak, Black primarily directed high school band, but he said he also served as an instructional technology coach and lead teacher. Black reminisced, and said he still looked very fondly on his experience teaching and living in Red Oak, and was so fortunate to work alongside so many

great staff members, community members, and parents.

"Next year, my classroom will be reaching 100 more students per day than when I started five years ago. The district has added another full time music educator to help reach all these kids. I couldn't be more grateful for the opportunity to be innovative in my classroom and try whole new approaches to music education, whether it be throwing out the model during COVID-19 to create a record label or starting our new guitar and rock band classes to make the classroom that much more accessible to kids 6-12," Black said. "Music is for everyone, and I'm excited to get started again next year."

Moore second at SkillsUSA Nationals

Lukas Moore of Emerson, a May 2022 Southwestern Community College (SWCC) auto collision repair/refinish graduate, placed second nation-

ally, receiving the silver medal in collision repair technology (post-secondary division), during the 2022 event held June 21-23, in Atlanta, Ga.

Portable classrooms delivered to Inman Elementary



Two modular classrooms were delivered and placed at Inman Elementary on July 14. The two-room classrooms were approved for lease by the Red Oak School Board May 9. The classrooms will be leased for 39 months. Superintendent Ron Lorenz said the classrooms would provide much-needed classroom space in the interim while the district has its needs assessment done through Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture. (Nick Johansen/The Red Oak Express)

Competitive bass fishing program begins at SWCC in August

Southwestern Community College made it official, beginning this fall the college will field a bass fishing team for the first time in college history and Cory Dorsey of Corning will lead the Spartan anglers.

Dorsey, a lifetime bass fisherman, has competed locally, regionally, and nationally. During high school, Dorsey competed with the Cedar Rapids Jr. Bassmasters.

Beginning his senior year of high school, he moved to a higher level of competition fishing with Iowa Premier Bass, a National Bass Anglers Association (NBAA)-affiliated organization.

The first year Dorsey competed with Iowa Premier Bass, he qualified to fish the NBAA National Championship on Kentucky Lake. He has been affiliated with Indian Creek Lure

Company since 2007.

Kim Bishop, Southwestern's dean of student services and athletic director, is excited about the hire and can't wait to have the new sport in place for Southwestern student-athletes.

"Creston is located in a region with an abundance of lakes allowing for prime fishing opportunities," stated Bishop. "Once our college administration made the commitment to pursue bass fishing as a collegiate sport, we needed a dynamic individual to spearhead the effort. After researching and getting to know Cory, I am confident he is the individual we need to establish the program."

Bishop said when Dorsey comes onboard at Southwestern he will ultimately make practice and competition decisions; but she said the team will practice and compete throughout the aca-

demie year as weather allows.

The fishing team will practice two or three days per week and will likely have inter-squad competitions to determine team members who will travel and compete at tournaments.

"Cory is known far and wide not only for his fishing talent and expertise, but also as an individual with strong character, a great work ethic, and respect for the sport and competition," Bishop explained. "I can't wait to see him interact with student-athletes and develop this program for us."

Dorsey attended Southwestern's carpentry and building trades program, as well as Des Moines Area Community College's criminal justice program.

In addition to coaching at Southwestern, he is a police officer for the Creston Police

Department.

Dorsey said he is excited to get the bass fishing team off the ground at Southwestern.

"This area is full of young anglers who love to compete" and the bass fishing team at SWCC is going to allow them to continue fishing at the collegiate level while pursuing their college education," said Dorsey. "I'm looking for the best anglers to take to the waters and put the Southwestern Community College Fishing Team on the map"

He will begin recruiting for Southwestern's bass fishing program immediately. Students interested in pursuing bass fishing as a collegiate sport should call Southwestern at 641-782-7081 or email Dorsey directly at dorsey@swcciaowa.edu.

VIEWPOINTS

Stronger the Press, Stronger the People

THE TIME CAPSULE | ROY MARSHALL

Sears, carrots, watermelons and ticks

Thanks to those who responded to the Sears kit home column.

So far one has been identified in the old Alix Addition of Red Oak, another has a rural address two miles from it, two are in Carson, one between Villisca and Nodaway and one in Lewis.

I've had a chance to drive by or visit with owners (past or present) of most of them and can confirm that Sears sold quality kits.

In order to beat the heat, wife went out early the other day to mow the lawn. I spent time in the garden, bringing in a few peppers, half a dozen tomatoes, one watermelon and three ticks.

The latter were later removed from my hair. Wife had two crawling on her.

Ticks seem to get worse every year. I said we needed a few guineas.

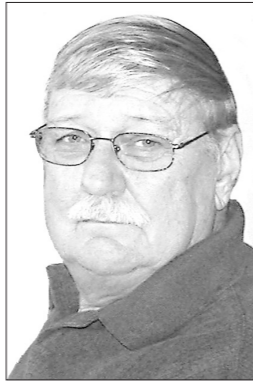
She remembered those we had in the late '80s and said we'd start putting repellent on our shoes and cuffs.

Guineas are out of the question.

They went after ticks and snakes, but in all other regards were awful.

The stupidity of guinea fowl makes a chicken look brilliant, and that's a tough hill to climb.

When one shrieked they all did, and they erupt-



ed at a passing car, a gust of wind, a daylily bloom they hadn't seen before.

They refused to return to a coop at night, roosting instead in trees or on rooftops; either ours or a house half a mile away.

Racoons and owls took some of them. Two died abruptly after they put deep scratch marks on the roof of my state car, and the others just went away.

Cecil Metz called over the weekend to tell me high temperatures in his part of Texas have been consistently 100 or above.

His carrots are toast. He knows I raise them in a protein tub and is thinking of doing likewise. He has to water anyway and in a tub he could do so closer to his house.

He asked how many can be raised that way. I've never counted.

Planting the tiny seeds and thinning half of them is tedious enough; counting seems absurd.

I suspect, though, that 80-90 nice carrots could

be done if spacing was ideal, and for that seed tapes might be good.

Metz said he had a better way of starting carrots. It sounds promising, and if we have readers interested in a crop for fall this a good time to plant.

He starts by putting seed in a plastic bag with a little water, sealing and sloshing occasionally to make sure all seeds are wet.

At room temperature they'll begin to sprout in a couple of days.

As soon as the first tiny white sprouts appear, he heats a cup of water and adds enough cornstarch to stir into the consistency of honey.

This is allowed to cool, then added to the plastic bag and gently swirled around to distribute seeds.

A corner is cut from the bag and the mixture squeezed like cake frosting, trying to get a seed every 2-3 inches.

Normally he does this in straight rows. With a protein tub his plan is to start with a large outer circle and spiral inward.

A mathematician, knowing our tubs have a diameter of 22.5 inches, would tell us the circumference is 68 inches and, allowing 2.5 inches between rows, could tell us how many carrots this will grow.

Things won't work that way, though, so I'll do it by planting now and counting carrots in September.

If anyone wonders about our early July watermelons, they're Blacktail Mountain. Taste is sweeter than seedless, produce aisle bowling balls.

At 10-12 pounds they fit the fridge, but three vines had four melons and show little promise of more.

Three hills of Sangria, which is what I've planted each of the last few years, consistently produce 25-30 melons with excellent taste.

Those planted this year are loaded with small ones, although they won't start ripening until late August.

A downside of Sangria is their size, which is up to 35 pounds and too much for two of us.

Metz scoffs at a 35-pounder, claiming he grows 50-pound Black Diamonds.

He can't be trusted, though, and I won't be confident of his carrot planting method until I've seen the green.

Roy Marshall is a local historian and columnist for the Red Oak Express. He can be contacted at news@redoakexpress.com.

Letters to the Editor

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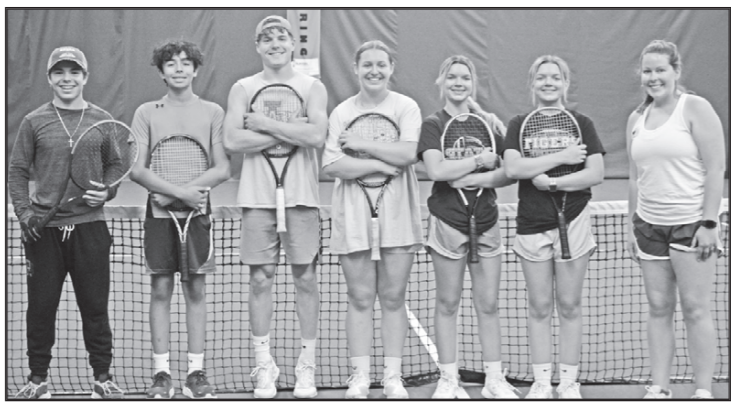
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also available from a coin rack in front of the Red Oak Express.



**"WHERE THE COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER"
FOLLOW THE BOUNCING BALL**



Tennis players pose for a picture with instructor Micayla Taylor. (Photos submitted)

Year-round, the Montgomery County Family YMCA has many active recreational sports opportunities to offer individuals and families. Here are just a few:

Tennis

With four courts indoors in the Carder Tennis Center and two outdoors, rain or shine, the Montgomery County Family YMCA is a great spot to learn this fun sport or prove your mastery of

it in a friendly game.

Tennis is a racket sport that is played either individually against a single opponent or between two teams of two players each. Each player uses a tennis racket that is strung with cord to strike a hollow rubber ball covered with felt over or around a net and into the opponent's court.

The Carder Tennis Center has a beautifully painted floor and lines

and nets which has made it a welcome destination for tennis lovers since it was built.

In addition to the courts, a Tennis Center Viewing Area room positioned above it has proved to be a great spot for family and friends to watch the games below. Recently updated and rededicated on July 23, 2016, it continues to be a tennis mecca for the Midwest, bringing in tennis players from Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri when tournaments are held there. The next tournament will be the Kiwanis Closed Tournament.

Instructor Micayla Taylor, a former Red Oak High School varsity player, led the Summer Youth Tennis Program this year. The kids were taught the importance of holding the racquet correctly, serve techniques, and the various rules that govern points. Throughout the year, groups gather to play tennis, and individual tennis lessons are available.

Pickleball

Pickleball is a combination of table tennis, badminton and tennis played with a paddle and a plastic wiffle-like ball. Back in March of 2019, Regional Director Steve Stone of the USAPA (United States of America Pickleball Association) along with Morand Thomas had a workshop on the game of pickleball. Anecdotes about the game's origins and name were shared as well as a passion for the fast-paced game. The sport is one of the fastest growing sports in the country for its low net and light wiffle ball that accommodates all ages and abilities. Since the introduction of the game, a group has regularly come to play on both the tennis courts and in the Wilson Gymnasium.

Racquetball

Racquetball is played by two or four players. When played by two, it is called singles and when played by four, doubles. A non-



Tennis Instructor Micayla Taylor and some of the students in her class.

tournament variation of the game that is played by three players is called cut-throat. The Montgomery County Family YMCA has a nicely appointed racquetball court with wooden floor, and see-through plexiglass entrance wall and ceiling drop-view from the Tennis Center Viewing Area gives it a spacious feel. It was built near the tennis courts in the Carder Tennis Center

and racquets and safety goggles are available at the front desk.

To learn more about how you can be involved in tennis, pickleball, or racquetball or to check out some of our other programs, visit us online at mcymca.com where you can register for them, call us at 623-2161, stop by the Y located at 101 E. Cherry St., or visit us on Facebook.



The YMCA's new HVAC system was installed earlier in June. (Photo submitted)

NEW HVAC SYSTEM INSTALLED AT Y

On Monday, June 20 and Tuesday, June 21 the Montgomery County Family YMCA shut down in preparation for the installation of a new HVAC and cooling system. Jones Mechanical completed the installation of the equipment on those days as well as the removal of the previous HVAC and cooling system that had been in place since the Y opened more than 20 years ago.

The purchase and installation was made possible by generous donations including from the estate of Nancy Murphy and grants such as the \$35,000 raised through the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs

Facility Improvement Grant and \$30,000 from Omaha Community Foundation/Foundations of Southwest Iowa. The new system has already proven to be beneficial in regulating the temperature throughout the facility.

For more information about the Montgomery County Family YMCA and its programs, memberships, and volunteer/donor opportunities, visit us online at mcymca.com where you can register for them, call us at 623-2161, stop by the Y located at 101 E. Cherry St., or visit us on Facebook.

NEW SWIM TEAM NAME SELECTED

The Montgomery County Family YMCA is restarting the swim team and recently held a contest to determine the name of the group.

First, the community was encouraged to submit potential names between June 13-24. From, June 27 to July 8 a vote narrowed down the choices to five.

The five choices were: Montgomery County Tiger Sharks, Montgomery County Blue Barracudas, Montgomery County Chlorine Machine, and Montgomery County Dolphins.

On Monday, July 11, all votes were tallied and by an overwhelming number the winner was the Montgomery County Tiger Sharks with the Montgomery County Blue Barracudas coming in second.

The new swim team will be coached by Michelle Grismore-Anderson. Michelle, currently a Red Cross certified lifeguard, life-guard instructor, and water safety instructor at the Y, is excited for the opportunity to be the swim coach for the incoming group of kids. She looks forward to teaching

them the finer points of swimming. As Michelle pointed out, "the only difference between try and triumph is a little 'umph.'" Look for more information to follow on registration dates and season details.

For more information about the Montgomery County Family YMCA and its programs, memberships, and volunteer/donor opportunities, visit us online at mcymca.com where you can register for them, call us at 623-2161, stop by the Y located at 101 E. Cherry St., or visit us on Facebook.



Chloe Devito, Ty Jenkins, Christopher Allison, and Mylee Echternach, pictured from left, passed out candy and guest passes during the Junction Days Parade. (Photo submitted)

YMCA SUMMER DAY CAMPS

During the Junction Days parade on Saturday, July 25, members of the staff walked along passing out guest passes and candy to the crowd.

In the past, a float has been decorated and filled with summer day

camp kids, however this year there are instead summer day camp trips for children entering first grade this fall. The first will be held on Thursday, July 21 at the Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information about this and other summer day camp trips, check out our website at mcymca.com where you can register, call 712-623-2161, or email cjohnson@mcymca.com.

BUSINESSES OF THE QUARTER

The Montgomery County Family YMCA would like to honor the Round Table companies: Houghton State Bank, Red Oak Subway, Red Oak Chrysler, Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, David Carbaugh's State Farm, and Tech Support Services as our Businesses of the Quarter for the next two quarters from April to September.

All employees of the Round Table companies and their immediate families will receive a free membership to the Y* until September. So, stop by if this means you! *Does not apply to current members.

The Round Table recognizes those who support the goals and objectives of the Montgomery County Family YMCA through donations in three different cat-

egories: Gold (\$1,500), Silver (\$1,000), and Bronze (\$500).

The Round Table Program gives the YMCA the ability to pursue the YMCA's three areas of focus, which are Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility by partnering with businesses throughout the community. The program gives businesses the opportunity to make an annual one-time contribution to the YMCA which will be put toward the annual campaign, endowment, or specific programs the business might choose to support.

Want to know how to become a Round Table participant? Simply contact Executive Director Carrie Shalters by email at cshalters@mcymca.com or by phone at 721-623-2161 for more information.



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Proposal for end of season 'Doggy Dip' passes initial request

Nick Johansen
The Red Oak Express

The Red Oak Park and Tree Board met for its regular monthly meeting July 14.

The board met with Red Oak resident Sara Orme, who requested the use of the Red Oak Municipal Pool for a special "doggy dip" event after the pool season. Board Chairman Bill Drey said he remembered similar events being held in the past.

"I was conversing with Tracy Vannausdle, and when she was a lifeguard, we both remember having a doggie dip event in the late 1990s," Drey stated.

Orme said the idea wasn't a new one, and that there were many other communities that held similar events.

"We previously lived in Omaha, Neb., and it was very popular there. What happened there was after the pool season was over, and before they drained the pool, they opened it up to dogs and their owners for day swimming. It encourages community participation. It usually fell on a Sunday night, and ran for about two hours," Orme said.

Orme suggested the possibility of charging a small admission price and donating the money to aid in the purchase of an animal shelter in Red Oak. Orme felt costs to the city would be minimal.



Park Board Chairman Bill Drey, Park Board member Cliff Owen, and park superintendent Adam VanDerVliet at the meeting July 14. (Nick Johansen/The Red Oak Express)

"I think the only cost to the city would be to have a couple of lifeguards on duty, since there will be humans swimming. I can't think of anything beyond that," commented Orme.

Park superintendent Adam VanDerVliet said he had preliminary discussions with the City of Red Oak on the proposal, and said they were looking into what liability insurance would be needed to hold the event.

"We've sent an email out to the insurance carrier to see how other cities have done it, because obviously it's been done before, so I don't think it would be too difficult an undertaking," advised VanDerVliet.

VanDerVliet asked what limitations were needed for chlorine to make the pool safe for dogs to swim. Orme suggested waiting a week or two after the pool season with no new chlorine added to the

pool to make sure the water was safe.

Drey also advised Orme to contact Red Oak City Clerk Mary Bolton to finalize other details including costs and insurance information.

The board approved the proposal for the doggie dip event, pending Orme contacting Bolton to finalize additional details.

The board also discussed a request for a memorial bench at Fountain Square Park in memory of Randy Vanderhoof. Drey said there was a potential location for the bench near the Freedom Rock.

"We can place the bench on the west side of the rock, so there's one on each side. I have heard back from the Red Oak American Legion, VFW, and the Montgomery County Veterans Memorial Court of Honor and they all granted permission for the bench to be placed in that location," advised Drey.

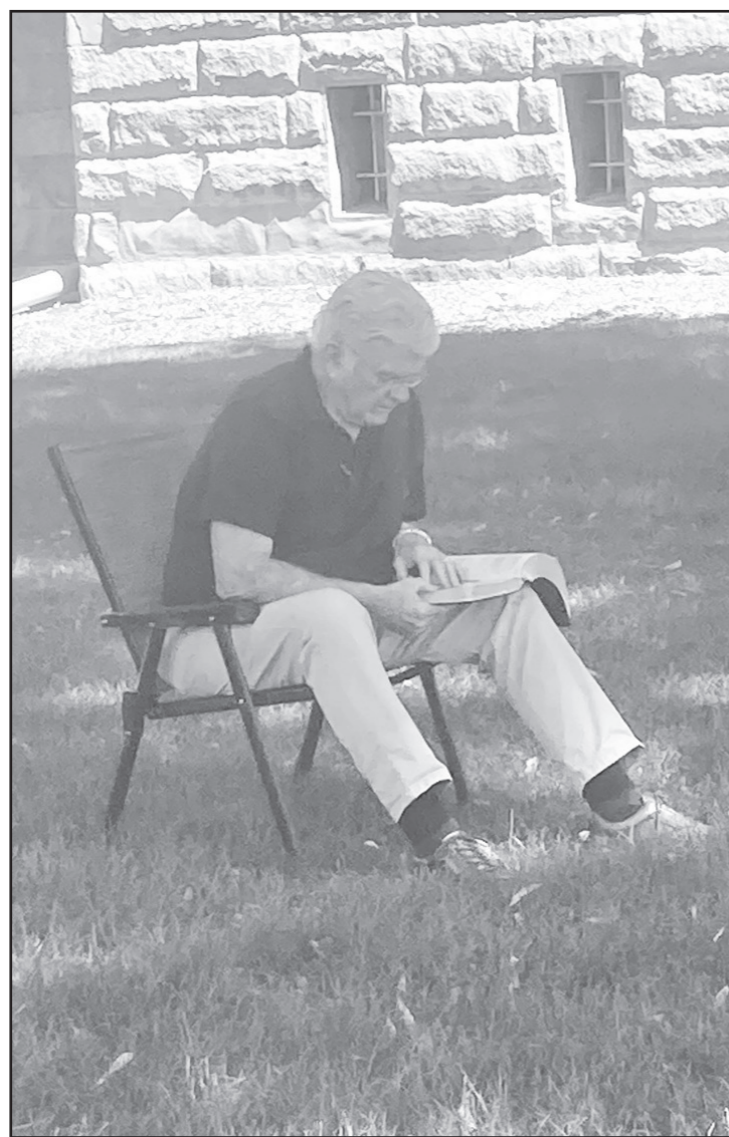
Drey added they are keeping the memorial bench the same as the others already in the park.

"They wanted a red, white, and blue one at first, but I informed them that we keep all the benches green on the square, and the Vanderhoof family is aware of the pricing of the bench," said Drey.

The board approved the request for a memorial bench in memory of Vanderhoof.

In other business, the board:

- Approved a request from the Classy Chassis Car Club for use of Fountain Square Park, including the shelter house, on Aug. 20 for the car show.



Bible reading marathon

Bill Artherholt of Red Oak reads his Bible as part of Iowa's 99 County Bible Reading Marathon Thursday, July 14, on the Montgomery County Courthouse lawn. (Tess Nelson/Red Oak Express)

Supervisors agree to appoint Ozuna as county auditor

Nick Johansen
The Red Oak Express

The Montgomery County Board of Supervisors has weighed its options on whether or not to appoint a new county auditor ahead of the November general election.

The supervisors first took up the discussion at the regular Board of Supervisors meeting July 12. Supervisors Chair Mark Peterson said due to timing ahead of the deadline for an appointee, he and Supervisor Mike Olson conducted the interviews with the two candidates that had applied for the position. Peterson felt there were a number of issues that needed to be discussed.

"We need to determine if we want to appoint someone to the position for the next several months, and let them run for election in November, or if we want to leave it open for a completely clean slate and let the new auditor be selected by someone who has chosen to run," Peterson said.

Additionally, Peterson said the two applicants were currently in full-time positions elsewhere, and would have to quit to take over the duties of auditor.

"If we appoint one of the candidates, we're then expecting them to run for election, possibly unopposed, or possibly opposed. Anything could happen there. Both of the applicants were from outside of government, so they don't have any experience in the office," said Peterson. "I will say that of the two applicants, Mike Olson and I both felt we had one candidate rise to the top, and if the board chose, we would be willing to recommend that candidate and setup an interview for all five of us to interview them together. We would even go so far as to recommend going ahead and appointing them."

The deadline to make an appointment for the position were aware that if they were appointed, they would have to run for election in November and win in order to keep the post.

Supervisor Charla Schmid said it was a big decision to quit a full-time job for an appointed position, and then not win in the November election. Peterson agreed.

"If we do appoint someone, I guess you would say that we're giving our seal of approval for them to run for the position and officially take it over, but that doesn't prevent someone else from running, or more than one candidate running, depending on the party, who might win over our appointee. But regardless of that, I'm very comfortable that both candidates were very aware of the fact that they'll have to run and were aware of the risks," explained Peterson.

Supervisor Randy Cooper asked if they declined to appoint the candidate, whether or not they'd decline to run themselves in November. As the candidate was already employed, Peterson didn't think that scenario was likely, but admitted that there was a possibility.

Supervisor Mike Olson said following the interview, the potential appointee, despite a lack of political experience, would be a good fit, and time may be limited to appoint them.

"I feel the person would be able to adapt and learn the new position in a short period of time. They have a lot of experience with corporate America and making difficult decisions and situations. My concern is that the candidate may not be available in four months, and may not run," Olson said.

Cooper asked what would happen if the county failed to appoint a new auditor, and

then in November, no one chose to run for the post, and questioned whether choosing not to act was a mistake.

"I'm a little nervous to be in a situation where if we have a good candidate now, and then we pass, what do we do if the person decides to move on to something else, or decides they don't want to leave the position they're currently in? It's something that needs to be considered," commented Cooper.

The supervisors agreed to meet as a full board and interview the candidate. A special meeting was held on Monday, July 18, where the candidate was revealed as Jill Ozuna of Red Oak.

At the July 18 meeting, Schmid expressed concerns over appointing Ozuna and potentially losing other employees in the auditor's office, or other issues that may arise between now and the November election.

"There are a bunch of situations I've been thinking about, and while Jill is a very intelligent and capable woman, they're just some things I'm throwing out for us to think about," explained Schmid.

Robinson had the full confidence that the three staff members in the auditor's office would work with them and give them a chance to grow in the new position and felt that everyone is, and would be, supportive of the appointment.

"I would agree that you interviewed very well and that you have the skill set to do this position," stated Robinson.

Olson, Cooper, and Peterson were all in agreement to appoint Ozuna as the county auditor. After a vote, the supervisors unanimously approved the appointment for Ozuna.

Ozuna's official start date will be on Aug. 1.

Johnson recognized by Gregg, Reynolds

Recently, Tim Johnson of Stanton was recognized as one of the 2022 Governor's Volunteer Awards recipients.

More than 500 awards are being presented this year during five ceremonies across Iowa. More than 150 communities in Iowa were served by this year's honorees.

"Iowans take great pride in their deep and rich commitment for serving others — it's in our DNA," Reynolds said in a press release from Volunteer Iowa. "Iowa nice is the foundation of our state — you see it everywhere you turn — Iowans volunteering their time to help others and improve their communities and our state. It truly is an honor to be able to recognize these individuals for their meaningful acts of generosity through the Governor's Volunteer Awards and inspire others to do the same."

Coordinated by Volunteer Iowa, the Governor's Volunteer Award program provides an easy way for Iowa nonprofits, charitable organizations, and government entities to honor their volunteers with a prestigious, state-level award. It is in its 38th year.



Pictured from left: Iowa Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg, Tim Johnson and Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds. (Photo provided)

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Disney week

Last week was Disney week at the Red Oak Child Development Center. On Thursday, July 14, students were able to dress like princes and princesses. Pictured, from left, back row: Hadley Stanley, Gavin Johnson, Rynleigh Mauer, Ensleigh Miner, Aubree Culley, Dawson White, Allyanna Lovvorn, Kalisa Straight, and Henry Taylor. Front row, from left: Owen Bisbee, Zane Bowen, Libby Fridolph, Palmer Peterson, Jax Pelzer, Aubree Treat and and Jade Jensen. (Tess Nelson/Red Oak Express)



Updated county comprehensive plan given go ahead by supervisors

Nick Johansen
The Red Oak Express

The Montgomery County Board of Supervisors has agreed to proceed with a proposal from the Southwest Iowa Planning Council to update the county's comprehensive plan.

At the start of the meeting, Montgomery County Planning and Zoning Commissioner Vicky Rossander spoke during the meeting and that revisions to the plan were long overdue.

"All counties are required to have a comprehensive plan to use while developing their ordinances. These plans are usually supposed to be updated every five years. The only version of the county's plan that zoning commissioner Barry Byers has been able to locate and share with us was written in 1967, almost 60 years ago. I urge the supervisors to take action and accept the SWIPCO proposal," said Rossander.

The supervisors then heard a presentation from Dani Briggs, planning technician II with SWIPCO. Briggs agreed with Rossander's statement and said the plans are a legal document that serve as a basis for zoning, and are a requirement.

"They aid in policy decisions, are a catalyst for goal-setting and consensus-building, and are a good source of community information. They're not perfect, nor inflexible, and are meant to change over the years. As we have heard, the current plan is simply past its effective life, largely because we didn't know when it was done. We are well past due for an update," Briggs said.

Briggs felt that now was a good time to update the county's comprehensive plan, as they are currently under contract with the City of Villisca to update its comprehensive plan, and discussions are ongoing with the City of Red Oak to update its own comprehensive plan.

"There's a possibility that we can be working on updating three comprehensive plans at the same time, which would be an interesting aspect for public participation," stated Briggs.

Also, Briggs felt it was time for the county to assess future needs,



Dani Briggs, planning technician II with SWIPCO, addresses the board of supervisors. (Nick Johansen/Red Oak Express)

and there would be benefits to the county to have an update plan.

"We've seen a lot of new funding sources pop up here recently for big projects, so it's good to have a plan in place for when those funding sources do pop up. Additionally, you will end up with a leg-up on grant applications. Comprehensive plans that are up-to-date look very good for grant applications, so that's always a plus," Briggs commented.

Completion of the new comprehensive plan, Briggs said, would take up to 12-18 months, and varied on how the process went and the level of public participation.

"We usually start by forming a steering committee, and start collecting data at that point. We will then have a kick-off meeting, and

we will try to do at least three community meetings. Since this is a plan that would affect the entire county, we would try to spread those out among different locations. We can also offer surveys and seek input from focus groups, so there are a variety of ways we can use to get participation from the public. After that we take all the information, do data analysis and plan writing, and then the final plan would

be delivered to the supervisors," explained Briggs.

Briggs stressed that the level of public participation they received during the planning process was the key to the strength of the new comprehensive plan.

Supervisor Donna Robinson asked whether, if Villisca, Red Oak, and the county all started updating comprehensive plans at the same time, there could be a group community meeting among all three entities and whether it would benefit SWIPCO. Briggs said it would be an undertaking, but felt it was possible and would be beneficial in the long run.

The cost for updating the comprehensive plan is \$20,000. Currently, there was nothing in the budget for those costs, but Robinson felt the county could use American Rescue Plan Act funding to pay for the proposal and get things kick-started.

Briggs said if the county wanted to wait to pay for the cost of the proposal out of the normal budget, there were ways where the work could be done and billed later.

"We could get started, and then the cost could be billed in the next fiscal year for budgeting purposes, if that was the direction the county chose to go," advised Briggs.

Briggs said if the county provided the go-ahead, they would plan to hold the first steering committee meeting in September, followed by a public meeting in the fall before the weather got too cold.

"We currently have four other comprehensive plans that we're working on right now, but three of them are getting ready to wrap up soon, so plenty of time will soon become available for us to get started in Montgomery County," Briggs said. "While I haven't seen the county's current comprehensive plan, I can tell you that we'll probably be starting from scratch on the new one."

The supervisors unanimously approved to move forward with SWIPCO's proposal for a revised comprehensive county plan, as presented.

Insecticide odor the cause for apartment evacuation

An apartment building was temporarily evacuated July 13 after reports of an unknown chemical smell, later revealed to be from insecticide.

At around 2:45 p.m., the Red Oak Fire Department was dispatched to 1403 E. Summit St. on a report of a chemical smell emanating from within the apartment building.

Upon arrival, firefighters reported there was a chemical odor coming from within the apartment building and evacuated all residents.

Gas/air monitoring equipment was deployed, however, no readings were reported. MidAmerican Utilities were dispatched and their gas/air monitoring equipment did not provide a readout either.

The building was checked for a possible chemical spill or improper chemicals being mixed with nothing being located. After the building was ventilated, fire crews rechecked the building and the irritant odor had diminished and ceased to remain.

Property Management staff and occupants were advised they could return and if the odor came back, they were to notify the dispatch center and residents would then have to be placed somewhere else until the building could be cleared by chemical specialists.

Red Oak Fire Chief John Bruce gave an update on the investigation into the smell on July 14. Bruce said they discovered that one of the residents had utilized an insecticide spray within their apartment, which is believed to have generated the

chemical odor.

There were no injuries to first responders and only one resident was examined on scene, but not transported.

The Red Oak Fire Department was also assisted at the scene by the Red Oak Police Department, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, Montgomery County Communications, the Montgomery County Emergency Management Agency, and the property owner, Southern Iowa Rural Housing.

MCCF fall grant program now open for applications

The Montgomery County Community Foundation, working in partnership with the Red Oak Heritage Foundation, is pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted from organizations providing charitable services in Montgomery County.

As part of this fall grant cycle, \$34,200 is available to support Montgomery County nonprofit organizations and community projects. The deadline to apply for funds through the online application process is Sept. 1.

Of the total funds, \$1,125 is restricted to the community of Stanton, \$4,150 is allocated to the Villisca area, which includes \$1,650 for projects at Villisca Community Schools, and \$28,925 is available to support projects throughout the county.

Beginning July 15, application details, a fact sheet, and a link to the application form can be found online by selecting Montgomery County under County Listing at swiowafoundations.org. Applications will only be accepted through the online system.

Only organizations providing services in Montgomery County are eligible to apply. They must be able to demonstrate broad community/county support and be an IRS-approved 501(c)(3) public charity, a local municipality, or a fiscally sponsored project.

The MCCF aims to improve the quality of life in Montgomery County by supporting community needs in the areas of civic engagement, culture, health, education, and social services. The objective of the grant program is to fund projects that

will have a permanent impact on, and in, Montgomery County. For fall 2022, the MCCF will entertain requests for capital and program support. Requests for general operating support will not be considered.

These grant funds are made possible by the generosity of MCCF donors. To inquire about donating to MCCF, please contact 1-800-794-3458. Gifts to permanently endowed funds through the MCCF may be eligible to receive a 25% Endow Iowa Tax Credit.

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