



Holiday on ice:
Anglers welcome hard water, B1



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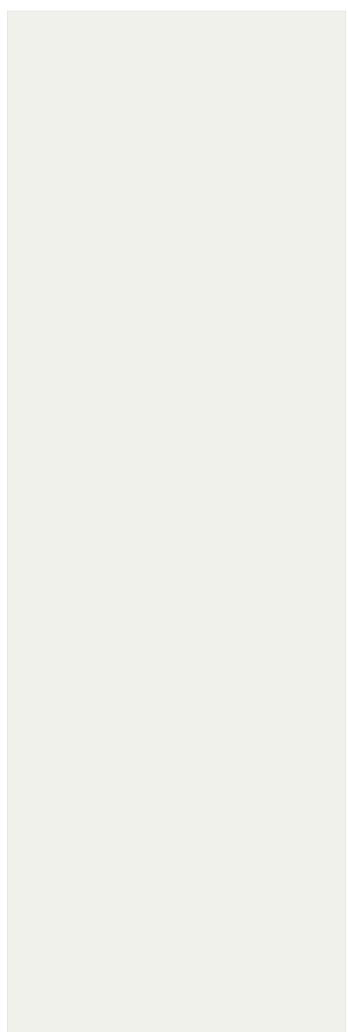


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Bayfield County getting door-to-door bus service

Rides aimed at those without other options



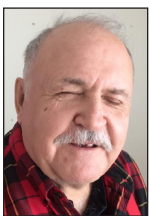
A pair of riders boards a BART bus near the Super One store in Ashland. BART is adding door-to-door, on-demand ride service for Bayfield County residents using a combination of federal and county money. Passengers will make reservations in advance and be transported by BART vans anywhere in the county and to Ashland or Hayward.

BY RICK OLIVO
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Bill Gallik of Ino is sightless and has for years relied upon others to drive him to the grocery store, doctor's appointments and pretty much wherever he needed to go.

He's precisely the kind of customer that a new Bay Area Rural Transit service is aimed at. In January, BART will begin to provide Bayfield County residents with on-demand, door-to-door transportation that will allow people like Gallik to call for a ride instead of using a traditional scheduled bus route.

"This absolutely opens a lot of doors," Gallik said. "I



Gallik

have medical appointments, dental appointments. It's pretty important. I am looking forward to it for sure."

Bayfield County Aging and Disability Services Manager Carrie Linder has worried about the plight of the county's rural and home-bound residents for nearly two decades. The on-demand service is an answer that has been a long time in coming, she said.

"What I have come to learn is that so much of our county has been left unserved by transportation. For many areas there are nothing but volunteer drivers, and when the pandemic hit, we shut down our volunteer-driver program because we couldn't ensure safety and we didn't want to put drivers at risk," Linder said.

As the pandemic raged in 2020, the county established a transportation coordinating committee to tackle the



Linder

problem, examining several transportation modes. It determined the on-demand system was the best route to take.

"We have come to realize that we are really not doing our county residents any favors by not providing them with any transportation, because that is really the foundation of everything," she said. Similar systems have worked well in other communities that have tried it, she said.

BART Manager Pat Daoust bought into the idea, committing a pair of BART vans to the project. BART had previously been providing an on-demand service in Bayfield County, but it was lightly used, primarily because during the early stages of the pandemic, people were hunkered down and not going anywhere, Linder said.



Daoust

SEE BUSES PAGE A5

Ashland school leader still silent on super's resignation

BY TOM STANKARD
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Ashland School Board members last week continued to decline to comment on why they decided to pay former Superintendent Erik Olson to resign from his post earlier this year.

Board President Jeffrey Moravchik told the Daily Press after last week's school board meeting that Olson had resigned — the first time he has used that word — but declined to comment any further, saying he's prohibited to do so by law. He then referred questions to the school district's attorney.

When asked for the attorney's contact information and what law prohibited an elected official from explaining how tax money had been spent, Moravchik again declined to comment.

"These are challenging times, but the board and the district continues to thrive and improve for the good of the students and the community," he said in response.

The board has agreed that all communication about Olson's departure must go through Moravchik.

District Executive Administrative Assistant Michelle Vuorenmaa said Madison-based attorney Lori Lubinsky was involved in Olson's resignation process, but Lubinsky did not return messages seeking comment.

Olson has not been able to be reached for comment.

The board "separated" from its former superintendent in August, but has not publicly explained why it did so. The board announced Olson's departure immediately after an Aug. 11 closed-door meeting, and members at the time refused to disclose any additional information.

As part of the "separation," the board agreed to pay Olson his full salary of almost \$150,000 a year through June and tens of thousands in other payments in exchange for his August resignation, according to documents later obtained by the Daily Press under state open-records law.

Those additional payments include full health, vision and dental insurance for him and his family, full contributions to his pension fund, reimbursement for graduate school classes, a \$10,000 contribution to his retirement account, \$7,000 to help him move to a new home, cash for his unused vacation time and unemployment compensation.

SEE RESIGNATION PAGE A5

Red Cliff to devote \$12.6M to additional housing

BY RICK OLIVO
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The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa are dedicating another \$12.62 million of American Rescue Plan money to building housing to address critical needs on the reservation.

This is the second recent housing development for Red Cliff. Earlier this year, the tribe won a \$4.8 million Department of Housing and Urban Development grant that is building 20 new rental and occupant-owned units on the reservation, Red Cliff Housing Authority Executive Director Cheryl Cloud said.



The Red Cliff Band will spend \$12.6 million in recovery act money building 46 additional housing units, from homes to apartments and rentals like this one recently completed using Housing and Urban Development funding. Tribal officials are trying to address a critical need for housing on the reservation. (File photo)

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