



Demonstrators call for fair maps, **A2**

Ice fishing the Mississippi River, **B1**



PRICE COUNTY REVIEW

\$1.50

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS ONLINE AT PRICECOUNTYREVIEW.COM

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2022

County jail had a COVID-19 outbreak

BY **TOM LAVENTURE**
tlaventure@pricecountyreview.com

PHILLIPS — The Price County Sheriff's Office reported having a brief COVID-19 outbreak in the county jail in early January, but said there are currently no positive cases among staff or inmates.

"I think my staff is really awesome," said Price County Sheriff Brian Schmidt. "They do a great job. As soon as they hear something, they deal with it. They're on top of things."

Schmidt spoke with the Review on Jan. 21, in response to questions about a possible outbreak. An inmate's letter to the Review stated there were vaccinations but that people were still sick.

An inmate with concerns about the jail should contact the state Department of Corrections to ask that the regional jail inspector investigate, Schmidt said.

"We're not the only facility that had a COVID outbreak, and the state prison system is dealing with it right now," Schmidt said.

SEE JAIL PAGE A8

MAILING LABEL ONLY



TOM LAVENTURE / PCR

Mike Malchow (412), left, a 71-year-old snowshoer in the 5K event of the Phillips Flurry 2022 on Saturday, is in the pack at the start with 14-year-old Jaycee Pomeroy (468) out in front, 74-year old Dennis McGraw (868) behind her at right. Malchow finished 10th in the 5K, while Pomeroy placed 14th, and McGraw placed 10th in the 10K.

Flurry snowshoers enjoy virtual, in-person event

BY **TOM LAVENTURE**
tlaventure@pricecountyreview.com

PHILLIPS — The annual Phillips Flurry was an in-person event again on Jan. 22, but also allowed snowshoers from around the country to participate virtually again to encourage more participants who are unable to travel.

There were 70 snowshoers registered to participate in person this year, with another 90 joining in the virtually, performing their race on their own timeframe and course, said Kristi Speer, event chair. The in-person racers at the Phillips School Forest Trail on Saturday seemed to have a great time, conquering a tough course that was made even more challenging with the three inches of fresh snow that fell the night before, she said.

"We were very pleased with how this year's event turned out, especially given all the uncertainties of today's world," Speer said. "With the Flurry serving as the Wisconsin State Championships, we attract some of the top racers from the midwest with over 75% of the competition this year traveling from outside of Price County for the event."



TOM LAVENTURE / PCR

Gavin Esterholm (433), a 14-year-old Phillips youth, was the first to cross the finish line in the 5K snowshoe race on Saturday with an official time of 25:22, as part of the Phillips Flurry 2022 event. The Phillips High School cross-country runner said, "that was fun," as he crossed the finish line.

Eric Hartmark, of Duluth, repeated as the overall winner of the 10K competition.

It was exciting to see 14-year-old Gavin Esterholm of Phillips the overall winner in the men's 5k race, especially with such tough competition, she said. The Phillips High School cross-country runner said, "that was fun," as he crossed the finish line with an official time of 25:22.

It was Esterholm's first time Phillips Flurry and the third time he won first place in a snowshoe race this season. He also took first in the

5K class of the North End Snowshoe Classic in Cable on Jan. 8. He outpaced 41 other racers with a time of 28:30.

He won first at the Perkinstown Tramp on Jan. 15 in Medford. He competed in the three-mile race and finished with a time of 21:54.

The Flurry course was a little unpacked but it was the result of a fresh snow and so that was all right, Esterholm said. It is easy to lose your footing in the fluffy stuff, he said.

SEE FLURY PAGE A8

COVID-19 numbers still climbing

BY **TOM LAVENTURE**
tlaventure@pricecountyreview.com

PHILLIPS — The number of confirmed positive COVID-19 cases have increased in Price County and the entire state of Wisconsin, according to the Price County Health and Human Services Department.

Every county in the state was in a critically high range, based on weekly data that is updated each Wednesday on the DHS website, according to Michelle Edwards, county health officer. Due to the high volume the county health department is currently following up with positive cases only.

"We are asking them to contact their close contacts," Edwards said. "If we are unable to reach positive cases we are mailing information to them."

There are more home tests available but results are not reportable to the public health department, she said. Individuals who test positive with a home kit are encouraged to call for information on isolation and quarantine.

Home tests are available through the federal government at COVIDtests.gov. Click on the box to order free at-home tests to be redirected to a U.S. Postal Service site.

The Price County vaccination rate of residents who have received at least one dose was 58.1% as of Jan. 3, she said. Another 55.4% have completed the two dose vaccine series.

There were a total of 1,471 positive COVID-19 cases from Jan. 1, 2021, when vaccinations started, to Jan. 4, 2022, Edwards said. Of that total, 1,284 cases were of unvaccinated people, and 187 cases with someone who was vaccinated.

Out of the total 113 cases that were hospitalized during that time, 15 were cases of vaccinated individuals and 98 cases with people who were not vaccinated.

"We continue to provide vaccinations both primary series and booster doses to all ages that qualify," Edwards said.

The county public health department conducts COVID-19 vaccinations on Thursdays. To schedule an appointment, call 715-339-3054.

SEE NUMBERS PAGE A8

Fifield fire departments under bylaws review

BY **TOM LAVENTURE**
tlaventure@pricecountyreview.com

FIFIELD — After a legal review of fire department bylaws, the Fifield Town Board nullified November elections of the Pike Lake station and will keep the interim chief in place.

Town board chair William Felch, reading a prepared statement at the Jan. 18 town board meeting, said "a closer look at fire protection service" was needed, and a legal review addressed budget and tax levy limits, correspondence, public record requests, and citizen concerns with election processes.

A committee of fire station members to include emergency medical services, town

board members and town human resources manager Cathy Pagel, will begin the process of developing new bylaws starting with a special meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the town hall. This is a situation where the departments functioned well for years and the errors went unnoticed until there was a problem, he said.

"This is not unusual for the towns to have this happen," Felch said of the many years the problems went unnoticed. "When things are running fine, you don't need to ask the hows and whys."

Fifield organized two fire departments with separate levies, structures and fire chiefs. Fire Department No. 1 is in Fifield, where Felch is also fire chief, and Fire De-

partment No. 2 is about 20 miles east in Pike Lake.

After a review of town board minutes the board determined that Pike Lake station was operating under bylaws and policies approved by the town board in 1997. The station had held an election out of cycle in December 2020, based on bylaws drafted in 2020 but were never approved by the town board, according to Felch.

The election is nullified, as the town board minutes do not reflect approval of 2020 bylaws of the Pike Lake station, he said. Although the 1997 bylaws don't detail elections clearly, biennial elections had been held on odd years.

"We have a responsibility to

the residents as a board to ensure we are doing everything that we can to ensure their safety with our fire protection," Felch said.

Bryce Schoenborn, an attorney with Slaby Dead Law Offices in Phillips, reviewed the bylaws and minutes and was present to answer questions of the board. The bylaws are for the town to oversee the departments, and are different from policies and procedures that the departments use as guidelines for their own operations that are consistent with Wisconsin fire department safety and health guidelines and standards of the National Fire Protection Association.

SEE REVIEW PAGE A8

INDEX

News.....	A2-3
Columns.....	A4
Obits.....	A6-7
Law.....	A3,7
Sports/Outdoors.....	B1-2
Classifieds.....	B3-8

PRICE COUNTY REVIEW

VOL. 8 - NO. 4 © 2022
(USPS No. 511500)



8 09556 61101 8

» JAIL

FROM PAGE A1

“The other county jails throughout the state of Wisconsin are dealing with this right now, but currently, we have no active COVID cases in the jail.”

There are two cell blocks in the jail and at the time three inmates in one cell tested positive, and two of three tested positive in cell block two, he said. One inmate was hospitalized but has since returned to the jail, he said.

The greatest concern is bringing a new person into the jail environment, he said. There are protocols in place but there is always the risk of someone who isn't symptomatic later becoming ill

and coming into contact with others.

Testing kits are more widely available after the department was awarded a grant to purchase them, he said. But even before the grant there was testing and vaccination opportunities.

“So, this kind of surprises me, because we did have a small outbreak,” Schmidt said. “But we've contained it and now it's done.”

When there is a case the jail designates a quarantine area that best fits the individual, he said. The jailors and county health department staff try to monitor the individual if it is a long-term stay.

The sheriff's office will try to limit access to the

jail as much as possible, Schmidt said. Individuals will be booked in the entryway when they are to be released, or referred directly to the county district attorney's office when appropriate.

The sheriff's office cannot mandate vaccinations, but do utilize the opportunities with the health department to provide them when requested, he said. A health care provider is also available to the jail for inmates and nurses.

Visitors are no longer allowed inside the jail to speak with inmates through a glass wall, he said. The policy will remain in place with the availability of video visitation from the lobby, he said.

» NUMBERS

FROM PAGE A1

People who have symptoms of onset COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should remain home for five days, and continue to quarantine if symptoms continue after five days. If the symptoms are resolved, continue to wear a face mask in public for an additional five days.

Persons who were exposed to someone with

COVID-19 and have completed the vaccination series within the past six months or have received a booster, should wear a face mask around others for 10 days. Take a COVID-19 test after five days if possible. If symptomatic, remain home for five days or longer if symptoms persist.

As of Jan. 17, the health department reported the confirmed case total at 2,610, which is 43 cases higher than the previous week. The number of

probable cases is at 218, which is one more than reported last week.

The number of active cases is currently 102, with 17 probable positives. So far, 2,685 county residents have recovered from COVID-19, to include 201 probable cases.

So far there have been 209 county residents hospitalized with COVID-19 to include five probable cases. There have been 24 deaths attributed to COVID-19.

» REVIEW

FROM PAGE A1

The revisions to the Pike Lake bylaws were contained within the policies and procedures updates of 2020, he said. It is the town's authority to revise the bylaws and ensure that the department policies and procedures are consistent and do not place the town at risk.

“Given that these are both municipal departments, all authority to the departments emanates from the town,” Schoenborn said at the meeting. “The town sets the budget, imposes the levy; the town is ultimately responsible for everything that the fire departments do.”

Effective Jan. 18, both the Fifield and Pike Lake fire departments are directed to post proper agendas, submit minutes from their meetings to the town clerk for public record at monthly town meetings, and to sign all written records of prior calls and incidents, Felch said.

“We will be drafting ordinances as advised by our attorney as well as revised 2009 rules and bylaws to be accepted and followed by both fire departments, or stations, inclusive of the election process, voting rights, qualification standards and reserve limits,” Felch said, adding that the Pike Lake station “will continue to follow the directions of the fire chief and the department budget.”

» FLURY

FROM PAGE A1

“Post-race feedback from prior years has shown us that racers enjoy their experience so much that some of them have subsequently scheduled vacations in our community to further experience our small town hospitality and natural resources,” Speer said. “We were thrilled to see a significant amount of recreational snowshoers participating, from near and far. This event really allows us the opportunity to showcase the beauty our area has to offer and to hopefully stimulate economic

spending at area businesses.”

The Flurry participants this year ranged from age of 5 all the way through 77 years old, she said. Participants came from as far as Texas, Las Vegas and Canada, along with virtual race attendance from surrounding states and as far away as New York, Maine and North Dakota.

Snowshoeing is a wonderful sport that allows people to get outside during the winter months and explore the abundance of trails in the area with a healthy activity for all ages, she said.

“All of this couldn't be done without the

financial backing of our sponsors, as well as all the efforts of our stellar group of volunteers,” Speer said. “There is a deep sense of community and pride associated with the race and it keeps participants coming back year after year.”

Ron Kendziera, of Phillips, said the race is organized by a small core group and volunteers. A ski club managed the trails and organized the flurry for 30 years until the Price Area Trail Hub formed three years ago, and just recently incorporated as a nonprofit in an effort to grow and maintain three area silent sports trail systems.

NOW HIRING

\$23.00
Starting Wage
(including shift premium)

\$2,500
Referral Bonus

3-Day
Work Week

No Mandatory
Overtime

Weekly Pay **Park Falls Division**

2nd Shift General Fabricator Positions:
Monday – Wednesday, 12-Hour Shifts, 3:30pm-4:00am

SCAN ME TO
APPLY TODAY

WEATHER SHIELD
WINDOWS & DOORS

Apply today by emailing careers@weathershield.com or call us at 1-800-969-1011.

Freedom from Polio. Freedom from COVID-19.

Vaccines set us free.

Schedule a COVID-19 vaccine.

call 1.844.568.0701

visit aspirus.org/vaccines

Watson Health

15

Top Health Systems* 2021

4 YEARS IN A ROW