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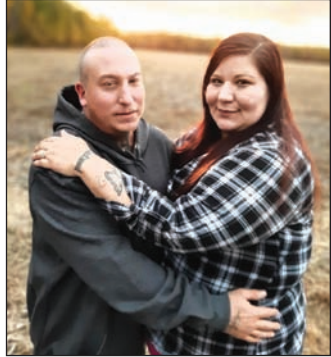


# Ashland Daily Press

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- > **Jerry Servinsky** - Ashland
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- > **Rita J. McCarthy** - Eau Claire
- > **Thomas M. Zorn** - San Francisco, CA
- > **Becky Lou Wiberg** - Ashland
- > **Mark K. Pycha** - Moore Haven, Florida

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## SEDIMENT-REDUCTION EFFORTS PROGRESSING

Burke Center project takes on erosion along Fish Creek

BY **RICK OLIVO**  
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The north branch of Fish Creek runs through a thickly wooded mixed forest of hardwoods and evergreens about 14 miles west of Ashland.

It is a cold, and usually clear Class I trout stream. But when torrential rains strike, as they have three times in the past seven years, the normally placid creek becomes a raging torrent and turns into the largest source of excess sediment and phosphorus feeding into Chequamegon Bay.

But if efforts being undertaken by Northland College's Mary Griggs Burke Center for Freshwater Innovation are successful, that destructive erosion may someday be controlled or even halted.

That would be quite an accomplishment. On Father's Day of 2018, the storms were so violent that a bridge culvert on Highway 2 less than a mile upstream failed, sending a tidal wave of water through the narrow valley, sluicing an estimated 45,000 tons of sediment into the bay and creating a plume of mud that could be seen from space.

"Behind us lies ground zero



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS BY BOB GROSS

**TOP: A surveyor helps map out the fish creek channel in preparation for the restoration project that will direct water-flow away from the eroding bluffs. ABOVE: The storm-scoured bluffs at several spots on Fish Creek are the primary cause of silt runoff, which harms people and the bay's environment.**

for sediment and phosphorus contributions into the bay," said Matt Hudson, associate director of the Burke Center.

Hudson said the failure of the bridge and the erosion caused by the Father's Day Flood were devastating for the Bay Area.

"The failure of this major economic artery disrupted the flow of people and goods for months after the storm and serves

as another example of human-built infrastructure all across the country, not just in this region, that is not built to withstand the changes to our climate that we are now experiencing," he said.

Although the highway damage has been repaired, Hudson said havoc caused by the flood downstream has not received much attention, though the damaged riverbank continues to lose an estimated 4,000 tons of sediment a year.

SEE PROJECT PAGE A5



Hudson

## First public electric car-charging station comes to Washburn

BY **RICK OLIVO**  
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The age of the electric car has arrived in Bayfield County.

With advances in battery and powertrain technology, the range and performance of all-electric vehicles has expanded to over 400 miles in the top-rated model, with acceleration that rivals gas-line engine models.

The range of even the most modest electric cars allow owners to take them on extended drives, with a very big caveat: They need a high-speed charging station somewhere along the trip.

"I get calls all the time from people in Minneapolis who want to drive to Bayfield County, and they ask if we have a high-speed charging station," said Washburn Mayor and Bayfield County Tourism and Recreation Director Mary Motiff.



**Xcel Energy Wisconsin and Michigan President Mark Stoering, left, is joined by Bay Area Rural Transit Director Pat Daoust at a vehicle-charger built at the parking lot of the Bayfield County Courthouse. The station is the result of a partnership between the county, BART and Xcel and is the first of its kind in Bayfield County, capable of charging a vehicle to 80% in an hour. Rick Olivo/Staff Photo**

In the past, Motiff has had to tell such callers with chagrin that there weren't any in

the county.

SEE STATION PAGE A5

## Ashland homeless shelter moves forward

BY **RICK OLIVO**  
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Ashland City Council members approved a plan by a 9-1 vote Tuesday to repurpose the Ashland Motel into a 24-unit emergency residential facility, and now the real work begins for Northwest Wisconsin Community Services Agency CEO Millie Rounsville.

Rounsville said Wednesday that the agency's offer to purchase the Ashland Motel on the city's west side from the current owner, SAI, Inc., is good until Oct. 14, and the next step for the project is to complete the sale of the property.

"We will close on the property. We will then begin recruiting for staff and volunteers, and once I can actually physically acquire the property then we can do things like updating the electric service, start to get accessibility issues completed so we can accommodate people with physical disabilities," she said. "We need to move as quickly as possible to get people in before it gets cold."

At Tuesday's city council session, Washburn Attorney Linda Coleman warned the council that the proposed conditional use permit violated both state law and the city's own comprehensive plan.

On Wednesday, Coleman, who represented a number of residents at the meeting, said her clients have not yet decided whether to pursue legal action to halt the project, but she believes there are grounds to take the issue to court.

"State law requires that to approve a conditional use permit, the city council must find that there is substantial evidence that the applicant has met the terms that are outlined in the city zoning ordinance," she said.

Coleman said the council failed to meet that burden in at least three of the six required provisions.

"The most clearly relevant is compatibility with existing uses within 200 feet of the proposed use and 500 feet on either direction down the same street, in this case the highway," she said.

Coleman said the uses on the highway were commercial in nature, and the shelter doesn't fall into that category.

She said the shelter would also violate the comprehensive plan because it would be in an area that is waterfront and also in the gateway - the transition into the city. Coleman said the shelter does not match the uses called for by the plan, and should have been placed in an area that allows congregate housing like apartment buildings.

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