



Ladysmith News

"Good news since 1895"

0 4 8 7 9 1 2 3 0 1 \$1.50

Vol. 127, Number 44

Ladysmith, Wisconsin 54848

Thursday, February 10, 2022

- Total loss**
No insurance for fire Page A2

- Boys-Girls Game**
OLS rallies ahead of big weekend Page A11

- Tournament time**
OLS welcomes area teams Sports

Two questions on April 5 ballot

School kicks off referendum vote campaign

By Luke Klink

Ladysmith school officials kicked off, Monday, an informational campaign to vote in an upcoming April 5 referendum.

One referendum question asks for permission to sell \$21 million in capital bonds to help fund building improvements. It will include replacing major building systems that have outlived their useful life, safety and security, ADA improvements, upgrades of classroom sizes and acoustics, a gym expansion to accommodate large group events, physical education and community activities, and roof replacement at the middle and high school campus. This plan also includes a roof replacement at the elementary school.

A second question asks for permission to exceed state revenue limits by \$600,000 annually over each of the next five years to help fund operational costs. This will support needs such as staffing to support students, staff costs, student services and general maintenance.

School officials say the referendums will have no impact on the school district's mill rate, noting the new debt would be taken on as old debt from the last referendum 20 years ago is paid off.

A handful of district parents attended the first of three planned informational meetings. The comments were mostly positive, supporting the proposals.

District resident Terry Carter, a former school board member, asked how much money the district has spent on Ladysmith Middle & High School since the building was constructed in the early 1970s.

"Over 50 years, how much have we spent?" Carter said. "We would have built two new schools with it

I'm sure."

John Huenink, vice president and director of education for the Madison construction company Kraus-Anderson, told those at the meeting the funds will make a substantial positive impact on Ladysmith school facilities.

"It is going to go a long way," Huenink said.

It is just time to give the school some TLC and appreciate what we have.

— Ladysmith School District Administrator
Laura Stunkel

which makes its debt cap \$29 million outstanding at any one time.

It would cost about \$50 million to replicate the current LMHS campus, according to Michael Clark, a director with Baird Financials, which is advising the district on the referendum. State law bars the district from taking on this much debt.

"The caps prohibit this much new borrowing," Clark said.

With state laws blocking debt needed to build an entirely new school, district officials instead are focused on improving what they believe is still a high quality campus.

A recent facility assessment, however, identified many pressing issues.

Classrooms throughout the building are undersized, lack flexible space for both large and small group learning and have acoustical issues that impact student learning. There is a lack of gym space for middle school and high school students and a lack flexible furniture for student collaboration. There are also aging floors, ceiling and cabinets.

Infrastructure and building-wide systems have exceeded their service

Please turn to Page A9



REFERENDUM INFORMATION — Ladysmith School District resident Terry Carter (foreground) asks officials how much money the district has spent on building improvements since Ladysmith High School was built in the early 1970s.

— News photo by Luke Klink



FIRE DESTROYS HOME — Three area fire departments respond Saturday morning to a home fire at N3620 Strom Rd., town of Grant. The Ladysmith Fire Department was the first called, requesting mutual aid assistance from Bruce and Weyerhaeuser fire departments. The home and its contents have been declared a total loss. The owner did not have insurance. Story on page A2.

— News photo by Luke Klink

Cost high to clean up 5R Processors waste

By Luke Klink

Officials project it will cost up to \$2.5 million to clean up hazardous electronics waste illegally disposed by 5R Processors when it was operating in Rusk County and other parts of the state. That is the amount being earmarked in a new bill recently introduced in the Wisconsin Legislature that seeks to make an appropriation and clean up after the now-defunct electronics recycler.

This bill requires the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to contract with third parties to perform any necessary assessment, collection, transportation and disposal of cathode ray tube glass and related waste generated from activities undertaken by 5R Processors and located at properties in Rusk, Price or Washington counties that are not owned by 5R Processors or its successors.

5R Processors is a former Wisconsin

company in the electronics recycling business. The company utilized six locations in Wisconsin, including those in Ladysmith, Catawba, Glen Flora and West Bend, as well as one location in Tennessee, to store electronics it had collected. 5R is now out of business, but it has left behind millions of pounds of unprocessed and partially processed CRT glass and other electronics-related materials. CRT glass contains significant amounts of lead and is considered hazardous waste.

Before the advent of flat screen TVs and monitors that do not contain lead, crushed CRT glass had value as a recyclable item and could be sold to vendors. However, once the newer screen technology came online, CRTs lost all value and 5R had to pay money to downstream vendors to dispose of the leaded CRT glass.

5R's customers included large public and private entities. These custom-

ers paid 5R, through the manufacturer-take-back program, over \$9.6 million to recycle e-waste, including CRTs containing leaded glass.

According to court documents, 5R used a de-manufacturing technique whereby electronic equipment was taken apart manually and the parts sorted into commodities which then could be resold. 5R took in computer monitors and televisions that contained CRTs, which were broken down and the glass separated between "clean glass" that was sold as a commodity and "funnel glass" that had lead in it. Until 2011, 5R shipped the leaded CRT glass to vendors that were allowed to handle it, and 5R was charged for the disposal.

Senate Bill 890 was introduced by Wisconsin Senators Jerry Petrowski, Robert Cowles, Janet Bewley and Ducey Stroebel. The bill is cosponsored by Wisconsin Assembly Representatives Jim Edming, Rick Gun-

drum and Beth Meyers.

Petrowski's new bill creates a new continuing appropriation of \$2.5 million from the segregated Environmental Management Account for this purpose. The balance in that account is projected to be \$33.8 million at the end of fiscal year 2022, and the expenditure of these funds will not impact the federal maintenance of effort requirements from the American Rescue Plan Act funds.

The bill was referred to the Legislature's Committee on Natural Resources and Energy, which held a public hearing on Monday, Jan. 31.

Appearances were made by Petrowski, Rusk County Administrative Coordinator Andy Albarado and Ladysmith City Administrator Alan Christianson. Providing written testimony were Jessica Wildes and Mark Piotrowicz, both of the city of West Bend in Washington

Please turn to Page A7

Michael Perry grew up near area, now lives in New Auburn

Best selling author to perform in Ladysmith

By Luke Klink

As Flambeau Valley Arts Association continues celebrating its 50th season, the local arts organization welcomes a *New York Times* best-selling author, humorist and playwright to a Ladysmith appearance.

Michael Perry bills himself as a bestselling author, humorist, singer/songwriter and intermittent pig farmer.

Raised on a small Midwestern dairy farm just north of New Auburn, he baled hay, cleaned calf pens and helped dad with the logging.

Then, for five summers starting at 16, Perry worked on a ranch in Wyoming in order to pay for college. He received a nursing degree, then detoured into writing.

"All this time — from the age of four — I was reading piles and piles of books. I helped with the farming and the logging, but my brothers would tell you it was pretty clear I wasn't gonna be a farmer or a logger," Perry said. "But it never occurred to me that a kid from Chippewa County, barely a mile from the Rusk County line, could write a book."

"Thankfully," Perry says, his seventh grade teacher and one of his college professors encouraged him to write. But he was out of college and working as a nurse before he got serious about it.

"I wrote piles of magazine articles and a bunch of books," Perry said.

One of them, "Visiting Tom," made it on the *New York Times* best-seller list. It was #21 for one week, then disappeared.



PERFORMS FRIDAY — Best-selling author Michael Perry will perform this Friday as the 50th anniversary season continues for the Flambeau Valley Arts Association. Perry bills himself as a *New York Times* bestselling author, humorist, singer/songwriter, intermittent pig farmer. He lives with his wife and two daughters in rural Wisconsin. The show has been moved to the Our Lady of Sorrows Church.

"It was like I played minor league baseball for years, got called up for one game with the Brewers, then went back to the minors," Perry said. "But the kid who read all those books when he should have been shoveling silage never even dreamed he'd get even that one game! I'm very grateful. It's been a good life. Not famous, just making a living doing something I want to do."

Perry had been scheduled to appear in Ladysmith in March of 2020, the week the schools shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Flambeau Valley Arts Association offi-

— Michael Perry photo cials are pleased to be able finally reschedule that performance.

Perry also will be speaking earlier on Friday with Ladysmith High School juniors and seniors. He plans to "shoot the breeze" about what it's like to make a living as a writer and performer, and how growing up in rural Wisconsin milking cows and logging helped him get there. He also will be sharing some photos of where his writing career has taken him.

"To have someone of Perry's stature here in Ladysmith and work with our students is a real plus for Flambeau Valley Arts and our com-

munity, said FVAA President Karen Ek. "Friday's audience will, no doubt, be well entertained with Perry's take on life in rural Wisconsin and will look for his books at their local library or bookstore."

Michael Perry will perform at 7:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 11, in the Our Lady of Sorrows Church. The venue was changed due to heat issues at the Ladysmith Middle & High School auditorium.

Perry lives with his wife and two daughters in rural Wisconsin, where he serves on the local volunteer fire and rescue service and has a handful of chickens.

He hosts the nationally-syndicated "Tent Show Radio" and performs widely as a humorist. His live humor albums include *Never Stand Behind A Sneezing Cow* and *The Clodhopper Monologues*. He tours with his band, The Long Beds, and lives online at www.sneezingcow.com.

Perry's best-selling memoirs include *Population 485, Truck: A Love Story*, *Coop* and *Visiting Tom*.

Population 485 subsequently was adapted for the stage.

His book *Montaigne in Barn Boots* explores the work of the French philosopher and essayist, Michel de Montaigne. It was published in 2017. Perry developed an interest in Montaigne's work while recuperating from a kidney stone, when he did research into his condition and saw references to Montaigne, who also suffered from that malady.

Please turn to Page A9

