



The Loose Caboose children's runs will return this year as the opening act of the WhistleStop running events. The event, sponsored by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department will take place Friday at 5:30 p.m. at the Railyard Park. (Photo contributed by Ashland Parks and Recreation Department)

» WHISTLESTOP
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Henderson said that while this year's WhistleStop may not be as big as it has been in previous years, it will be a big improvement over 2020.

"Last year was really dead; it was pretty sad," she said. "Just to get people in here, moving around, seeing what we have to offer, that will be a good thing, and it helps out the little businesses in the area, too."

Becky Wygonik, owner of the Stagecoach Bar and Grill, said WhistleStop's return is vital during the "shoulder season"

between summer crowds and the influx of winter skiers and snowmobilers.

"Not only does it bring visitors into the area, but because it is such a tradition here, I think people are excited to feel some amount of normal celebration," she said. "Especially right after Apple Festival activities die down, it's nice to have an event on our side of the bay to look forward to."

Wygonik said the Brews and Blues cancellation allowed her to offer racers a reason to stay in town.

"We saw that opportunity to provide outdoor live music, and have our smoker trailer

going with smoked meats from Chef Pete, beer and cocktails outside, just kind of have an opportunity to extend the season a bit," she said.

Another WhistleStop tradition returning this year is the Loose Caboose children's races, sponsored by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department. The race will take place on Friday evening at 5:30 p.m.

The races are a free event, sponsored by community businesses, and are open to kids aged 2 to 12. The runs are held at Railyard Park and include a one-half kilometer and full kilometer run, depending on age.

"It's pretty exciting, said Ashland Parks and Recreation Director Sara Hudson. "I am a little nervous, because we are still in the pandemic, but it is exciting to have it come back.

It is going to be outside, and we are encouraging masks."

Hudson said kids don't have to wear masks when they are running, but when they are waiting for their event they and the rest of those attending are encouraged to wear masks.

"I am excited because it is one of my favorite events. It is just awesome to see so many kids show up to run it and to see the community support we get to be able to have it," Hudson said.

The WhistleStop is organized by the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by Memorial Medical Center.



Henderson



Wygonik



Hudson

» HIGHWAY
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He plans to add signs on the detour to help customers find his location.

"I am still unclear as to how much you can do with that," he said.

He said the project would definitely affect his bottom line, "But it's something that needs to be done. You've got to bite the bullet and do it," he said.

DOT Project Manager Jessica Bowker said that when the road is being rebuilt, the city will install new sewers and a new water main. The project will also include new sidewalks, curbs and gutters with upgraded intersection curb ramps to meet Americans With Disabilities Act standards, new streetlights and left-turn lanes at Third Avenue West and Washington Avenue.

The project will replace the current deteriorating pavement that dates to 1974. That concrete pavement was overlaid with asphalt in 1999 and a second time in 2009. The utility improvements will replace water and sewer lines that were installed in the 1950s. DOT officials said the sewer mains and the brick manholes were crumbling and the brittle cast iron water lines had suffered three major breaks in less than three years.

Bowker agreed that



RICK OLIVO/STAFF PHOTO

Washburn residents got their first look Wednesday at preliminary plans to rebuild Highway 13 through the heart of the city. Though construction won't begin until 2024, the state and locals already are planning detours and other provisions.

detours will cause local headaches. Washburn Mayor Mary Motiff said she was worried about a plan to detour heavy trucks to Highway A from Iron River to Port Wing, then completely around the Bayfield peninsula to get to Bayfield.

"There are a lot of trucks that make deliveries up to Bayfield," she said, asking why Highway C couldn't be used as a detour route.

Bowker said the DOT could consider that, but that because Highway C originated on Highway 13 well into the project area, that work would

have to be completed before it could be used as a detour.

Nevertheless, Motiff said the detour on Highway A would add an hour of drive time for trucks going to Bayfield.

"I am very hesitant about that and I am really pushing for a way to use County Highway C instead," she said. "I will be bringing it up whenever it is on the table."

Heavy truck traffic

bound for Washburn would be able to use a detour intended for car traffic on Omaha Street, which parallels Bayfield Street.

However, the use of Omaha Street as a detour was also questioned because of the impact heavy use of the quiet residential street and damage that could be done by the roadbed.

"This is a very tough project on how to handle traffic," said DOT Supervisor Tyler Rongstad. "It is not an easy scenario, and we are hoping to get more feedback out of

these meetings."

Making matters more difficult is that the project cannot start until highway weight restrictions are lifted in mid-May, Rongstad said.

Despite the issues and complexities of the project, Motiff said she was looking forward to the road being repaired and other improvements.

"I am really glad that they are here this early helping us plan for how to do this as well as we can," she said. "For me the biggest issue is making sure that people know that our businesses are open and how to get to them."

Public comments for the project are due before Oct. 28, and preliminary plans for the work are to be prepared this winter. Final plans are to be completed by August of 2023. Additional information about the project, along with links to DOT project information are available via the city of Washburn website at <http://www.cityofwashburn.org/bayfield-street-project.html>.

» OLSON
FROM PAGE A1

As recently as February, School Board members gave Olson glowing reviews in his annual performance evaluation. It applauded him for his "clear focus on student success" and "strong effort to use survey data and listening sessions to attain input on how to achieve goals."

The review, also obtained under open records law, listed few areas for Olson to improve his work performance and outlined two goals for the coming year: work to address "disproportionality" in student achievement and "develop effective communication strategies that are responsive to stakeholders."

Immediately after the "separation" was announced, elected school board members told the Daily Press that they had agreed that all communication about Olson's departure would go through Board President Jeff Moravchik. Moravchik did not return calls seeking comment for this story.

In the emails obtained by the Daily Press, Moravchik tells other board members on Aug. 13 that, "There's nothing we can say right now until we know whether he's going to sign (the resignation agreement) or not. We can't say he resigned because if we do and he doesn't sign the agreement, we will be sued for defamation. So we have to stay strong and go from there."

Board member Shelly Viater emailed back that she ran into Olson and his family as they were preparing to move the day after the closed-door meeting.

"Hugged them all goodbye and wished them well," she wrote. "Meanwhile, people driving along Beaver Avenue were pleasantly surprised to pick up all kinds of household items at no cost. I received bar stools, a grill, a beautiful full length mirror, a room size rug with pad, Oredocker blanket. It felt like Christmas."

The emails go on to discuss the hiring of Chris Patriotto, a former Hurley School District administrator who now is serving as Ashland's interim superintendent.

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