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INSIDE



Matmen handle the competition in Aurburndale page 14

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Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!

Fourth grade students at the Abbotsford Elementary School throw handfuls of "snow" into the air at the conclusion of one of their songs on Tuesday, Dec. 14. Elementary, middle and high school students from Abbotsford and Colby held Christmas concerts last week. For more pictures see pages 9-11.

STAFF PHOTO/ROSS PATTERMANN

Storm and high wind hits Colby, local areas

By Kevin O'Brien

The neighborhood across the highway from Packaging Corporation of America in Colby became a debris field last week, as winds from a supercharged storm system sent pieces of the company's tin roof into several nearby properties and the city's softball fields.

An unseasonable thunderstorm ripped through Central Wisconsin on the night of Dec. 15, melting away several inches of freshly fallen snow, taking down trees and power lines and peeling off a portion of PCA's roof.

The storm system, which generated wind speeds of over 70 miles per hour, tore several pieces of PCA's tin roof off its building on the west side on STH 13 and sent them flying into the neighborhood on the other side of the highway.

Pieces of the roof could be found as far away as the city's softball field on South East Street.

Rooftop air conditioners and ventilation units were also torn down or damaged by the high winds on Wednesday night.

A forklift and other equipment were deployed Thursday morning to remove strips of shredded tin from yards and trees.

The city's main softball field sustained extensive damage, with a light pole falling on a portion of the fence and the stairs on the scorekeeper's booth becoming unusable.

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Central Fire and EMS receives COVID relief money

By Kevin O'Brien

Central Fire and EMS is expecting to collect as much as \$60,000 in federal COVID relief money from the four townships in the district, as part of a plan devised by district board chairman Larry Oehmichen.

The money, which comes from the American Rescue Plan Act, will be used to pay for EMT training and wages and personal protective equipment. In exchange for turning over the ARPA money, the towns will be given a dollar-for-dollar discount on their annual fire protection dues to the district.

Oehmichen went over the federal government's restrictions for using ARPA money at the board's regular monthly meeting last Thursday.

"The United States is the only country in the world that gives you free money, and then you've got to figure out ways on how to use it," he said.

Central Fire is hoping to get about \$15,000 each from the towns of Holton, Mayville, Hull and Colby, which will be used to offset the amount each township pays into the district. Over the course of three consecutive years, each township

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