



Ladysmith News

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Thursday, March 24, 2022

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Ladysmith students perform **Page A12**

Police cite multiple 'swatting' calls

Ladysmith school evacuated after bomb scare call

By Luke Klink

Students and staff at Ladysmith Middle & High School were evacuated last Thursday, after law enforcement received a threat of a bomb in the building.

The caller making the threat warned a bomb was placed in an English room at the school. The caller also advised the person who left the bomb was wearing a red and white shirt, a black jacket and blue jeans.

No bomb or dangerous devices were found.

"Nothing was located," Ladysmith Police Chief Kevin Julien said.

Emergency crews began responding the school at 12:35 p.m., March 17.

Precautionary measures were taken, starting with getting everyone safely out of and away from the building.

Students and staff were directed to the far east end of the school's main parking lot, about 100 yards from the school. The school enrolls about 450 students in grades 6-12.

All available area law enforcement officers from multiple agencies — including those who were off duty — were asked to respond. Ambulance crews were placed on standby at the fire hall and nearby

businesses. Ladysmith firefighters blocked the two school entrances at Edgewood Avenue and E. 16th Street N.

More than a dozen officers were on scene.

With the school evacuated, officers from the Ladysmith and Rusk County Sheriff's departments entered the building to investigate.

"A decision was made to get kids out and do a protective sweep of the building," Julien said. "We made a proactive sweep of every room in the whole building, but there wasn't any indication of where an explosive might be."

If a suspicious device had been located, local law enforcement would have contracted to have a specialized bomb squad respond, according to Julien.

The bomb threat call was made to the business office line at the Ladysmith Police Department, and transferred to dispatchers.

"It was a bomb threat made toward Ladysmith High School," Julien said. "It was a foreign voice."

The incident was handled "pretty well" given the level of the threat and the large number of people that were evacuated, according to Julien.

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SCHOOL EVACUATED — Ladysmith firefighter Jan Martin helps direct traffic at the main entrance to Ladysmith Middle & High School as the building is evacuated after a bomb scare was phoned into the city police department. A sweep of the building turned up nothing suspicious.

— News photo by Luke Klink



DRIVER SAFE — A Ladysmith firefighter douses a vehicle that caught fire as the driver was entering the parking lot Sunday morning at St. Anthony de Padua Church in Tony. The driver reported she had turned onto Maple Street leading to the church and heard a loud "pop" sound. She continued into the church parking lot and was flagged down by other parishioners noting smoke coming from the vehicle before she could park. The Ladysmith Fire Department was called at 9:05 a.m., March 20. They were on scene for about 45 minutes. The Rusk County Sheriff's Department and Wisconsin State Patrol also responded. No injuries were reported.

— News photo by Luke Klink

City council plans street assessments

By Luke Klink

The Ladysmith Common Council voted 7-0, Monday, to approve a director's report on two upcoming street reconstruction projects. The council also voted unanimously on March 14 to approve a preliminary resolution declaring an intent to exercise special assessments for two upcoming street reconstruction projects.

The city is proceeding this year with reconstructing the Summit Avenue cul-de-sac east of W. Fifth Street and E. 10th Street N between Menasha and Park avenues.

Special assessments for E. 10th Street N total \$124,899. This breaks down to \$54,478 for sanitary sewer, \$61,781 for water and \$8,539 for curb and gutter. There is no sidewalk work being done.

Special assessments for the Summit Avenue cul-de-sac total \$119,064. This breaks down to \$64,252 for

sanitary sewer and \$54,812 for water. There is no sidewalk or curb and gutter work being done.

Public hearings on the special assessments will be held on April 11 for Summit Avenue and April 25 for E. 10th Street N.

The council will act on levying the assessments after the hearing.

Last month, the council voted unanimously to award the reconstruction of E. 10th Street N from Menasha to Park avenues to Haas Sons with the low bid of \$362,960. A-1 Excavating bid \$400,511 and McCabe Construction bid \$399,399.

The council also voted unanimously last month to award a project for the Summit Avenue cul-de-sac to Haas Sons with the low base bid of \$356,847. A-1 Excavating bid \$444,345 and McCabe Construction bid \$433,367. Added costs not part of the base bid include directional boring

for storm sewer, sanitary sewer and water main.

The council also voted unanimously last month to table bids for Lindoo Avenue from E. Fourth to E. Sixth streets. Haas Sons bid \$589,637. A-1 Excavating bid \$653,053 and McCabe Construction bid \$696,970.

Last month's actions came a month after council members pledged to do whatever it takes this year to fund reconstruction of Flambeau Avenue between W. Ninth and E. Second streets, as part of a joint project between the city and town of Flambeau. City council meeting minutes from last Dec. 13 indicate a total projected cost of \$352,000 to improve Flambeau Avenue. Assuming 50 percent funding from grants applied for, projections show the city's share is about \$120,000 and the county's share is about \$50,000.

Compelling reasons to accept the

two project bids were E.10th Street N has not been repaved since its asphalt surface was pulverized in 2020. That resurfacing project stalled to allow underground utilities to be engineered as part of a complete reconstruction after multiple water main breaks.

The Summit Avenue bid came in at 18 percent below the estimated cost. The council was also alerted to rising prices of construction materials, making Summit Avenue work seem like an even bigger bargain.

Also last week, the council overlooked a sizable price increase unanimously approved financing construction of a new shelter over a boxcar and caboose display outside the Rusk County Visitors Center & Rail Display at the intersection of Wis. 27 and Fritz Avenue.

The project was bid last year at

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Ladysmith School Board OKs new curriculum

By Luke Klink

The Ladysmith School Board voted 5-0, Wednesday, March 16, to adopt a new science curriculum for the middle school. It will be used in grades 6-8.

The curriculum is developed by Amplify, a publisher of next-generation curriculum and assessment programs.

The total cost is \$33,258 for all three grades. This breaks down to \$9,869 for grade 6, \$10,220 for grade 7 and \$10,480 for grade 8. The remaining \$2,689 is for professional development, shipping and handling. This spending covers only the science portion of the entire middle school curriculum, hence the lower cost than the last curriculum purchase in 2019 of the new English/Language Arts for the elementary school.

"It comes highly recommended,"

It comes highly recommended.

— Ladysmith School District Administrator Laura Stunkel of the new middle school science curriculum

said School District Administrator Laura Stunkel about the middle school science curriculum.

Funding is through the district's ESSER III, the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund grant program authorized under American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. These funds provide additional money for local educational agencies to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. ESSER III supplements ESSER I, created by the CARES Act in March

2020, and ESSER II, created by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act in December 2020.

Amplify Science is the leading phenomena-based curriculum for grades PreK-8. The program blends hands-on investigations, literacy-rich activities, and interactive digital tools to empower students to think, read, write, and argue like real scientists and engineers. Amplify Science was developed by the science education experts at UC

Berkeley's Lawrence Hall of Science and the digital learning team at Amplify. As the Lawrence's first curriculum designed to address three-dimensional science standards, Amplify Science reflects state-of-the-art practices in science teaching and learning. Each unit of Amplify Science engages students in a relevant, real-world problem where they investigate scientific phenomena, engage in collaboration and discussion, and develop models or explanations in order to arrive at solutions.

One positive about the curriculum cited to the board was that it scored the best out of all the middle science curricula on EdReports.org, an independent nonprofit that ensures all students have access to high-quality instructional materi-

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Threat: Leads to Ladysmith school evacuation

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Once out of the building, students began calling parents on cell phones and families began arriving in private vehicles to pick up children.

School officials canceled classes for the rest of the day, and school buses arrived to take children home.

School District Administrator Laura Stunkel thanked staff, students and parents for their cooperation in the emergency situation. The building was evacuated due to the bomb threat, according to Stunkel.

"All students and staff are safe and that is our main goal," Stunkel said. "We made the quick decision to evacuate the students and staff to the parking lot for their safety."

Students were not allowed back into the building. Their belongings remained where they were left.

Buses were called, and the elementary building was informed. Due to combined routes for elementary and middle/high school buses, officials canceled classes for the rest of the day at both buildings.

"We loaded students on the bus and checked out students to parents in an organized manner at the east end of the LMHS parking lot," Stunkel said. "We did not release elementary students early due to safety. We did so because of shared transportation, the timing of the incident and siblings from both buildings."

Law enforcement officers, along with teachers, did a thorough search of the entire building.

Teachers were escorted in by officers as school staff would best know any objects that might be out of place in their rooms, according to Julien.

"They found nothing of concern. They reassured us that the building is safe and classes can resume in the morning," Stunkel said.

Stunkel encouraged families to talk with their children about the incident. She added the school guidance department is available to help answer questions or concerns with your child.

"Our school safety team met with the entire staff to process and reflect on the situation," Stunkel said.

Julien stated law enforcement and school officials will meet within a week to discuss the incident and review the evacuation process.

No arrests have been made. Law enforcement officers continue to investigate the threat.

By 2:33 p.m., law enforcement advised the school was back open for normal business operations about 2 hours after the incident started.

At least five other law enforcement agencies in the state received similar threats on the same day, St. Patrick's Day, according to Julien. One of them was the Two Rivers Police Department, he said.

Bomb threats were called into the Two Rivers Joint Dispatch Center on Wednesday and Thursday, March 16-17, about an explosive device being located inside of Two Rivers High School. While classes were not in session, all students and staff in the building were evacuated.

Two Rivers law enforcement officials deemed the threats as instances of "swatting."

Swatting is the action or practice of making a prank call to emergency services in an attempt to bring about the dispatch of a large number of armed police officers to a particular address.

"They were able to ID the call coming from Ethiopia," Julien said.

Julien said the motives of the caller or callers is unknown, other than they disrupt people's life when they happen.

News outlets statewide reported on other similar threats last week involving incidents later determined to be not credible.

A bomb threat was called in from out of state against the Ninth Grade Center at the Oak Creek High School campus Wednesday, March 16.

Students and staff in nearby Roncalli High School were evacuated to a safe area after a reported bomb threat Wednesday, March 16.

A bomb threat was called in to Algonoma High School, near Green Bay, Thursday, March 17.

Earlier this month, Madison law enforcement officials responded to a string of unsubstantiated school threats resulting in lockdowns and heightened security at city schools.

Madison Metropolitan School District spokesperson Tim LeMonds expressed concern the pattern of threats could continue, adding they have taken a toll on students and first responders alike.

"The fact that these threats, all similar in nature, are turning up to

be unsubstantiated (is) not only a tremendous strain on our first responder resources, but it's also causing learning loss for those students in both Jefferson and Madison Memorial, and that's just absolutely unacceptable," LeMonds told a Madison news outlet, WISC-TV.

The speculation is these recent threats were called in from overseas. Last December, many parents including in Ladysmith, kept their children out of school after vague warnings of threats circulated on TikTok and other social media platforms, police and school officials said. It was not clear where the warnings originated, but they had been circulating for days on many sites.

In a statement on Twitter, the F.B.I. urged people to contact the police or the federal authorities if they saw a threat against a school. "DO NOT share or forward the threat," the bureau said. "Doing so can spread misinformation and cause panic."

There was a similar wave of closures and increased police presence at schools in late October, after districts reported seeing vague threats on Snapchat and TikTok.

Though no explosives were found, 57 historically Black colleges and universities and houses of worship were targeted by bomb threats between Jan. 4 and Feb. 16, according to a new statement from the FBI.

The bomb threats came via phone calls and emails, instant messages and online posts.

Mathieu Deflem, a professor of sociology at the University of South Carolina, said the emotional and financial costs of responding to threats, credible or not, "can be tremendous." But officials have little choice but to respond in some form, he said in a New York Times article.

Felony statutes would apply in instances of bomb threats, under Wisconsin law.

Officers from the Rusk County Sheriff's and Ladysmith Police departments, Wisconsin State Patrol and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources responded to the threat to Ladysmith Middle & High School. The Ladysmith Fire Department and Rusk County Ambulance Service also responded.

School was back in session on Friday, the day after the incident.



EVACUATED — Students and staff at Ladysmith Middle & High School evacuate the building at about 12:30 p.m., Thursday, March 17, after the city police department received a bomb scare threat called in by phone. Classes were canceled for the day. A law enforcement sweep of the school turned up nothing suspicious, and the threat determined to be unfounded.

— News photos by Luke Klink



HEIGHTENED SECURITY — Officers from the Wisconsin State Patrol and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources are among multiple law enforcement agency representatives who responded.



CLASSES CANCELED — Ladysmith School District Administrator Laura Stunkel and Principal Greg Posewitz meet with Rusk County Sheriff Jeff Wallace during the evacuation.



BUILDING SWEEP — A Rusk County Sheriff's Deputy leads school staff to start a room by room sweep of Ladysmith Middle & High School.



CONCERNED PARENTS — Ladysmith school staff meet with parents as they arrive at the high school entrance as they arrive to pick up their children.

School: Board OKs new science curriculum

Continued from Page A1

als. It publishes free reviews of K-12 instructional materials, using an educator led approach that measures standards alignment, usability, and other quality criteria.

The curriculum also received favorable results by WestEd and UC Berkeley through independent study. It is a blended model and can work with both online and offline.

A gold-standard independent study led by the nonprofit research, development, and service agency WestEd, and with funding support by the National Science Foundation, found promising evidence that the Amplify Science middle school curriculum has a significant positive impact on student learning.

WestEd researchers found:

■ The estimated impact was statistically significant (p < 0.001) and corresponds to an effect size of 0.36. This impact is consistent with the average student using the Amplify Science curriculum moving up 14 percentiles compared to their peers who used other materials.

■ The results were similar across gender and racial groups, and for students with varying levels of math and literacy achievement.

■ More than 80 percent of teachers agreed that they and their students benefited from using Amplify Science curriculum.

■ Almost 90 percent of teachers reported that Amplify Science supported them in engaging students in science discourse.

The randomized controlled study focused on physical science for grade 7 and included 28 teachers and more than 1700 students across three districts that served diverse populations.

The school board ordered 60 units for each grade level including integrated full year course models, course model kits, investigation notebook bundles and course model print teacher guides.

It includes hands-on investigations or labs with all the material to do the lab for three classes of 40 students with student investigation notebooks and science articles, digital resources, digital simulations and teachers guides.

The textbook is the student investigation journal as well as a digital copy of everything in the journal. The class can be linked directly to Google Classroom

This program will take a middle unit assessment and automatically level the rest of the unit to match reading and learning levels. It differentiates automatically.

In other matters, the board:

■ Approved a new CESA 10 contract totaling \$110,123 for the 2022-23 school year, mostly the same as the prior year with the inclusion of a college and career readiness service costing \$11,000. This service is already being offered by neighboring districts, and school officials believe it is a valuable offering for students. CESA Purchasing was created in 2006 by the 12 CESAs so all state school districts could utilize discounts and contracts, leveling the play-

ing field so the smallest schools can have the same advantages of a large district.

■ Approved student Start College Now and Early College Credit Program Course requests.

■ Approved NEOLA policy updates.

■ Approved the school district calendar for the 2022-23 school year with the first day of school on Sept. 1, Thanksgiving Break Nov. 21-25, Christmas Break Dec. 25-Jan. 1, Spring Break March 13-17, Easter April 7-9, Graduation May 27 and the last day of school June 2, 2023. After several years, district officials have removed the non-mandatory early school start dates from the schedule due to lack of full attendance resulting in the district not realizing its full budget potential.

■ Approved staffing including resignation with board thanks and appreciation of Mary Gruber as special education teacher, Brenda Danielson as 4th grade teacher, Rachel Badura as 5th grade teacher, Pat Zbikowski as LMHS art teacher and David Groothusen as custodian; employment of Carla Dexter as 4th grade teacher and Taylor Hartzell as 5th grade teacher and employment of and employment of Bailey Naas as head cross country coach, Troy Gago and Nicole Stewart as Assistant Track Coaches, Bryce Meverden as assistant baseball coach and Judd Rozak as assistant softball coach.

■ Set dates of regular meetings on April 20 and May 18 and reorganization on April 27.

City: Council reviews street work assessments

Continued from Page A1

\$78,000, but with recent construction material price increases the project is now expected to cost about 25 percent more.

"You'd be adding another \$20,000 to that price," said City Administrator Alan Christianson.

The project is being funded with Tax Incremental District 12 revenue. The city is expecting to purchase materials, saving somewhat on sales taxes.

Ald. Bill Morgan told the council the project is not a necessity but delaying the work "sure screws things up."

The display will be moved 45 feet to the south prior to construction of the shelter and moved back under the

structure when work is completed.

In other matters, the council:

■ Voted unanimously to authorize its property committee to accept bids on agriculture land lease at its March 31 meeting.

■ Unanimously approved spending \$15,000 from Tax Incremental District 8 for street pole and park holiday decorations.

■ Voted 6-1 to spend \$6,000 from Council Grants and Aids for the Northland Mardi Gras.

■ Approved this year's chipseal and crackseal projects with a \$65,000 budget including E. Third Street S, from Lake to Worden; W. Fourth Street N, from Miner to Lake; W. Sixth Street N, from Lake to Pederson; Menasha

Avenue, from E. Third to E. 16th; W. Fifth Street S, from Fritz to Corbett; Garfield Avenue, from W. Ninth to east terminal end; Sabin Avenue W, from W. Fifth to east terminal end; E. 11th Street N, from U.S. 8 to Shady Lane; E. Ninth Street S, from Lindoo to Sabin; River Avenue, from E. Fifth to east terminal end; E. Eighth Street S, from Worden south to railroad tracks; E. Ninth Street S, from Worden south to railroad tracks; W. Seventh Street N, from Pederson to Lake; Pederson Avenue W., from W. 10th to W. 11th; Pederson Lift Station; Birdie Court; from Eagle to south terminal end; Gokey Road; from E. Ninth to Tiews; and Gates Avenue, from W. Fifth to W. Eighth.

I am running as a write-in candidate for the Rusk County Board of Supervisors in District 10.

Currently, I am the president of the Family Health Center Board of Marshfield, Inc. and serve on the Town of Grant Board. I previously served on the Ladysmith School Board and the Mount Senario College Board.

I appreciate your vote.
Anton (Tony) Ziesler
 anton.ziesler@icloud.com

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