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RIVALRY WEEK SEE PAGE 7



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Council to consider \$900K in requests for ARPA funds

By PAT MULVANEY
Contributing Writer

The Sparta City Council will vote on disbursing some of its more than \$1 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to local hospitality businesses and nonprofit organizations when it meets this Wednesday, Jan. 12.

The finance committee last week forwarded to the council 16 requests for funds from five nonprofit organizations and 11 private businesses, including bars, restaurants and a hotel.

The businesses and organizations are hoping to recoup lost revenue due to the COVID pandemic.

The city received half of its \$1.029 million ARPA funding in 2021 and will be receiving the rest in the coming months. The money can be used to

recover the city's revenue losses due to the pandemic as well as to help small businesses and nonprofits that also incurred pandemic-related losses.

According to Co-City Administrator/Treasurer Mark Sund, the city had \$340,000 in COVID-related revenue losses from 2019 through 2020 and will use ARPA money to shore up that deficit.

That leaves \$681,000 available for businesses and nonprofits, but requests submitted total \$897,000 and range from a low of \$2,629 to a high of \$195,202 from Best Western Hotel.

Sund said he didn't expect the council to fund all requests at 100%, adding the city can use some of the ARPA money for infrastructure projects

ARPA cont. on pg. 5

Committee recommends FEH for library design

Members also OK land donation to school district

By PAT MULVANEY
Contributing Writer

The Sparta Finance Committee last week agreed to sign a contract with FEH Design of Dubuque, Iowa, to draw up the plans for the Sparta Free Library expansion project.

The approximately \$330,000 agreement will require approval from the full council this coming Wednesday, Jan. 12. If approved, the city will be

responsible for 70% of the design costs, while the Friends of the Sparta Free Library (FOSFL) will cover the remaining 30%.

FEH is the firm that drew up the preliminary expansion design in 2018 for the purpose of fundraising efforts by the FOSFL, which is raising \$1.5 million for the project. FEH beat out HSR of La Crosse, designer of the recently completed Sparta police station.

The city council agreed to fund 70% of a \$5 million library expansion project, capping the city's contribution at \$3.5 million.

LIBRARY cont. on pg. 5

HAPPY
healing

Art teacher Lisa Kirschbaum, left, and Lisa Winchel, who works part-time as a bartender at Vino Anjo, create their "vision boards" at the first Wellness Wednesday event.
Photos by Rhonda Hess

Wellness Wednesdays being held at Vino Anjo

By RHONDA HESS
Contributing writer

What do you want your life to look like? This was the question asked of participants in the first Wellness Wednesday event, which started last week with a "vision board" exercise at Vino Anjo in downtown Tomah.

These free events are being held each week and are coordinated by Judy Jonson Faulkner. "I want to start forming a community," she said. "This is my passion - being with people and wellness."

Future Wellness Wednesdays include guided imagery, art therapy with chalk, journaling and belly dance. See Vino Anjo's Facebook page for these scheduled events, at which participation is usually free.

About a half-dozen women braved the wind and cold to attend last week's event, which included a guided imagery session followed by the creation of "vision boards."

Jonson Faulkner called the boards a great manifesting tool, asking the participants if anyone could describe manifestation.

Amber Schick said she understood the definition of manifesting. "It's like, I did that, I spoke that into existence," she said. "I envisioned the end goal. It's pretty cool."

Schick said the key is to "focus on what you want, not what you don't want."

Amber Schick chooses some magazine images for her board.

HEALING cont. on pg. 5

Friends prop up Tomah family in wake of sorrow

Benefit for Franks Family is Jan. 16

By RHONDA HESS
Contributing writer

After Kevin Franks died Oct. 29, his church family, friends and community members came together to take care of his family.

The 48-year-old from Tomah suffered a long battle with COVID, being hospitalized for several weeks.

He left behind his wife, Amy, and their young children Emma, Bergen and Brede,

along with many other family members and friends.

A benefit for the Franks family, organized by Amanda Mallmann and others, will be held Saturday, Jan. 16, from noon until 5 p.m. at Murray's on Main, downtown Tomah.

"Our church, Good Shepherd Lutheran, along with community members, want to help with medical bills and living expenses," Mallmann said.

The benefit includes auctions and raffles, some of which are quite extravagant.

At the top of that list is a five-day hunt for six people in South Africa. This \$15,000

value prize is being sold in a separate raffle. One hundred tickets are being sold for \$100 each for a drawing at 4 p.m. that day. Another high-ticket item is an event donated by Burlap and Bells Wedding Venue with a \$6,000 value, which will be auctioned off during a live auction that day. Other prizes include a Matthews crossbow and three different airplane flights (a flying lesson, a lunch and buffet flight, and a photo-opportunity flight).

"We also have a five-course dinner at Murray's on Main with wine pairings for eight people," Mallmann

said. "And, we have a Green Mountain Daniel Boone pellet grill smoker worth \$800, a pair of Pilla Panther X7 shooting/hunting glasses worth \$799, a wine tour for 24 people, camping packages, a push lawnmower, ice fishing packages and various baskets. There are so many incredible things donated by the community and throughout the state of Wisconsin."

There is no entry fee for the event, however, different colored tickets may be purchased throughout the day for the basket raffles and other

BENEFIT cont. on pg. 5



A benefit will be held for the family of Kevin Franks on Jan. 16 in Tomah. Contributed photo

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