

FREE

MCMH Oncology Department
Reveal Imager Facial Scan

Tuesday | May 9th | 9:00 - 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday | May 16th | 9:00 - 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday | May 23rd | 9:00 - 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday | May 30th | 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Call 712.623.6708 to schedule your appointment.

THE RED OAK Express

WEDNESDAY

May 3, 2023

Red Oak, IA

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DEDICATED TO FREEDOM SINCE 1868

\$1.50

Red Oak author Rhonda Wilkinson poses with three of her self-published books. (Nick Johansen/Red Oak Express)

More books planned for Red Oak's Wilkinson

Nick Johansen
The Red Oak Express

A Red Oak woman has three published books to her credit, and more on the way.

Ronda Wilkinson, a substitute teacher with the Red Oak Community School District, authored her first book, "There's a Monster in My Cart," in 2022. She followed that book with "Escaped," a short novel and the first in a series. The newest book she's published is "The Pug Who Thought he was a Pig."

Wilkinson, who also does the artwork for all of her books, said she's always had an interest in art and writing.

"After high school, I earned an AA in psychology, with a minor in art. Later, I earned a BA in elementary education with a reading endorsement and a concentration in psychology," Wilkinson said.

When she first put down her ideas for "There's a Monster in my Cart," Wilkinson said she wasn't planning on publishing it as a book at the time.

"It's based on my son. It started out as a Shutterfly book for my dad just for fun, before he passed away. The idea started when we were at the Red Oak HyVee grocery store. My son was in the cart, and he told me that he was going to turn into a monster if I would not let him out of the cart, and it took off from there," commented Wilkinson.

Her most recent book, "The Pug Who Thought He was a Pig," came to fruition when her husband noted that the neighbor's pug looked like a pig. Wilkinson's interest in writing began when she worked with the older kids in a daycare.

"I like to tell stories, and so I'd start a story and they'd add to it. I remember one story the kids titled Booga Ooga, he was just an inch tall, and he would go wherever the kids took him. I enjoyed the way kids liked to twist and turn the stories we made up. I try to create that same playfulness in my books."

The children's books are all stand-alone stories, and while "Escaped" is part of a series, Wilkinson said they are also stand-alone stories.

"The book "Escaped" is set in the 1600s, and follows a girl named Shayla

who lives in a remote jungle with her family. Shayla is stolen from her homeland and ends up on a ship. She escapes her captors, and struggles to survive on an island she thought was deserted. As Shayla heals from her trauma, we learn how she finds the strength to survive," explained Wilkinson.

Wilkinson said she decided to write "Escaped," and the other books in the series for a specific reason.

"I wanted to write about people finding the strength to overcome the trauma they have experienced. There are a few chapters in the book that are really intense, and as the story progresses, Shayla undergoes healing," said Wilkinson. "As she experiences the world around her, she finds healing in the simple things. There's so much healing in the world around us, and she gets to see it and experience it. If we open our eyes, we can see all these beautiful things around us."

When she sits down to write, Wilkinson said she doesn't ever start with a clear finish in mind.

"I don't know how they're going to end. They just take on a life of their own. When I write, it is like I can identify with the reader. If I think something is predictable, I can work out something to change things up and surprise the reader."

Wilkinson said she had several goals as a writer, primarily for her stories to entertain.

"I wanted to write books that parents would enjoy reading to their kids. When I'm reading a story to kids, I like reading something that's going to stimulate the mind, not just retell the plot from a movie. My illustrations often add a twist of humor and sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words. Also, I do my artwork by painting on a canvas, there's something relaxing about that," Wilkinson commented.

Wilkinson said she decided to take the plunge into making a full book after finding Kindle Direct Publishing, a free site.

"I did these books for me, and if other people enjoy them, that's awesome. And with the site being free, there was no reason not to do it. I can publish the book, get

BOOKS, Page 2A

Council approves new city administrator appointment

Nick Johansen
The Red Oak Express

The Red Oak City Council has approved the hire of a new city administrator.

At the regular Red Oak City Council meeting May 1, the council discussed an employment agreement resolution, a resolution of appointment, and a resolution of salary for Kyra Smith.

Councilmember Brian Bills said Smith is a Red Oak native, who currently resides in Kansas City, Mo. Bills said after conducting interviews, he and other members who sat in during the interview process found her to be the best fit for the community.

"The qualifications included more than just the education and previous job experience. The other part of the qualification was potential longevity on the job as well," said Bills. "Once she's hired on the job, we feel that she'll be here for a very long time."

The council unanimously approved the resolution approving an employment agreement with Smith, and the resolution approving Smith's appointment. Red Oak Mayor Shawanna Silvius said Smith was expected to take over the role later this month.

"We currently have her start date as May 31. That may need to be adjusted a little bit, but according to her last statement, that was the date we could start with," commented Silvius.

The council also unanimously approved the resolution setting Smith's salary at \$100,000 annually for a

three-year term.

With the hiring of a new city administrator, interim city administrator Al Vacanti's temporary position of the post is coming to an end. May 1 marked the final council meeting that Vacanti would be in attendance at, and he expressed his appreciation to the City of Red Oak.

"I want to express my appreciation to the employees and the citizens of Red Oak for the opportunity to serve the community for a few months. I wish I could say it was perfect, but it was definitely a learning experience and a challenge at times. However, I also feel there were some things we accomplished that will serve the community well," said Vacanti.

Councilmember Jeanice Lester praised Vacanti for his assistance to the city.

"The city was in a predicament, and you helped us get through that," stated Lester.

Bills added he wanted to express his appreciation for the hours Vacanti put in and the learning curve that he went through, saying he was a perfect fit for the office.

Red Oak Mayor Shawanna Silvius also praised Vacanti for his brief tenure with the city.

"I feel that we're in a much better position than we would have been if we hadn't had you, and we appreciate your service greatly," Silvius said.

Vacanti said he'd be doing his best to prepare things for Smith.

"I'll try to do some clean-up of some last minute things so they're not on the table for the new city administrator," Vacanti commented.

Green Hills AEA goes above and beyond to assist schools

Nick Johansen
The Red Oak Express

The Green Hills Area Education Agency is continuing to do its part to assist school districts around the area.

At a recent meeting with administrators with the Red Oak Community Schools district, Green Hills AEA Chief Administrator Jason Plorde said representatives from Green Hills were making a three-year tour and meeting with every single board across the Green Hills AEA area for a multitude of reasons - one of the biggest, to share funding information.

"Like you, we have funding. Funding is very critical, and we provide critical services to all schools in our area, but particularly rural schools. Legislators are always looking for places to cut, and if it starts to cut into our funding, it affects not only us, but rural schools. We have a healthy staff, and we have Green Hills AEA folk that are in your schools," Plorde said.

Currently the Green Hills AEA serves 43 public schools, six non-public schools, and has seven offices with 315 staff which serves 37,755 students and 4,934 teachers around the state and in Red Oak.

Field director Jeremy Stukenholtz is serving in his second year in the position. Stukenholtz said his focus was making sure the Red Oak District was getting what it needed.

"I supervise our staff that is out in the field, but I also serve and support and try to help the schools in our region and make sure that not only is our staff doing good work, but also try to support administrators and find ways that we might partner further so that we can do other things to help and support and work together," advised Stukenholtz.

Among those areas of support that are offered are assistive technology, audiology, a family - educator partnership, occupational therapy, specially designed education in math and literacy, special education rep-

"I do appreciate everything the AEA does because we are well served, and we do believe they're investing in our district."

Red Oak Superintendent Ron Lorenz

representatives, speech-language pathology, and transitions for high school students with disabilities.

"A lot of this is digital now. It's not so much the van driving around and delivering videos and things like that, but it's books and DVDs and assistive technology and partnering in any way we can to support the district. We have good people who do great work," commented Stukenholtz. "Currently 142 students in the Red Oak District are part of an individualized education plan, and the Green Hills AEA has a very special relationship with Red Oak's administrators."

Stukenholtz added the Green Hills AEA is working harder to partner more in terms of managing and working on student behavior.

"That's an issue all over our country, honestly, and so we are trying to find ways to partner and help in that regard," Stukenholtz said.

Stukenholtz added his main message was to express appreciation for the partnership with the Red Oak District.

"We have been welcomed into the Red Oak District. We think about the Red Oak District a lot, and we're thinking about solutions and ways we can help. Education is hard, and I think it's become more challenging in the last few years. We are completely

AEA, Page 2A

FREEDOM FROM SMOKING GROUP QUIT PROGRAM
Thursday May 25th
Montgomery County Memorial Hospital
CALL TINA AT (712) 623-8446 TO RSVP!

Stanton Prom royalty



The Stanton School District held its junior/senior high school prom on April 29. Pictured left, Carli Smith was crowned as the Stanton Prom Queen by junior class vice president Leah Sandin. Pictured right, Prom King Damien Meek joins Queen Carli Smith. (Charm Carpenter/The Red Oak Express)

AEA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

invested in Red Oak and want to continue to find ways to keep partnering in the future,” explained Stukenholtz.

AEA Board Member John Gambs, who is a former instructor at the Red Oak District, said he’s always had a rich history in education, having a father who served as a school board member for more than 30 years, and appreciates the efforts of the Red Oak Board.

“I have a vivid memory of him looking at the latest technology to look at teaching vacancies and needs, the Des Moines Register. He used to shake his head and ask where we were going to find teachers. I do appreciate all the things you do,” Gambs said. “At certain times, it’s a lot of time,

and you spend a good portion of that time, energy, and thought goes towards the board. Sometimes you may get some unwelcome advice from people you may know, but that’s just the way it is.”

Superintendent Ron Lorenz said for anyone who was looking at the business reports and saw funding that appeared to be leaving Red Oak and going to the AEA didn’t realize it was a product of the AEA having no taxing capacity.

“They would love to have that money, but the reality is, if the AEA goes away, Red Oak isn’t getting that money. The creation of the AEA in the early 1970s was about equity. There are things we as a district can-

not provide that are federally required, such as speech occupational therapists and behavioral therapists. We couldn’t hire them, and without the AEA, we’re sunk,” Lorenz said.

Lorenz also added that while the Red Oak district was hurting for funding, the AEA was losing funding as well, which in the end, hurts the kids.

“Every dollar they take away from the AEA comes back to hurt the district and kids, because the expectations don’t change, it’s just the capacity to meet them,” Lorenz stated. “I do appreciate everything the AEA does because we are well served, and we do believe they’re investing in our district.”

On April 24, the burn ban for Montgomery County was lifted. However, Montgomery County Emergency Management Director Brian Hamman said it is requested that anyone who wishes to burn, call the Montgomery County Communications Center at 712-623-5107 to avoid any unnecessary fire department responses. He added that those who decide to burn have alternative water sources nearby, never leave fires unattended, and use caution on dry windy days.

BOOKS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

a copyright, and can get them sent to me. If I sell them through Amazon, they do all the work for me there. It takes time, and if you can’t do your own illustrations, it can be more difficult, but since I’m writing and doing my own artwork, it’s simpler for me,” advised Wilkinson.

Through Kindle Direct Publishing, Wilkinson said she can edit her manuscript and upload it to the site, as well as submit her paintings and artwork, and an app is available to make her cover. The printing of the books themselves is also done through Kindle Direct Publishing, and she can order books at a maximum total of 999 per order. Review copies are also made available.

“You can have a copy shipped to you and preview it before you decide you want it published. Also, through Kindle, I can go back and change the font, or make edits. You can do a Kindle copy, a paperback, and a hardcover. Hardcover require 75 pages or more,” Wilkinson stated. “Also, if someone has a Kindle Unlimited, the ebook is free. If they have a Firestick and a Kindle or Kindle app, they can listen to it right on their television using the Alexa feature on their firestick remote. We actu-

ally listened to one of my books the other day.”

To purchase a copy of the books, Wilkinson is on Amazon at: amazon.com/stores/Ronda-Wilkinson/author/B0BGGX5M7Y?ref=ap_rdr&store_ref=ap_rdr&isDramIntegrated=true&shoppingPortalEnabled=true. All of her books are available for free through Kindle Unlimited. Using Kindle,

Wilkinson said, also allows for her books to be available in areas overseas.

A free copy of “There’s a Monster in My Cart” will be available through a drawing at the Red Oak Hy-Vee. The winner will be announced May 12 on KCSI. Sign up at the Hy-Vee customer service counter.

Wilkinson added that she’s currently working on several

other books and further details about them will be available in the fall. She will continue to post updates on the Red Oak Talk of the town Facebook page.

We can stop HIV, Iowa.

HIV treatment has come a long way, and it's extremely effective.

- If you're living with HIV, getting medical care & taking your HIV medication will help you live a long, healthy life.
- Staying on your HIV treatment almost eliminates the chance of transmitting HIV to your partners.
- There are programs to support you and your family and help pay for your care and treatment.

Learn more at stophiviowa.org

MYTH

Syphilis only affects men.

FACT

Syphilis quadrupled among Iowa women from 2019 to 2022.

Find testing near you: gettested.cdc.gov

Public Health IOWA HHS

Syphilis is a sexually transmissible infection (STI) that may have no symptoms. If not treated, it can cause serious, long-term health problems. Syphilis can also be passed on to sexual partners or to an unborn baby during pregnancy. Thankfully, it's easy to test, treat and cure! If you're sexually active, make sure that getting tested for syphilis is part of your regular health routine.

May Spring Special

0% Interest with No Payments for 12 Months

Financing with approved credit. Expires 5/31/23

Leaf Free Gutter System From A Family You Can Trust

- #1 Rated and Largest Leaf Free Gutter System on the market
- Handles 40% more water than our leading competition
- Doesn't mount underneath roof shingles
- Custom made on site of .032" seamless aluminum

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EARL AND MERLE WOODS

Please join the families of twin brothers, Earl and Merle Woods, for a graveside memorial service and celebration of life on Saturday, May 13 at 11 a.m. at Monroe Township Cemetery in Imogene. The Eagles Club in Shenandoah is providing lunch immediately following the service.

Nelson-Boylan-LeRette Funeral Chapel is in charge of arrangements.



DEBRA RHOTEN, 61

Debra L. Rhoten, 61, Council Bluffs, passed away Sunday, April 30, 2023, following a battle with cancer, at Accura Healthcare of Stanton, Stanton.

Debra Lynn Rhoten, the daughter of David F. and Judith (Hayes) Smith, was born Jan. 17, 1962, at El Paso, Texas.


Deb is survived by her mother, Judith Wheeler of Red Oak.

May God bless her memory and give strength to those who mourn.

A private family graveside service will be held at Evergreen Cemetery, Red Oak.

Memorial contributions may be given in Deb's name to the American Cancer Society. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at sldfuneralhome.com.

Sellergren-Lindell-DeMarce Funeral Home is in charge of Deb's arrangements and caring for her family.



Law and Order



The following events were filed with the Red Oak, Montgomery County, State of Iowa, or other government offices. In regard to law enforcement and judicial activities, all parties are presumed innocent until proven guilty, and other details may be available at iowacourts.state.ia.us.

REAL ESTATE

WARRANTY DEED

- Linda Boehle, Successor Trustee and Verna Heuer Revocable Trust to Andrew Askey, Red Oak Hillcrest Addition Lt 12.
- Lorin Davis to Eric March, Villisca Bixler Addition Lt 12-15, 18-25.
- Melissa Adams to Rocio Adams, Red Oak Kretschmers Addition Blk 1 Lt 6.
- Randall and Bonnie Orme to Lucas and Julie Orme, Red Oak Eastern Slopes VI Lts 54-55.
- Heath and Dawna Mitchell to Michael and Jennifer Graham, 13-71-36 Lt 1 Parcel A.
- Michael and Jennifer Graham to Nathan Banks and Savana Cook, Villisca N Villisca Lt 14.

COURT OFFICER'S DEED

- Jean Thrapp Estate and Scott Billings, Executor, to Donald Hardy, Red Oak Original Plat Blk 68 Lt 7.

QUIT CLAIM DEED

- Steven and Tonya Cline to City of Elliott, Elliott 1st Addition Blk 2 Lts 1-2.
- Lorrie and Jason Chambers to Lorrie and Jason Chambers, 29-73-38 Lt 1.
- Rayna Putnam, Rayna Putman, Rayna Blay, Jeremy Putman and Jeremy Putman to Rayna and Jeremy Putnam, 12-72-38.
- Peggy Brensel to Douglas and Donna Grooms, Red Oak Original Plat Blk 67 Lts 11-12.

CONTRACT

- Gene and Beverly Mirts to Kaleb Mirts, Red Oak Quinby Addition Blk 6 Lts 5-6.

MORTGAGE

- Jason and Tammie Bodwell to Bank Iowa, 27-72-36.
- Nicholas and Nicole Rengstorf to First Heritage Bank, 27-72-38 Parcel A.
- Holly and Jeremy Anderson to Veridian Credit Union, Red Oak Pritchards Addition Lt 12-14.
- Michael and Jamie Hossle to Midstates Bank, 19-72-39 Parcel A.
- Adrian and Terri Grant to Bank Iowa, Elliott Original Plat Blk 15 Lt 10.
- Melissa and Bradley Mueller to Bank Iowa, 2-73-38.
- Natasha and Dallas Davis to Rocket Mortgage LLC, Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems Inc. and MERS, Red Oak Willard's Addition Lt 17.
- Luke Herrington to US Bank National Association, Villisca West Side Addition Lt 23, 38.
- Travis Alexander and Amber Crussell to Centris Federal Credit Union, Red Oak Northeastern

SMALL CLAIMS

- Monte Most vs. Michael Hossle, Emerson, dismissed with prejudice.
- Nebraska Furniture Mart vs. Ashley Vanzant, Red Oak, judgment default in favor of the plaintiff, \$1,729.39 with 6.51% interest from April 25, plus costs.
- Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC vs. David Clark, Red Oak, judgment default in favor of the plaintiff, \$618.30 with 0% interest from April 25, plus costs.
- Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC vs. Angelina Detlef, Red Oak, judgment default in favor of the plaintiff, \$707.95 with 0% interest from April 25, plus costs.
- MC Funding vs. Chasity Anway, Council Bluffs, judgment default in favor of the plaintiff, \$2,469.92 with 6.51% interest

ARRESTS

- Filed April 25, Nikki Brown, 34, Red Oak, warrant for compulsory education first offense, \$300 bond.
- Filed April 27, Shawnee Edwards, 29, Red Oak, controlled substance violation, \$10,000 bond.
- Filed April 30, Mildred Douglas, 33, Red Oak, Adams County warrant for theft second degree, held on no bond.
- Filed May 1, Justin Smith, 45, Villisca, Fremont County warrant for failure to appear, \$1,000 cash only bond.

DISMISSED

- Felony, State of Iowa vs. Kiley Caron, 33, Red Oak, unlawful possession of prescription drugs, dismissed.
- Simple misdemeanor, State of Iowa vs. James Otte, 56, Red Oak, public intoxication, one count, dismissed, disorderly conduct, loud raucous noise, dismissed.
- Simple misdemeanor, State of Iowa vs. Logan Cashatt, 29, Red Oak, domestic abuse assault - first offense, dismissed.

CRIMINAL

- Aggravated, State of Iowa vs. Christopher Birdtail, 25, Red Oak, public intoxication, pled guilty, \$300 fine, disorderly conduct - fighting/violent behavior, pled guilty, \$300 fine.
- Felony, State of Iowa vs. Kiley Caron, 33, Red Oak, possession of a controlled substance - methamphetamine, first offense, pled guilty, \$250 fine.

TRAFFIC

- Gage Gorseth, Council Bluffs, speeding.
- Ryan Petersen, Audubon, operation by unqualified driver.
- Steven Lanier, Omaha, Neb., speeding.
- Brady Miller, Silver City, speeding.
- Janette Sunderman, Granger, speeding.
- Jordan Abbott, Eldon, Mo., speeding.
- Michele Helberg, Stanton, speeding.
- Ashley Hall, Red Oak, speeding.
- Steven Greenfield, Villisca, operating non-registered vehicle.
- Mark Thamer, Council Bluffs, speeding.
- Wendi Condon, Cumberland, speeding.
- Natha Slettedahl, Grand Marias, Minn., speeding.
- Kailey Conley, Bellevue, Neb., speeding.
- Brady Miller, Silver City, speeding.
- Kailyn Nordboe Jarecki, Glenwood, speeding.
- Phillip Glasby, Yale, Okla., speeding.
- Miguel Alonso Alarcon, Columbus, Neb., no valid driver's license.
- Kale Wenberg, Red Oak, driving while license denied, suspended, cancelled, or revoked.

ACCIDENTS

- On April 27, at 12:37 p.m., Red Oak Police officers investigated a two-vehicle accident in the 600 block of Coolbaugh Street. Caryn Pedersen, 51, Red Oak, driving a 2018 Chrysler Pacifica, was traveling east on Coolbaugh Street when her car sideswiped a legally parked 2016 KIA Sorento LX. Cost to the Pedersen vehicle was about \$4,500, and damage to the parked car was about \$4,000. There were no injuries, and no citations were issued.

Yard and Garden: Planting trees in spring

From ISU Extension

Spring is a time of renewal, growth and new beginnings. Planting a new tree (or trees) is a great way to add beauty to your landscape, improve air quality, provide wildlife habitat and reduce home energy consumption. Planting trees requires specific steps and aftercare to ensure a successful outcome. In this article, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach horticulturists answer your questions about how to best plant new trees that will enhance your landscape and create a legacy that will be enjoyed for generations.

- What is the proper way to plant a container-grown tree?

Start by locating the trunk flare of the tree. This is the spot on the trunk that broadens just above the major roots of the tree. It is common for trees to be planted too deep in containers. Remove any soil off the top of the root ball to expose the trunk flare if needed.

Dig a hole two to three times wider than the diameter of the container. The depth of the hole should be the height of the root ball (after the extra soil has been removed to reveal the trunk flare). Slope the sides of the hole so the top of the hole is several inches wider than the bottom. In poorly drained soils, the depth of the hole should be approximately two-thirds of the height of the soil ball.

Once the hole has been prepared, carefully lay the tree on its side. Tap the sides of the container to loosen the soil ball from the container, then slide the tree out of its container. If the sides of the soil ball are a mass of roots, carefully shave off the outer 1/2 to 1 inch of the soil ball with a sharp spade or saw. Place the tree in the hole, checking to ensure the trunk flare is at the same level as the surrounding soil.

Gradually fill the hole with the same soil that was dug from the hole. Firm each new addition of soil in place with your hands. When finished, the backfill soil should match the surrounding grade or site soil. Again, when planting in poorly drained soils, the backfill soil should gradually slope down to the surrounding site soil. Once planted, water thoroughly.

- Should compost or sphagnum peat moss be added to the soil when planting a tree?

Do not add compost, Sphagnum peat moss, or other organic materials to the backfill soil when planting trees. Research studies have shown no benefit to adding organic amendments to the backfill. In other words, trees will not establish any sooner or grow any faster when organic amendments are added to native site soils and used as backfill.
- Can I replant a new tree in the same spot after removing an old tree?

A new planting site is best for any new tree. If any of the old tree's roots are still in the ground, it will be difficult to prepare an adequate hole for the new tree. Also, sawdust left behind from grinding and removing a stump may drastically change the structure, moisture-holding capacity, and nutrient balance of the soil, making it difficult for the new tree to become established and grow.

Most of the issues encountered when attempting to plant in the exact same location as an old tree stump can be avoided by planting at least three feet (ideally six to eight feet) away from the removed tree. If you encounter large roots or other obstructions in the new nearby planting location, simply shift the planting hole to avoid the obstruction.

Do not plant a new tree in the decomposing stump of an old one. While occasionally this will be observed in nature, planting a new tree in the decaying stump will not be successful because of unsuitable soil, limited space for rooting and poor moisture availability.
- How do I care for a newly planted tree?

The most important thing you can do to have success with your new tree is to provide consistent and proper care during the establishment period, which for most container-grown trees is one to three years.

Regular and consistent watering is essential for newly planted trees. The roots of newly planted trees are initially confined to the plant's root ball. Check the moisture status of the plant's root ball and the surrounding soil regularly. Water when the soil begins to dry out by slowly applying water to the root ball and surrounding soil. Newly planted trees

often need water every day for the first four or five days after planting as the root ball can dry out quickly. Gradually reduce the watering frequency over the next two to three weeks to every 7 to 14 days as roots begin to grow into the surrounding soil. Regularly check soil moisture all summer and into fall, applying water when soil conditions are dry.

To help conserve soil moisture, place 2 to 4 inches of mulch, such as wood chips or shredded bark, around trees. Typically, mulched areas are circular and extend outward from the trunk as wide as the branch spread or canopy. Mulches also help control weeds, moderate soil temperatures and reduce the risk of mechanical damage to tree trunks from errant lawnmowers and string trimmers.

Do not severely prune the branches of newly planted trees. Pruning and the subsequent removal of foliage reduces the tree's ability to manufacture food and slows plant growth. Additionally, it is generally not necessary to fertilize newly planted trees. Most Iowa soils supply sufficient nutrients during establishment.

Staking is not required for most newly planted trees. However, large trees and those planted in windy, exposed sites may require staking. If staking is necessary, stabilizing materials and techniques should allow the trunk to move or sway for proper trunk and root development. To prevent damage to the trunk, use strong, wide strips of canvas, rubber or other materials to support the tree. Remove the stakes as soon as possible. In most cases, stakes should be removed after one growing season.

Same great styles, new location



Broadway Styles is settling into its new location at 1503 N. Broadway. The hair salon moved to the new location on March 7. Pictured from left: Denise Meisinger, Corie Hoyt, and Tracy Johnson are available to handle styling needs. Broadway Styles is open Monday through Saturday by appointment only. Check out the Facebook page at facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063738602427. (Nick Johansen/The Red Oak Express)

SUDOKU

							8
		4		3		6	
8	3			2	6		7
	7						
4		9			6		
6			3			2	
1			5				3
					8		
		5		4	1		2

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

2	6	1	4	7	9	8	5	3
9	5	8	2	1	3	7	4	6
3	4	7	8	6	5	2	9	1
7	2	9	6	3	4	8	1	5
1	8	6	7	5	4	3	2	9
4	3	1	9	2	8	3	5	6
6	9	4	1	8	3	2	6	7
8	6	2	3	5	1	4	7	9
5	7	3	9	4	6	1	8	2

ANSWER:

Stanton FFA students participate in Iowa FFA Conference in Ames

More than 6,800 FFA members, advisors, and guests attended the 95th Iowa FFA State Leadership Conference in Ames, Iowa, April 16–18. Nine Stanton FFA members, one advisor and 12 guests represented the Stanton community at the event.

On Sunday night, students registered and set up their chapter activity display, which was designed by Leah Sandin. The Chapter Activity Display received a bronze rating at state.

Monday, students connected with others at the Career Show, watched several Leadership Development Events (LDEs), and participated in workshops. Two of the members advanced to the State level in LDEs. Ella Peterson received Gold in Ag Broadcasting and Clark Spencer received Silver in Ag Sales.

Leah Sandin and Adrian Haynie served as our Chapter Delegates during the Business Session. During the first general session, Ella Peterson was recognized for her top five gold rating in the Ag Broadcasting

Leadership Development Event.

During the second general session on Tuesday, April 18, Dacey Henneman was presented her Diversified Horticulture Proficiency Award plaque. Dacey was named the state winner in this proficiency award area.

After the session, Dacey was an honored guest at the Proficiency Award Luncheon, where she ate with fellow award winners and sponsors. At the session, Leah represented the Stanton FFA Chapter in receiving the Supreme National Chapter Award. The Stanton FFA Chapter received a gold placing and is in the top 10% of Iowa FFA Chapters. The chapter will advance their application to the national level this summer.

Four Stanton FFA Junior High members attended the State Middle School Conference. They participated in workshops, attended the Career Show, watched a variety of Leadership Development Events and attended the general sessions with the chapter. This was a great oppor-

tunity to expose younger members to the possibilities provided by active membership in the National FFA Organization.

Both Clark Spencer and Ella Peterson were selected to sing in the 100 member Iowa FFA State Chorus. Clark was one of three tenors who performed with the choir and Ella performed with the soprano section. They sang during the second and fourth general sessions.

Adrian Haynie completed the 100 question Greenhand Quiz covering FFA history, parliamentary procedure, and general FFA knowledge. Adrian received a silver rating.

Dacey Henneman received her Iowa FFA Degree during the 4th General Session. To earn her Iowa FFA Degree Dacey had to invest over 375 hours of work outside of classroom instructional time, complete 25 hours of community service, document skills obtained and have active participation in and above the local FFA Chapter.



Stanton FFA members attending the leadership conference were, from left: Nick Herrick, Ella Peterson, Grant Spencer, Lauren Roberts, Gabe Kingery, Adrian Haynie, Clark Spencer, Leah Sandin, and Dacey Henneman (Photo submitted)

Essex preschool registration next week

Essex Community School Preschool Registration for 2023-24 will be held from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on May 10 at the Essex Community School Preschool room.

Parents will be able to see the preschool room

and ask the teacher any questions they may have. There will be applications to fill out for both the school and Head Start.

Please bring the child's information and a W-2 or SNAP card for the Head Start application.

Stronger the Press, Stronger the People

VIEWPOINTS

LETTER TO | THE EDITOR

Simmons comments on societal matters

To the Editor:

My name is Ray Simmons. I am a pastor in the Covenant Presbyterian Church denomination.

I have lived in Red Oak for five years and in Iowa for 10. We chose this place to retire after my military career. We love it here and love the folks here.

As an active pastor in our county, I'd like to share some thoughts on the drag show debate. Even though these events are held in private places and people can choose whether or not to attend, it is a societal

matter.

It brings up societal ethics. And, as we saw last week, it brings up Scripture. Notice that when Scripture is brought up, there is a presupposition involved.

That presupposition is that the Bible is the source of societal ethics. I appreciate and affirm this. Given this, we can have a discussion about what God's word means.

For example, Matthew 7:1 was cited last week by the gentleman from Mills County as something that everyone should follow. It says, "Judge not, that

ye be not judged." Now, it's fine to use it as a rebuke, but we need to understand it first.

If you read the following verses, it does not say to keep your ethics to yourself. In fact, the whole passage falls apart with that understanding. Jesus is saying to look at your own sin first *before* you call out the sin of others. Good advice!

I have to check myself all the time. Also, remember the other verse, John 7:24, that says to judge with righteous judgment. The point I'm trying to make is we do need to make ethical judgments and apply them to society.

The Bible demands it. Along these lines, we need to understand that this is not just entertainment. Even if it were "just entertainment," that doesn't mean we check our ethics at the door. I think we can all agree that there is some entertainment that should not happen. The question is not whether you draw the line, but where.

As you can see from Mr. Fuller's remarks last week that his organization is on a mission with a societal scope, "to spread queer visibility to rural communities." I think it's helpful to be forthright, and so I appreciate

this from Mr. Fuller.

Christians also have a mission with a societal scope. Our mission (our "commission") is to preach and minister the gospel so that people will repent and be saved, and to teach them to obey all that he has commanded. Christians must do that with gentleness and respect. We must remember that vengeance and judgment are God's, not ours. But there is a coming judgment, and we seek to warn people in love. That means we cannot compromise on the unchanging, living Word of God. To do so would be unsafe to us and unlov-

ing to the lost.

So, society matters before God. My hope is that our county will continue to be blessed by God. In order to be blessed by God, we have to follow his ways (Duet. 28, Matt. 10:11-15). It is difficult for us rugged, independent Americans to remember that there is not only a personal standing before God but also a societal one. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Ps. 33:12). And this applies to our county, societally.

Ray Simmons
Red Oak

THE TIME CAPSULE | ROY MARSHALL

April Fool's

April got me again. Also fooled were our apricot, cherry and peach trees. A few purple martins got a crash course on April in Iowa, but no doubt they've seen worse.

I was cautious with vegetables, risking only two tomatoes, two peppers and 28 sprouted sweet corn plants, all of which had been started indoors under grow lights. Milk jugs and grass clippings weren't enough, so blackened, withered carcasses will be replaced with plants that had sense enough to stay inside.

Fruit trees, though, were completely seduced by a string of 80-degree days. They went all in, blanketing themselves with white blossoms. If hail missed a few, the 25-degree temperature didn't. Their crop is toast and trees won't get another chance until next year. The same trees were tricked two of the last three Aprils, so their future isn't promising.

Our first pair of purple martins arrived on March 31. By the day before the storm, we estimated there to about 20.

We can only imagine crouching in a plastic gourd that swings from a crossbar at the top of a 16-foot pole pitching like a mast on the high seas while battered by hail and 35-mph winds with gusts to 50. Birds had every reason to go back to Brazil.

They weathered the storm, though, more arrived in days that followed, and as I write this on Thursday, April 27, there are about 40 of them. (Anyone driving by hoping to see that many will have the best chance either as they gather at dusk or early in the morning. By 8 a.m. they've scattered, coming and going all day in small groups.)

We did salvage the first picking of asparagus, bringing it in as the north wind was rising and temperatures were falling. The taste of



fresh, crisp, cold-weather asparagus spears the diameter of one's thumb is so superior to the wimpy, pencil-sized stuff arriving on a slow boat from China that there really is no comparison. If you can find an early-opening farmers market that has locally grown asparagus, buy it.

Wife planted some seed potatoes that haven't emerged so they'll probably be fine. She's hoping for a 15-20 lb. harvest, which caused me to wonder what the annual average potato consumption is.

I asked Mr. Google. Answers ranged from 30-60 pounds in the U.S., while the Alliance for Potato Research & Education claims the average Canadian consumes 71 kg. (156 pounds) of potatoes each year.

Whatever the number, potatoes are cheap, versatile, nutritious and easy to raise.

During the Great Depression a lot of potatoes were grown in the Midwest. Aunt Belle and Uncle Gunther were married in the early 1920s. Before the Depression was over they had at least eight children (there may have been nine or 10—they were older than me and my memory's a bit fuzzy.)

Regardless, Gunther planted his potatoes in rows half a block long. He did row after row with a horse-drawn potato planter he sat on while dropping seed potatoes into a round tube. When the time came he and Belle rounded up their kids, relatives and sometimes

neighbors to help with the harvest.

Gunther had an impressive potato digger with a wide shovel and cleated wheels. Wheels ran a chain that turned a gear that powered a conveyor that picked up dirt, vines and potatoes unearthed by the shovel, separated (sort of) and deposited on the surface behind the digger.

Kids gathered spuds and filled wheel barrows, which were pushed to Belle's basement and dumped onto a slide that took them to a bin that held several hundred pounds.

Gunther farmed with modern equipment and could have converted his potato digger hitch to a tractor-pull, but he was still using an elderly team of horses into the 1960s. I suspect he did this—raising potatoes for his grown kids and their youngsters—as justification for keeping horses he didn't have the heart to part with.

Aunt Belle died while I was in the Army. Months later I went to see Gunther. Mom rode along. He was on the porch—a porch with a view of a long driveway and 10-15 acre pasture set aside for his old Belgians.

He was never one to talk much. At one point, trying to make conversation, I made reference to the Army and said I understood he served during World War I. He nodded and gave the strangest answer. He'd been in France for 15 months, he said, and never saw a horse because they killed them all.

To this day I don't know what was behind that statement.

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

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Newspaper Inserts: Noon Wednesdays.
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Public Notices: 4 p.m. Thursdays.
Display & Classified Display Advertising: 4 p.m. Wednesdays.
Classified Line Ads/Garage Sale Ads: 10 a.m. Thursdays.
Obituaries: 9 a.m. Mondays.

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Spirits; United Farmers Cooperative. Single copy sales are also available from a coin rack in front of the Red Oak Express.

WHO WE ARE

Employees in order of continuous service: Trish Deitchler, Graphic Design; Peggy Boeye, Office Manager, News; Ann Watt, Mail; Nick Johansen, News Reporter; Charm Carpenter, Sports Reporter; Tracy Schooling, Driver; Tess Nelson, General Manager/Editor; Nanny Crowe, Circulation; Joshua Byers, Regional Publisher.

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Community Calendar

4 May

6:30 a.m. National Day of Prayer breakfast, Gold Fair building, 1809 N. 4th St. See story on this page for further details

8 a.m.-noon, Leadership Red Oak.

12:30 p.m., Bingo, Red Oak Senior Center, 2700 N. 4th St. Call 712-623-3497 or Carolyn at 402-926-8683 for more information.

4 p.m., Community Prayer Time, Fountain Square Park. Call Bonnie at 623-4759.

7 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

7 p.m. The Amazing Chemistry Show at the Gold Fair Building, 1809 N. 4th St.

5 May

Red Oak Public Library, Popcorn Friday, all day.

10-11 a.m., Core 52 Bible study at the Red Oak Presbyterian Church, 511 E. Coolbaugh St.

5:30 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

5:30-7:30 p.m. Business After Hours at Mark Jackson's Red Oak Hardware Hank & Hallmark Gold Crown Store, 315 E. Reed St.

7 p.m., "Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves," theatre #1; "Jesus Revolution," theatre #2; Red Oak Grand Theatre.

6 May

10:10-45 a.m., Parent-Tot swim lessons for kids ages 6 months to 3 years at the Montgomery County Family YMCA.

11 a.m.-1 p.m., K-Dog lunch at Mark Jackson's Red Oak Hardware Hank and Hallmark Gold Crown Store, 315 E. Reed St.

10:30 a.m., Tiger Invitational golf tournament at the Red Oak Country Club, 2038 200 St. Shotgun start at noon. Proceeds go towards athletic programs in the community.

7 p.m., "Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves," theatre #1; "Jesus Revolution," theatre #2; Red Oak Grand Theatre.

7 May

11 a.m.-1 p.m., FCCLA drive up meal at the Villisca Community Center, 207 S. 3rd Ave.

2 and 7 p.m., "Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves," theatre #1; "Jesus Revolution," theatre #2; Red Oak Grand Theatre.

5:30 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

8 May

12:30 p.m. Bingo, Red Oak Senior Center, 2700 N. 4th St. Call 712-623-3497 or Carolyn at 402-926-8683 for more information.

7 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

9 May

8:30 a.m., Montgomery County Supervisors, North Meeting Room in courthouse basement, open to public, or attend online via Zoom.

9-11 a.m., Intro to pickleball at the Montgomery County Family YMCA, 101 E. Cherry St. Equipment provided.

Noon, Rotary Club meeting. For location, go to rotarydistrict5650.org/clubinfo/red-oak.

1 p.m., Card games (pitch and/or cribbage) Red Oak Senior Center, 2700 N. 4th St. Call 712-623-3497 or Carolyn at 402-926-8683 for more info.

2-3:30 p.m., Journeys Grief Support Group, Faith Community Church, 2701 N. 8th St.

10 May

1:30-5 p.m., Christ's Cupboard Food Pantry and Clothing Cupboard, 206 E. Coolbaugh St. Donations accepted 1-5 p.m. at back door.



Skönja Maj performs

The Skönja Maj singers in Stanton performed at the firemen's pancake feed from Sunday, April 30. The Skönja Maj group annually sings a cappella to "Welcome May" every April 30 in Stanton. Group is made up of men from the community. (Charm Carpenter/The Red Oak Express)

Boy Scouts donate to Christ's Cupboard Food Pantry



Christ's Cupboard Food Pantry received a huge donation from a food drive done at both Fareway and Hy-Vee on Saturday, April 15, by Boy Scout troop 86 and pack 80. They gathered over 400 food items as well as cash donations. Lori Johnson with Christ's Cupboard praised the generosity of the community. (Photo submitted)

Day of Prayer breakfast May 4

The National Day of Prayer in Red Oak will be held Thursday, May 4, at the Gold Fair Building. Breakfast starts being served at 6:30 a.m., with the program from 7 to 7:45 a.m. Tickets are \$15

per person; or a table of eight for \$150. This is the 20th anniversary of the National Day of Prayer Breakfast in Red Oak. Call Carol Allensworth at 712-621-3051 for tickets.

Memorial Day flag dedications

Please call Ron DeMarce at 712- 623-2796 or Larry Barnett at 712-623-5555 as soon as possible if your family has an

American Flag to be dedicated during the 2023 Court of Honor Memorial Day event.



Celebrating their anniversaries this week are:

Bob and Sally Wingert – May 6

Congratulations and happy anniversary to you!

To become a member of the free "Anniversary Club," e-mail your anniversary (and those of your friends and family) to news@redoakexpress.com, mail to P.O. Box 377, Red Oak, IA 51566, or drop by our office at 2012 Commerce Dr.

Mark Jackson's anniversary events

Mark Jackson's Red Oak Hardware Hank & Hallmark Gold Crown Store is celebrating its 40th anniversary with two events. On May 5 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., a Business After

Hours event is being hosted at the store at 315 E. Reed St. .

On May 6 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., The Red Oak Kiwanis will provide a K-Dog lunch for \$3, also at 315 E. Reed St.

Amazing Chemistry Show upcoming

On Thursday, May 4, at 7 p.m., The Amazing Chemistry Show, featuring Josh Denhart, will take place at the Gold Fair

Building. This educational, entertaining show is free to the public as part of the National Day of Prayer event.

Happy Birthday!

Celebrating birthdays are:

Lanny Sellers – May 4
Chris Baird – May 6
Elinor Almquist – May 6
Jennifer Bupp – May 8
John Sankey – May 9
Tess Nelson – May 10

To be included on the free "Happy Birthday" list, e-mail your birthday (and those of your friends and family) to news@redoakexpress.com, mail to P.O. Box 377, Red Oak, IA 51566, or drop by our office at 2012 Commerce Dr.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Advent Christian

300 S. 2nd Ave., Villisca, Rev. Jeff Eason, Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:30 a.m., Celebrate Recovery, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.

Assembly Of God

1005 Senate, Red Oak, 623-2174, Services, 10:30 a.m.

Baptist

The Bridge (First Baptist Church), 406 N. 3rd St., Red Oak, Rev. Len Taylor, Worship, 11 a.m.

Grace Baptist, 1510 N. 6th St., Red Oak, Gary D. Walters, Bible class, 10 a.m., Worship, 11 a.m., Worship, 6 p.m.; Wednesday, Prayer, 7 p.m. Grace Baptist, 525 Main St., Griswold, Victor Maxson, Bible study, 10 a.m., Worship, 11 a.m. **Online:** 9:45 a.m. approx. live on Facebook.

Southern Baptist

Crossroads Community Church, 303 E. Oak St., use the alley entrance, Rev. Ricky Rohrig, Sr., Celebration Services with Kids' Church, 9:23 a.m., Wednesdays in the Word, live on Facebook, 6:30 p.m. 712-357-1060, crossroadsredoak.com. **Online:** 9:45 a.m. approx. live on Facebook.

Catholic

St. Joseph's, 131 W. High, Villisca, Father Sylvester Okoh, Sunday

Mass, 8:30 a.m.

St. Mary's, 1510 Highland Ave., Red Oak, Father Lazarus Kirigia, Saturdays, 5 p.m. (1st, 3rd, 5th Saturday); Sunday, 10:30 a.m., in Spanish, 1 p.m.

Christian

First Christian, 1909 Summit St., Red Oak, Pastor AJ Baratta, PreKindergarten - Sunday School, 9:30-10:15 a.m., Fellowship, 10 a.m., Worship, 10:30 a.m. **Online:** 10:30 a.m. live on Facebook.

Christian & Missionary Alliance

Citylight Southwest Iowa, 705 Bradford, Emerson. Co-lead pastors Matt Keller, Tyler Mass. Worship with children's church, 10 a.m. in-person gathering. **Online:** 10 a.m. live on Facebook. Faith Community, 2701 N. 8th St., Red Oak, Pastor Dan Wetzel, Associate Pastor Stephen Beaulier, Worship, 9:30 a.m. Connection Classes for pre-kindergarten-adults, 11 a.m..Wednesday activities: Faith Kids, Pre-K grade 4, 6-7:30 p.m. Faith Midpoint, grades 5-6, 6-7:30 p.m. Faith Youth, grades 7-12, 7-8:30 p.m. **Online:** 9:30 a.m. on KCSI, 9:30 a.m. on Facebook.

Church Of Christ

Church Of Christ, Elliott, Sunday Bible School, 9 a.m., Worship, 10 a.m., Men's and Women's Bible study and breakfast, first Sunday of the month at 7:30 a.m. River of Life Church, Hwy. 48 North, Red Oak, Interim Minister Kevin Berry, Sunday School 9 a.m., Worship, 10 a.m.

Church Of the Nazarene

Red Oak, 401 E. Prospect St., Rev. Lori Lathrop. Radio ministry, 8:30 a.m., worship with children's church at 10:30 a.m.

Covenant

Evangelical, Rev. Matt King, 308 Eastern, Stanton, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:45 a.m. **Online:** 10:45 a.m. live on Facebook and later on Youtube. Faith Covenant Church, 212 Alice St., Essex, Pastor Gordon Scott, Pastor Staci Shearer, Worship, 8:30 a.m. First Covenant, Rev. Alan Dean, pastor, 3rd & Hammond, Red Oak, Worship, 9:30 a.m.

Jehovah's Witness

210 Argus Road, Shenandoah, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m., public Bible discourse.

Lutheran

Bethesda Lutheran, Rural Clarinda. Worship 9:30 a.m. Worship, Sunday School 10:30 a.m.

Bethlehem Lutheran, 1101 Summit St., Red Oak, Rev. Jennifer Yeske-Drown, Sunday worship, 11 a.m. Strand Evangelical, Rural Villisca, Rev. Marietta Nelson-Bittle, Worship, 9:45 a.m.

Fremont Lutheran (Nyman), 1147 Ironwood Ave, Red Oak, Pastor Ann Albert, Worship, 9:30 a.m., Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

Mamrelund Lutheran, 410 Eastern Ave., Stanton. Worship, 10:30 a.m. Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. **Online:** 10:30 a.m. FMTC Cable Channel 1, also live on Facebook.

Mt. Calvary, 107 S. 5th, Villisca, Jerome Wagoner, Worship, 9:00 a.m. Tabor Lutheran, 1711 Q Ave., Stanton, Worship, 8:15 a.m., Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Peace Lutheran, (A WELS Congregation), 411 Church St., Shenandoah, Saturday Worship, 5:30 p.m.; Bible and Sunday School, 6:30 p.m.

Non-Denominational

Oaks Community Church, 41310 Ellington Rd., Emerson, Rev. Ron Perry, 712-824-7218, Sunday School, 10 a.m., Worship, 11 a.m.

Presbyterian

Center Ridge, 1546 N. 110th St., Red Oak, Caryn Pedersen, Worship 1 p.m., two times a month. Call 623-9023 for more information.

First Presbyterian, 109 S. 3rd Ave., Villisca, Rev. Sandra Wainwright, Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:30 a.m.

Red Oak Presbyterian, 511 E. Coolbaugh, PO Box 402, Red Oak, Caryn Pedersen, redoakpresbyterianchurch.com, Service, 10:30 a.m. **Online:** 10:30 a.m. live on Facebook/Red Oak Presbyterian Church

Reformed Evangelical

Heartland Sovereign Grace Church, new church plant. Bible study Sunday, 5 p.m., www.swiacrec.com, contact@swiacrec.com.

United Methodist

First United Methodist, 600 E. Hammond, Red Oak, Rev. Jennifer Van Nostrand, Worship, Sunday, 9 a.m.; Youth group Wednesday 6:30-8 p.m., grades 6-12, snack is served. **Online:** 9 a.m. fumcro.org; click on the media tab to see previously recorded services.

Wesley Chapel UMC, Rev. Joni Hickey, M16 north off Hwy. 34 then west on Epperson. 624-8320. strahaniowachurch.org Worship, 8:30 a.m., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

Red Oak Circuit, Linda Westerhold; Hawthorne, 1248 210th St., Red Oak, Worship, 10 a.m.; Stratton, 1695 150th St., Red Oak, Worship, 11:15 a.m. **Online:** 11:15 a.m. live on Facebook.

Elliott United Methodist, Rev. Terry McClain, Sunday School, 9 a.m., Worship, 10 a.m. **Online:** 10 a.m. live on Facebook.

Emerson United Methodist Church, Rev. Denise Stevens, 801 Bradford Ave., Emerson, (712) 824-7368, Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:30 a.m.

Grant United Methodist, Pastor Casey Pelzer, Worship services, 8:30 a.m. **Online:** 8:30 a.m. live on Facebook

United Methodist, 203 S. 3rd Ave., Villisca, Pastor Jennifer Van Nostrand, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:45 a.m. **Online:** 10:45 a.m. live on Facebook. Strahan United Methodist, Five miles south of Hastings on M16., strahaniowachurch.org, Rev. Joni Hickey, Sunday Worship service 9:45 a.m..Adult and children's Sunday School 10:45 a.m.

United Church Of Christ

First Congregational, 608 Reed St., Red Oak, Sunday Worship, 11:30 a.m. in the sanctuary with fellowship prior to the service at 10:30 a.m.. Rev. Holly Scherff, interim pastor.

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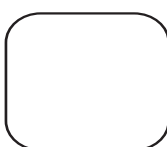
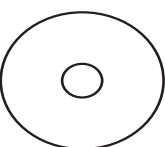
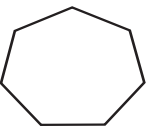

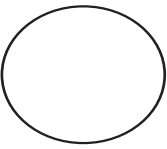
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Money Around the World

The bills and coins you use to buy things in your country can look a lot different from the money, or currency, that is used in other countries.




Standards Link: Economics: Students understand the basic features of market structures and exchanges.

What shapes are the different coins and bills in your country?












English Money

Use the code to find out what people in England call their money.

In the United Kingdom, they use the . A nickname for the  is .

SECRET CODE






D = 	N = 	Q = 
E = 	O = 	R = 
I = 	P = 	U = 

Vending Machine

Why do some coins have different shapes?

People who have trouble seeing or reading can tell the difference between coins that are worth different amounts of money when the coins are different shapes and sizes.

Which item in the vending machine costs the most? Use the code below to find out.



20¢ 25¢ 15¢ 5¢ 50¢

The Euro

The **euro** is the money used by most countries in Europe. Before the euro was introduced, most European countries had their own **currency**, meaning their own coins and banknotes.

When they traveled, people had to change money each time they came to a new country. For example, in Germany, you paid in Deutsch Marks, but if you left Germany and traveled to France, you had to exchange your Deutsch Marks for French francs. Europe has many countries close together, which made for a lot of money changing!

Chart It!

Look through the newspaper for five numbers with five or more digits. Cut out the numbers and glue each one's digits onto a chart that shows how many ones, tens, hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, or more are in each number.

TEN THOUSANDS	THOUSANDS	HUNDREDS	TENS	ONES
1	2	9	1	3

Standards Link: Number Sense: Understand place value to the millions.

Yuan and Yen

The money used in China and Japan today was developed from the silver dollars introduced by European and American traders. The dollars were called **yuan** in China and **yen** in Japan. Translated, these words mean "round object."

Cut out this box and hold it up to a mirror to reveal the world's most popular currency.

The pound sterling is the fourth most traded currency in the foreign exchange market after the U.S. dollar, the euro and the Japanese yen.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Weighty Money

The word **peso**, meaning *weight* in Spanish, was the name of a coin that originated in Spain. Peso is now the name of money in several former Spanish colonies.

The countries next to sums with even numbers use pesos.

22 + 5 = Guinea-Bissau	24 + 7 = Brazil
17 + 9 = Cuba	19 + 14 = Panama
31 + 7 = Dominican Republic	18 + 9 = Portugal
13 + 15 = Mexico	44 + 6 = Colombia
11 + 9 = Argentina	35 + 13 = Uruguay
43 + 13 = Chile	14 + 14 = Philippines

Standards Link: Number Sense: Add sums to 100.

Double Double Word Search

MONEY
CALCULATOR
COINS
DOLLAR
FRANCE
EURO
PESOS
BILLS
POUND
FOREIGN
DESIGN
YEN
ITALY

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

T	C	O	H	N	G	I	S	E	D
R	R	E	R	E	C	L	O	I	M
C	A	L	C	U	L	A	T	O	R
Y	L	A	T	I	E	P	N	N	D
S	L	I	B	C	E	E	N	A	N
C	O	I	N	S	Y	D	F	G	U
O	D	A	O	U	N	I	I	T	O
I	R	S	E	R	T	S	A	I	P
F	O	R	E	I	G	N	U	N	O
















Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

Dollar Signs

The origin of the \$ sign is uncertain. But many historians believe that the **P**—for either Spanish or Mexican *pesos*—was accompanied by a small s above and to the right of it when the plural form was used. This pairing of letters was simplified by keeping only the stem of the **P** and writing the **S** right on top of it. *Voila*—the dollar sign!

Dollar Match

Match each of the dollar signs with its identical twin. Look carefully! One dollar sign has no duplicate.



Kid Scoop Vocabulary Builders

This week's word: CURRENCY

The noun **currency** means the money that is used in a country.

In Mexico, the **currency** is the *peso*.

Try to use the word **currency** in a sentence today when talking with your friends and family members.

Write On!

Make Money

What are three ways you could earn money?

FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

Money Math Game

Start by counting the number of pages in today's newspaper. Add the number of sections listed in the index. Subtract the number of headlines on the front page. Add the cost of a single issue. What is your total?

Standards Link: Number Sense: Solve word problems using addition and subtraction.

How does a farmer count his cows?

ANSWER: With a **cowculator**.

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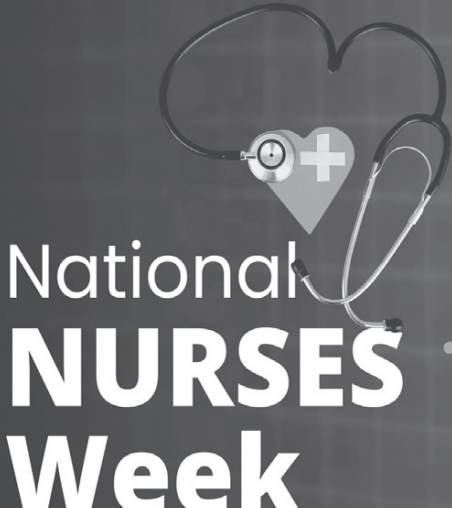
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**National
NURSES
Week**

NURSES

*the courage
to CARE
the strength
to HELP*

MAY 6-12



The important role of nursing assistants

Health professionals are often unsung heroes. However, since the arrival of COVID-19, millions of people have had their eyes opened to the crucial role medical providers play in regard to helping patients and their families.

Nursing assistants are tireless health care workers who perform their tasks with professionalism and patience. Certified nursing assistants, or CNAs, help patients with their basic daily care, and may assist with:

- ♥ Making beds and changing bedding.
- ♥ Helping patients use toilets and tending to catheters.
- ♥ Helping patients to get dressed.
- ♥ Monitoring vital signs and reporting on patients' health.
- ♥ Handling feeding and helping the patient drink.
- ♥ Turning bedridden patients according to schedule.



CNAs work in various settings, notably long-term care facilities, doctors' offices, hospitals, and rehabilitation clinics. Nursing assistants often are the first responders when a patient calls for help. They traditionally work under the guidance of registered nurses, and the work of CNAs frees up nurses to provide care that requires a greater level of training, such as administering IV medication or alerting doctors to significant changes in health.

Nursing assistants must possess certain qualities, as the job requires caregiving above all. The nursing resource All Nursing Schools says CNAs must be able to listen to patients' concerns and develop personal relationships.

The care CNAs provide requires a certain level of intimacy, and CNAs must have demeanors that help patients feel comfortable. Some tasks may involve lifting or helping to move a patient, so some measure of physical strength also is needed. Most importantly, CNAs often provide companionship and friendship, especially in home care settings. Providing comfort for patients who are scared, lonely or upset also is part of a CNA's job.

Nursing assistants are important health care professionals and often part of a team of caregivers that help patients enjoy improved quality of life.



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MAY 06 - 12

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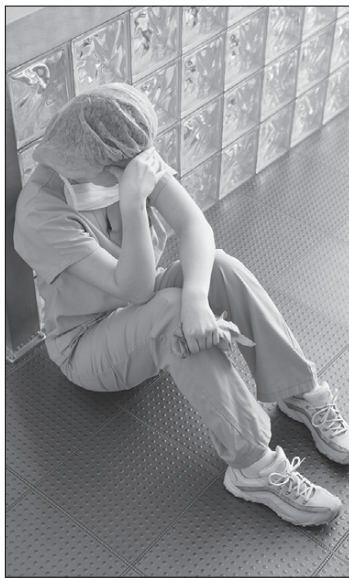
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Amanda Blok	Christie Welter	Jenny Gettler	Logan Wagg	PeggySue Welchans
Amanda Bryant	Christina Bruce	Jenny Gilleland	Lori Glassel	Regan Dailey
Amanda Crouse	Christina McClain	Jenny Reese	Macayla Stoaks	Ronda Means
Amelia Baker	Colleen Lushinsky	Judi Erickson	Marcia Gowdy	Ruth Aughe
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Brent Perdue	Holly Crowell	Laura Kinnison	Nadine Stewart	Teresa Jennings
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Carley Vandenberg	Jacqueline Maher	Lea Craig	Nathan Swaink	Trina Rea
Cathi Brown	Jeanne Franson	Lila Lassen	Nichole Haley	

HOW TO MANAGE THE STRESS OF BEING A NURSE

Working in the healthcare sector can be a fast-paced job filled with days characterized by extremes. Nurses already were working long, variable shifts in hectic environments before COVID-19 came along. Then they were asked to do even more, including being tasked with the care of a seemingly endless stream of new patients.

According to a research paper published in The Lancet in June 2020, a large-scale, cross-sectional study of 2,014 frontline nurses from two hospitals in Wuhan, China, determined the nurses had a moderate level of burnout and a high level of fear while working. Roughly half of the nurses reported emotional exhaustion. Beyond China,

many nurses routinely report having moderate to high levels of stress on the job.



The nursing education and program resource Nurse Journal says stress may be one of the most overlooked issues affecting nurses and nursing students today. Stress can affect nurses' personal and professional lives. In fact, scientists first identified stress as an occupational concern for nurses in the 1950s. Continuing to explore ways for nurses to alleviate stress means more positive outcomes for all involved. Here are some strategies.

INCREASE STAFF

Worker shortages can take their toll on nurses who have to work even harder due to those deficits. Whenever possible, healthcare offices and departments should make every effort to keep sufficient qualified

staff on hand so that nurses do not feel overly taxed. Nurses can do their best to advocate for hiring more nurses as well.

TAKE QUIET BREAKS

Nursing requires a high level of skill and technical acumen. Most nurses cannot daydream or work on autopilot while on the job. Taking ample opportunity to retreat to quiet spaces and turn off your brain for some time can help you recharge during a shift. While resting, drink water and limit caffeine consumption. Mild dehydration may increase cortisol levels and exacerbate stress.

TRY AROMATHERAPY

Researchers have long studied how certain aromas can calm anxiety. According to the

healthcare site Healthier Talk, in one study researchers gave special citrus-scented badges to stressed out nurses working in a cancer center. Over shifts ranging from four to eight hours, the nurses' stress levels decreased by up to 40 percent. Using scented oils or other aromatherapy techniques may help induce a calmer atmosphere.

FIND A SHIFT YOU CAN MANAGE

Rather than working a varied schedule each week, determine if you can work a consistent schedule. Nurses tend to work 12-hour shifts and even longer hours when shortages require overtime. However, by working the same shift hours, your body can grow accus-

tomed to the schedule, rather than facing exhaustion from ever-changing shifts. In addition, a routine can reduce anxiety, helping nurses more easily anticipate what is coming next.

KEEP A JOURNAL

Keep a list of days when you're feeling especially overwhelmed and jot down what led to that feeling. Identifying particular stressors can help you find effective coping strategies. You may notice you're more stressed on days you're responsible for a school carpool. Asking a friend to help out in these situations can alleviate stress.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF NURSING IS RIGHT FOR YOU

Nursing is a popular career choice. With strong job security and the potential for growth, it is no wonder nursing draws such interest. In 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated there would be about 203,200 openings for registered nurses each year for the next decade. And employment of registered nurses is expected to grow by 6 percent between 2021 and 2031.

A strong job outlook and competitive pay (nurses earn median salaries of \$77,600 as of May 2021) appeals to any aspiring professional, but a career in nursing is about more than opportunity and compensation. Individuals considering nursing need to determine if the field might be the right fit for them. It's not always glamorous being a nurse. In fact, it can be quite challenging and often stressful. However, the rewards tend to outweigh the trials and tribulations. The following are some components of nursing that can help individuals determine if the field is right for them.

TRAINING TIME CONSTRAINTS

There are different levels of nursing, each of which requires a different amount of training and certification, according to Nurse Money Talk. A certified nursing assistant must complete a program at a specific CNA vocational school, and such programs run between four and 10 months, on average. Licensed vocational nurses can expect to study for 12 to 18 months, and must pass the NCLEX-PN licensing exam. Registered nurses will need two to four years of schooling and are expected to earn an associate's degree or bachelor's degree. Aspiring RNs also will need a passing grade on the NCLEX-RN licensing exam. Most nurses will have to complete clinicals to showcase skills in real life situations.

FLEXIBILITY

Nurses need to be adaptable and flexible. Shifts may not be consistent and the demands of the job may differ from day to day, even though there may be some overlap. If challenging new experiences come easy to you or if you have the flexibility to work different shifts rather than a set schedule, then nursing could be a good option.

PROBLEM-SOLVER AND CRITICAL THINKER

Although nurses are part of a larger health care team and may need to leave certain decisions to physicians, there are plenty of critical decisions and think-on-your-feet actions that may need to be taken to ensure patient health. It is essential for nurses to keep their emotions in check so they can think clearly in stressful situations.

GOOD COMMUNICATOR

Nurses must be able to speak and interact with doctors and others in a clinical setting, but also communicate effectively with patients who may not fully understand all of the medical jargon nor what is happening to them. Nursing requires social skills and an ability to pivot between many different roles - all the while adjusting communication tactics depending on the audience.

ORGANIZED & DILIGENT

There isn't too much room for mistakes in health care, which means nurses will need to maintain their attention to detail; otherwise, they could subject patients to injury or even death.

In addition to these traits, good nurses should have compassion for patients. A desire to help others during difficult times compels many people to become nurses.


A Salute to Nurses

Today's nurses perform a vital role in patient care and healing with their specialized skill, knowledge and compassion. During **National Nurses Week** and every day, we honor and appreciate these dedicated men and women whose commitment to caring is an inspiration to all of us. To nurses everywhere, thank you for making our world a better place.




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AT RED OAK

Supervisor Cooper to public, please stop dumping

Nick Johansen

The Red Oak Express

The Montgomery County Board of Supervisors has approved funding for work on the 250th Street Bridge in the Grant Township.

Discussions about potential funding for the Beeson bridge located on 250th street west of G Avenue over the East Nishnabotna River had been taking place since Dec. 6, 2022, when it was shared that the county was waiting for an update on the status of the funding from Rep. Cindy Axne's office.

The county's request was part of the U.S. House FY 2023 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development funding bill, and throughout the month of December, committee chairs were negotiating the final details of the package. The county was able to apply for 80% of the funding, equaling the \$2 million amount.

At the April 25 meeting of the board of supervisors, the supervisors finally were able to take final action, and approved a funding agreement of up to \$2 million, being given to the county through an EarMark funding agreement.



Montgomery County Supervisor Randy Cooper is urging residents to stop using places in the county as a free dumpster. Cooper took the above photo recently at the clothing donation box.

County engineer Karen Albert said the funding will go a long way, but likely won't cover the entire project.

"We haven't gotten an actual engineer's estimate, but I think the project will be about \$3 million in total," commented Albert.

The supervisors also approved an Iowa Department of Transportation funding agreement for the remaining project costs.

"The funding agreement is to cover

any additional cost of the bridge over the \$2 million in the bridge fund," Albert stated.

Albert was still hopeful that they could get the preliminary parts of the project started before the end of the year.

"We're hoping to let the project in October or November, but that could change," commented Albert.

Supervisor Randy Cooper took the opportunity during the meeting to praise

the efforts of the secondary roads crew in assisting in ditch clean up.

"The last couple of weeks I've called secondary roads superintendent Loren Taylor to help me pick up garbage in ditches, and he and his crew have done an outstanding job. I really don't think it's a part of their job, but they've been willing to do it," Cooper said.

Cooper said the crews have picked up freezers, grills, tires, a couch, and had done cleanup at the Kmart parking lot. Cooper admitted he was frustrated at the items being dumped, especially a freezer.

"I think it's terrible how the citizens of Montgomery County dump this stuff in our ditches. I did go talk to the folks at Dovel Refrigeration about what they would charge to dispose of a fridge or freezer. The county landfill charges \$50, and Dovel's will do it for \$10. If it's a person who doesn't have money, they'll still take it for free," Cooper advised.

During one clean up, Cooper said they had discovered a used toilet in the ditch east of Supervisor Charla Schmid's residence. Supervisors Chair Mike Olson said the situation was even worse.

"It looked like someone had remodeled their bathroom. The old bar light was laying there, along with the toilet, a bathroom sink, and some miscellaneous items such as drywall. It looks like they filled up the back of a truck with it and dumped it in the middle of the night," Olson said.

Cooper urged residents to dispose of the items in places other than county ditches, citing that most places, such as Dovel, will charge less than a landfill and in certain cases do it for free.

Lastly, Albert said crews have been assisting Page County with construction observation at two bridge sites, but was expecting that to slow down in the near future, as the county had hired a construction inspector that was currently being trained.

In other business, the supervisors:

- Approved a tax transfer from rural services basic to secondary roads, in the amount of \$317,206.

- Approved a tax transfer from general services basic to secondary roads, in the amount of \$25,075.

- Approved the treasurer's Fund Balance for March, 2023 in the amount of \$17,278,533.

Lorenz discusses summer school sessions

Nick Johansen

The Red Oak Express

The Red Oak School Board has agreed to a proposal that would scale back summer school classes.

Red Oak Schools superintendent Ron Lorenz advised the board that due to dwindling participation rates and sunseting of ESSER funds, the administrative team was proposing scaling back the summer school program to balance available resources and anticipated student needs and interest.

"We really had some robust programs in then last few years since COVID, but every year, we're seeing fewer and fewer kids take advantage of it," commented Lorenz.

Rather than offering two three-week open sessions, Lorenz said the district was proposing offering two two-week intervention sessions for students on an invitational basis.

"These sessions would take place during the second and third full weeks of June, June 12 through 22, and the second and third full weeks of July, July 10 through 20. Elementary intervention sessions would run Monday through Thursday, from 8 to 11:30 a.m. Secondary credit recovery sessions would run Monday through Thursday, from 8 to 11 a.m. Lunch would also be served on a daily basis," advised Lorenz.

Intervention sessions at the elementary school would focus on skill building in the areas of literacy, writing, math, and science. Secondary sessions would focus on credit recovery as needed. Students would be invited or encouraged to attend based on Title I or Special Education entitlement, chronic absenteeism, and 7-12 grade course failures.

"While inviting students that are habitually absent seems counterintuitive, Principal Jane Chaillie pointed out that those kids tend to come to summer classes more regularly than normal classes. Don't ask me to explain that; I don't know why," Lorenz commented.

Lorenz also proposed hosting kindergarten and preschool Jump Start Sessions.

"This is a means to evaluate students prior to grouping them. We will put them into different classes, which has been really successful. Kindergarten Jump Start would take place Aug. 7 through 8. We would offer both a morning and afternoon cohort. Preschool Jump Start would take place at the Red Oak

Early Childhood Center on Aug. 15 through 16," Lorenz stated.

In terms of compensation, Lorenz recommended offering teachers \$25 per hour of student contact and one hour of instructional planning as well as a \$400 per week stipend to be paid using Title I and remaining ESSER funds. This equates to \$43 to \$45 per hour for teachers. Paraprofessionals would be paid their regular hourly rate.

"We're hoping this will help incentivize the teachers to participate, and we're optimistic that since this will be for a shorter span, there will be more interest by the teachers in participating," said Lorenz.

The board approved the updated summer school plan as presented.

The board also discussed the 2023-24 concurrent enrollment courses and career and technical education programs with Southwestern Community College.

While it was something the district did every year, Lorenz was excited about adding some new career pathways and concurrent enrollment courses.

"I think these are going to do good things for our kids. The new pathways we're talking about are an internet technology systems networking, a criminal justice pathway, an early childhood education pathway, and most of those lead to a certain certification or credential in those different courses. Most of those courses will be offered remotely through video conferencing. Early childhood education will be online, and the criminal justice courses will be a mix of face-to-face online," stated Lorenz.

Also proposed was a sports officiating offering. While it didn't lead to a certificate, it did help the kids prepare to take the officiating exam, and provided other benefits.

"It also exposes kids that might be interested in participating in youth sports. Given the lack of officials there are right now, we're trying to take the grow your own approach."

Courses to be dropped were fundamentals of oral communication due to SWCC no longer offering the course. Public speaking was still available. Also to be dropped was anatomy and physiology, as it did not align with SWCC's nursing pathway.

The board approved the 2023-24 concurrent enrollment courses and career and technical education programs with Southwestern

Community College.

The board also approved a reduction to the teacher leadership and compensation plan. The TLC proposed a plan that would scale back the current program by roughly \$100,000. The committee endorsed reducing six instructional lead positions, two assessment leads, one intervention lead, three mentors, and eliminating two interventionists entirely, around a 40% decrease in positions. Also endorsed was reducing the current TLC stipends by 20%.

Lorenz said the program was created following regulations from the Iowa Department of Education, and the rules had changed.

"Last year, we started looking at the program and found a lot of the stipends were twice the amount we were paying some of our other supplemental contracts. It didn't feel right, and it didn't look right, so the committee acknowledged that and agreed we needed to scale it back. We still think it's valuable, but we need better equity."

In other business, the board:

- Approved the 2023-24 student handbook.

- Approved the renewal of the Infinite Campus student information system for the 2023-24 school year, at a cost of \$26,763.

- Approved the hire of Charles Hollis as English language arts teacher and yearbook sponsor at the junior/senior high school for the 2023-24 school year.

- Approved the hire of Bevin Anderzohn as senior high school fall play director for the 2023-24 school year and the hire of Alec Ruskell as senior high school assistant football coach for the 2022-23 school year.

- Approved the resignation of Nevada Meis as special education teacher and middle school volleyball coach at Inman Elementary effective and the resignation of Darla Olinger as math teacher and activity supervisor at the junior/senior high school, both effective at the end of the 2022-23 school year.

Approved the resignation of Bevin Anderzohn as senior high school fall play assistant director effective at the end of the 2022-23 school year.

- Approved the resignation of Weston Rolenc as senior high school assistant girls basketball coach effective at the end of the 2022-23 school year.



As part of being honored with a 2022 Tree City USA award, four Black Hills Spruce trees were planted at the Evergreen Cemetery April 28. Pictured are, from left: City of Red Oak Park Supervisor Adam Van Der Vliet, Red Oak Park and Tree Board Chairman Bill Drey, assistant cemetery superintendent Ron Tilton, and Red Oak Mayor Shawna Silvius. (Nick Johansen/The Red Oak Express)

Tree City award received

The City of Red Oak was recently honored with the 2022 Tree City USA Award at the 32nd Annual Community Forestry Awards Luncheon in Ankeny. The award was presented by the Arbor Day Foundation and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources April 12 at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny.

"The Tree City USA award is a symbol for communities who have made a commitment to the management of public trees," says state forester Jeff Goerndt. "Your community has provided an outstanding example for other Iowa communities by enhancing our forest resources and demonstrating the great value of trees in providing multiple benefits for future generations."

Red Oak was one of 74 Iowa communities to qualify for Tree City USA status. To receive the award, a city must, at a minimum, have either a city forester or an active city tree board; have a tree ordinance; spend at least \$2 per capita annually for its community forestry program; and have a tree planting and maintenance plan.

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- Ability to handle constructive criticism
- Ability to effectively communicate, build rapport and relate well to all kinds of people
- Professional appearance a must

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Dr. Michael Peters May 8, 11, 22, 25

DERMATOLOGY
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Sally Campbell, PA-C May 17
Abbey Christensen, PA-C May 12
Jacob Ridder, PA-C May 11
Sara Stephenson, PA-C May 16

ENDOCRINOLOGY (TELEMEDICINE)
Dr. Leslie Eiland May 11, 25
Dr. Sydney Blount May 11, 25

ENT
Dr. Tracey Wellendorf May 10, 24

EPILEPSY (TELEMEDICINE)
Shelley Lee, DO May 10

GASTROENTEROLOGY
Dr. John Cannella May 12, 26

INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY
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NEUROLOGY
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Dr. Michael Stojanovic May 3, 9, 17, 23, 30
Thomas "Pat" Schmidt, PA-C May N/A

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Midwest Pain Clinics May 2, 16, 23

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Dr. Inderjit Panesar May 4, 18

PULMONOLOGY
Dr. Koenig May 23

STROKE NEUROLOGY (TELEMEDICINE)
Dr. Marco Gonzalez May 18

UROLOGY
Dr. Christopher Corder May 10, 19, 22

VASCULAR
Dr. David Vogel May 1, 15
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Hupke updates supervisors on ICAP opportunities

Nick Johansen
The Red Oak Express

The Montgomery County Board of Supervisors received an update on its insurance through the Iowa Communities Assurance Pool, or ICAP, which covered the county's buildings, properties, and vehicles.

The supervisors met with Rick Taylor, as well as ICAP representative Beau Hupke, at the April 25 meeting. Taylor said Montgomery County had been insured with ICAP since 2007, and while there had been many changes over the years in the insurance industry, ICAP had been a good program for the county. However, there had been some changes that raised questions.

"I had a conversation about the contributions Montgomery County paid to ICAP, and the changes we'd seen. In 2021, the contribution was \$110,000, in 2022, it was \$135,000, and in 2023, it's approximately \$168,000, so you've seen quite a large increase over the last three years," Taylor commented. "Having said that, over the last five years, Montgomery County has paid in approximately \$525,000 in contributions, and the claims over that time were almost \$500,000, so for every dollar spent, ICAP has paid back about 90 cents in claims."

Also, Taylor said coverages had increased over the last five years due to inflationary prices for replacement costs of insurable items such as buildings.

"We have increased coverages to keep buildings and property insured to the values it should be insured at if there was a catastrophe," stated Taylor. "One thing we haven't updated is the county's general liability limit. It hasn't been changed in a very long time, and probably should be examined before the next renewal. \$1 million and \$5 million isn't what it used to be."

Hupke said ICAP was created to specifically provide insurance to governmental entities, and rates were up both in the ICAP sector and personal lines of insurance as well.

"There are a couple reasons for the increase. The cost of claims has gone up. In one year, the same cost of a claim from the previous year has increased by 40%, and a \$10,000 claim is now \$14,000 due to the cost of trying to get a labor force. This isn't just locally, it's nationwide. The cost of construction has also increased. Five years



Beau Hupke discusses ICAP insurance rate increases with the supervisors. (Nick Johansen/The Red Oak Express)

ago, it was about \$150 per square foot, and now it's \$225 per square foot, to cover the costs of construction," Hupke explained.

Hupke also agreed with Taylor that the county should consider increasing its liability coverage, due to the prevalence of lawsuits being filed as of late.

"You see multi-million and multi-billion dollar lawsuits on a weekly basis it seems like. Someone is always suing someone for something, that's just the world we live in now. What's the market forecast? Your guess is as good as mine," advised Hupke.

Hupke added ICAP was always looking at ways to reduce losses, such as slip and slide situations, and mandatory seatbelt use.

"It's a good habit to get into. A little fender bender could have

a \$5,000 med pay if the victim had the seat belt on. If they didn't, it could be a \$250,000 medical bill, and all those things contribute to the rates. We need to right the ship a little bit, and a lot of things might be out of the county's control, but that's why you have insurance for the things that are unavoidable. The things that we can avoid we need to look into," Hupke stated.

Supervisors Chair Mike Olson said he was aware that building costs have gone crazy, as well as everything else, and there wasn't an end in sight. Hupke agreed.

"Everything is in a big circle. One thing goes up, and another thing goes up, and if that goes up, then another thing goes up," Hupke said. "When there's a big verdict lawsuit, ICAP or any insurance company has a liability limit. If it gets through that, it goes to reinsurance markets. The reinsurance market that ends up with the majority has rates go up, and they pass it down. It's one after the other until they can become profitable."

Taylor said Berkshire Hathaway owned reinsurance companies, and recorded a huge loss in 2022. Taylor said that affected everyone.

"It not only cost the county, it cost property owners and individuals. I will say, when I first started doing insurance for the county, it was all through private insurance companies, and there were tough times. There were times we got canceled by companies or were denied markets. ICAP really leveled the playing field for the county, and they've been there. Standard insurance companies, based on the loss ratio the county has, probably wouldn't insure you, but ICAP is committed to counties and cities," advised Taylor. "I don't know what the future is going to bring, but I hope it stabilizes."

According to Hupke, based on nationwide statistics, roughly 85% of the country was in some sort of insurance pool, and agreed with Taylor that it was unclear when things would stabilize. Also, since the county was in a pool, it was in a unique position.

"You guys are part owners of the pool with vested credit. If there's something you want to know or see as far as coverage, you let us know, we take it to the board, and they determine if it's necessary. You're not going to find anything better than what ICAP has to offer," commented Hupke. "However, I want to make it clear that the increases in the insurance are not just in your county, it's in all the counties."

No further action was taken by the supervisors.

City of Corning receives CNRP-CDBD grant of \$25,000

The city of Corning was awarded a \$25,000 grant under the Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Planning Community Development Block Grant (CNRP-CDBG) Program by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA).

The Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) will administer the grant for the City of Corning.

The community will use the funds to hire a firm to write an action plan and analysis on what projects could or should be done in the target area in order to help revitalize that area.

Corning can then use the action plan and analysis to apply for grant funding of up to \$1.75 million to implement the plan. Potential projects

fundable under the grant would need to comply with the national objectives of HUD to benefit low and moderate-income persons and to prevent or eliminate slum and blight.

Examples of potential projects could include single-family housing rehabilitation, commercial facades, parks and open spaces, sidewalks and trails, street repair, and street scaping.

SWIPCO previously assisted the city of Sidney with applying for the Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Planning grant. The application discussed the potential for housing rehabilitation, trail development, a basketball/pickleball court, and sidewalk development to aid in revitalizing the targeted area of the city. While

outside of the SWIPCO region, SWIPCO was hired to administer grants in Corning and Creston.

SWIPCO routinely provides grant writing and administration services to its member communities in Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby Counties and has brought over \$129 million in grants to the region in the last year alone.



Express donates to the RO library

Red Oak Public Library Director Kathi Most holds a check from The Red Oak Express' "Read Across America Day" promotion. The library received \$5 from every new Red Oak Express subscription throughout the month of March. (Nick Johansen/The Red Oak Express)

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