Frawford County Independent & Rickapoo Scout

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2022

Plum Creek

Land buy creates extremely large conservation area

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By GILLIAN POMPLUN

Local land trust Mississippi Valley Conservancy (MVC) has purchased 1,600 acres of rugged land along the lower Kickapoo River for permanent protection. The site, just north of Wauzeka in Crawford County, which includes a stretch of Plum Creek and is located on both sides of Plum Creek Road, will be known as Plum Creek Conservation

The property includes over five-and-a-half miles of frontage along the west bank of the Kickapoo River, and over two miles along both banks of Plum Creek, a Class I trout stream. It is next to DNR's 1,927-acre Kickapoo Wildlife Area-Wauzeka Unit that includes the 635-acre Kickapoo Wild Woods State Natural

"These protected areas, now enlarged by the MVC purchase, support one of the highest concentrations of rare forest-interior breeding birds in southern Wisconsin, including many considered high conservation priorities in eastern North America," the WDNR's Craig Thompson said.

The protected land will be open to the public for hunting, fishing, and low-impact recreation such as hiking, paddling, and wildlife observation.

"Public lands are an asset to Crawford County," said Dave Troester, the Crawford County Conservationist. "People come here to fish the streams, to hunt, to enjoy the rivers and scenic beauty. Public land makes that possible for more people, as access to private land for hunting is harder to find these days.

Troester also cited Crawford County's Comprehensive Plan, in which a survey of county residents rated the things they most value about living in Crawford County.

See AREA Page 9 Col 1

Riverway meeting History of bridges

explained by Cupp

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board met in Muscoda on April 14 to conduct a regular monthly business

Mark Cupp, Executive Director od LWSRB, started the meeting with an educational presentation on the history of river-crossings at Muscoda. Cupp said that one of the most important issues in the Riverway in the post-settlement era has been river-crossings, which he said are essential to promote travel and commerce. Historically, ferries crossed the river at Harper's Ferry, Avoca and Muscoda.

"The Moore family originally ran a ferry across the river from Muscoda to Richland County. Following the Civil War, General Jonathon B. Moore, a former Sheriff of Grant County and former member of the state legislature, agreed to invest \$16,000 in a new toll bridge with additional investors putting in another \$8,000," Cupp told the board. "There were complaints about the tolls for using the new bridge, but it provided an important link across the Wisconsin River."

Cupp said that in 1888, the toll bridge was sold to John Postel and John Schwingle for \$10,000. The remnants of the stone piers for the toll bridge can still be seen on the upstream side of the existing bridge. In 1920, Cupp said, a severe storm had destroyed major parts of the toll bridge, requiring significant repairs.

See LWSRB Page 13 Col 1





Enjoying an egg hunt moment

Four-year-old Colby Hooker, son of Tara Heisz, was on the move, gathering up Easter eggs at a furious pace. The little fellow shot out of the starting gate with gusto, and seemed to be filling up his bag in short order at the Gays Mills Easter Egg Hunt held Saturday at the Log Cabin Village Park. Was Colby having fun? You bet.

Perseverance pays off

Drone team competes in Milwaukee

By CHARLEY PREUSSER

Despite some real obstacles, the North Crawford High School drone team rose to the occasion at a competition held in Milwaukee recently.

The team's adviser Liz Bransky brought some of the participants to the Gays Mills Public Library last Saturday to discuss their work and the competition.

There was a huge problem with receiving the drone kits for the 12 teams from around the state. Materials to build and ready the drones was supposed to arrive in December. In fact, nothing arrived until March just one week before the competition. That was very unfortunate and due to ongoing supply chain problems.

Working with the Wisconsin Space Grant Consortium, the UW-Whitewater GIS Center, along with Carroll College, organized and ran a state-wide drone competition for high school teams from around the

Inspired by the Artemis NASA mission to the moon, teams were tasked with buildsensor platforms that would be mounted on a drone and used in the competition to sense and measure a simulated lunar environment.

The competition took place in the Fiserv Forum In Milwaukee. All of the teams attended the Milwaukee Bucks game the same day as the competition.

The Bucks game, the chance to eat some different types of food and the hotel pool made the it all very enjoyable to the local high school students, according to adviser Liz Bran-



up the sensor and programed it. Behind them, Bjorn Unseth

works with Liz Branksy to get the sensor programed.

MAKING A CONNECTION was easy for drone team member Rivyn DiPadova, left, and her sister Aurelia. The pair hooked

The competition was created to spread awareness of NASA to help the younger generation learn what trying to go to moon involves," Bran-

sky said. The adviser had three of the students from the drone team (Rivyn DiPadova, Aiden Unseth and Sarah Bransky) on hand for the presentation.

The students took turns explaining the project and the competition.

The project was intended to use a drone to collect soil samples and take other measurements. It's similar to what will be done on the moon in the coming unmanned launch in the Artemis mission.

The students needed to program sensors to work with drone sensors and collect information with a supplied APP, using a Bluetooth connection to transfer the information.

"It was simple enough to understand," Sarah Bransky

Aiden Unseth indicated that making the sensors work was bit harder. The group wanted to test for moisture in air and soil. There was also a color sensor to record colors.

Then, there was the servo, a scoop to retrieve a soil sample. There was also Lidar to map the area.

Unseth noted a battery to supply power was too weak and some of the sensors were too heavy for the drone.

Well, the group struggled to make progress in a week on the project, which was originally scheduled for three months. Progress was made.

Rivyn DiPadova charged with communications about the project. Her tasks included writing releases and making videos to place on multiple social media platforms-among other things.

Adviser Liz Bransky acknowledged the group hit a lot of dead-ends in the short period of time they had to complete the project.

Unseth added that the drone had to be assembled as well. He served as the drone pilot. At the end of the presentation, the group assembled outside to

see the drone fly. See DRONE Page 9 Col 2 At North Crawford

Board discusses developing referenda for fall election

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

At their Monday, April 18 meeting, the North Crawford School Board took up the topic of development of referenda to be placed on the November 2022 election ballot. The two referendums would authorize the district to exceed the property tax levy limit set by the State of Wisconsin.

"We need to make very clear to the voters in the school district that there will be two separate referenda placed on the ballot in November," board member Jesse Swenson said. "There will be an operating referendum to help the district maintain instruction and services, and a capital improvement referendum to allow the district to make needed repairs or improvements to our build-

North Crawford School Superintendent Brandon Munson reported to the board on the current status of referenda development, and the timeline for completing the process. He explained that the series of four meetings of the Advisory Task Force (ATF), composed of interested citizens in the school district has been completed.

Securing ideas and input

These meetings were intended to secure ideas, input and feedback about what repairs or improvements are needed for district buildings, and what the voter's appetite is to support the district in paying for them through an increase in the property tax levy.

"We haven't invested any money in our district building for 30 years," board president Mary Kuhn said. "We all know that if we own a property, and don't engage in needed maintenance, then eventually the bill comes due for the work that we deferred, and the cost only goes up over time.'

Munson pointed out that 80 percent of the referendums proposed by school districts on the April 5 ballot had passed, which is a historic high. He said that the results indicate that support for public schools is high.

Munson said that at the last meeting of the ATF, the district had revealed for the first time estimated numbers for what the scenario for the district would be if an operating referendum to pay for continuation of district instruction and curriculum were not passed. This estimated, developed with the district's financial consultant, Baird, projects budget deficits as soon as the 2024-2025 school year.

Operating referendum

The proposed operating referendum amount would be for a recurring \$900,000 per year. This would be phased in slowly over the course of four years, at Year 1, \$300,000; Year 2, \$250,000; Year 3, \$200,000; and Year 4, \$150,000. Beginning in year five, we would then have an additional \$900,000 of revenue built into our base to use to pay staff salary and benefits, increased operational costs, sustaining our instructional programming and curriculum without making programmatic cuts, and to budget for deferred maintenance projects.

"Phasing the additional levied operating revenue in slowly over the course of four years would allow us to make adjustments based on any changes to state aid to schools that may come about in future state budgets," Munson said. "It is important to know that the numbers we are working with are just estimates, which is always how it is with school district budgets." At the fourth ATF meeting,

the district also revealed what the cost would be to property taxpayers under a \$5.5 million, and a \$6.5 million referendum, for debt service for borrowing to make needed repairs or improvements to district facilities.

"If both the operating referendum, and a capital improvement referendum at the \$6.5 million level were passed, that would result in \$150 per \$100,000 of assessed

value increase for the operating referendum, and \$76 per \$100,000 of assessed value for the capital improvement referendum," Munson explained. "That would mean a total of \$226 per \$100,000 of assessed

ONE DOLLAR

The board felt strongly that in the survey to be sent out in April to voters in the district, the language of the survey should make crystal clear that there would be two referenda on the November ballot. That survey will be made available electronically through e-mail and social media, and will also be available as a hard-copy paper option from the district for those that are less familiar with online options.

Public survey available

The survey will be available to voters for at least five weeks, and Munson estimated the results would be available to the board for review at their May meeting. From there, the board will work to develop final referenda language at their June meeting. The final language of the two referenda to be placed on the November ballot must be finalized 75 days before the election or approximately in the month of

"I am concerned that voters will focus on the building/ capital improvement referendum, and not understand that there will be an operating referendum as well," Kuhn said. "We don't want to appear to be 'dramatic,' as if we're overstating the consequences of not passing the operational referendum, but they need to clearly understand that without those additional funds, the district is poised to fall off of a financial cliff.'

Building projects rating

Coming out of the fourth ATF meeting, ratings for the various building maintenance or improvement projects proposed by the district and their architectural and building consultant partners (FEH Design and Kramer Construction) were available at the April 18 school board meeting. The numbers, provided by Kramer are refined rough estimates. Final numbers will be developed at such time as the proj-

ects are authorized. The top nine projects identified by attendees at the fourth ATF meeting would come in within a \$5.5 million facility maintenance referendum amount. The projects, currently estimated at a cost of \$5,010,000, include (projects presented in descending order of ranking):

- · Reroof of entire building \$2,890,000
- Repair Exterior Insulation & finish system at above roof walls \$170,000
- Replace exterior windows \$150,000
- Agriculture lab, finishing room and project storage addition \$700,000
- Add Childcare rooms \$130,000 (renovation option) or add if childcare is an addition +\$230,000 (total \$360,000) ***
- Outdoor concessions, restroom structure, new sanitary line, 600 SF \$175,000
- Replace parking lot paving south of the building \$175,000
- Media Center, teaching space, tutoring room, booth, windows \$100,000 **
- · Replace parking lot paving west and north of the building \$290,000

Capital improvements

If a capital improvement referendum were authorized at the \$6.5 million level, then in addition to the projects listed above, these additional projects could be accomplished for a total of \$6,275,000 (projects presented in descending order of ranking):

- Renovate family Cons. Science, Life Skills, Career & Tech Ed rooms \$600,000
- Add mezzanine storage above commons to gain classroom back \$190,000
- Update Middle School Showers, \$75,000

See BOARD Page 10 Col 1

Board members emphasize that there will be not one, but two, referenda

BOARD from Page 1

- Update indoor concessions, shelving, cabinets, electrical
- \$20,000 Add four restrooms, unisex
- \$90,000 Provide additional 16-feet

of trophy cases \$12,000

- Move student services to other side of building in con-
- nected space \$9,000
- Replace flooring in hallways and common areas \$130,000
- Update High School Showers \$75,000
- Provide a Special Education sensory room. Add swing, wall padding \$8,000
- · Repair existing sewage vault \$5,000

Special notes

* At the April 18 meeting, the board voted to use funds from their Fund 46 and/or Fund 10 accounts to pursue three of the projects on the list this summer. The Fund 10 balance contains an extra \$52,000 in state aid to the district provided by the administration of Governor thorized after the district's 2021-2022 budget was finalized, and so constitutes a projected budget surplus.

** The three projects approved to be undertaken this summer (highlighted in bold above) will cost an estimated total of \$49,000. The Media Center improvement proposed would cost an estimated \$20,000 to complete a portion of the total proposed \$100,000 estimated cost of that project, meaning that the remaining project elements would cost an additional \$80,000 if approved through a referendum by the voters.

*** The board engaged in extensive discussion of the proposed development of a day care facility in the district, which is viewed as important to achievement of the staff retention goal, and could also provide a day care option that would allow district residents who qualify for SHARE funding for daycare to have an accredited option.

Daycare option Board discussion of the

daycare option was as fol-"I'd like to see the daycare option developed as soon as possible, perhaps even this summer," board member Jim

Dworschack said. "I see this

as an essential staff recruitment and retention tool." "I want to see the option for developing the daycare in the potential project listing be the cost to build the addition at \$360,000, and to see the \$130,000 renovation option removed from the list," board member Jerry Cole-

man said. "If we're going to

do this, we need to pursue the

most realistic option." North Crawford Elementary Principal Amanda Killeen reported that the daycare option for staff is likely an essential undertaking to be able to retain the existing staff, and to recruit new staff. For this reason, she said, the district is pursuing a conversation with a daycare provider that may be interested in operating a private daycare business for staff only in the existing space in the middle

school building. "We would see this as a pilot program, to dip our toes in the water, meet staff needs, and to see what the demand for this service looks like," Killeen said. "This limited daycare option would not have all the bells and whistles needed for the accreditation that would allow those with SHARE to access services, but it would allow us to further assess the possibilities with daycare without taking the step of spending district funds for a renovation or addition."

Munson explained that other districts in the state have operated daycare facilities in school buildings using this model, with mixed

"In some cases, it has worked, and in others it hasn't," Munson said. "Typically, if these daycares have failed, it was because they were either hemorrhaging money, couldn't secure and retain adequate staffing, or

both." Other project priorities

The remaining project priorities ranked by ATF meeting attendees, and associated estimated costs are as follows (projects presented in descending order of ranking): · Addition of a second meet-

- ing room \$350,000
- Add upper stage storage mezzanine \$100,000
- High School and Elementary School restroom updates \$77,000
- Update fencing around playground \$2,000
- Multipurpose (54'x86') for indoor recess, dance, wrestling, and aerobics \$1,400,000
- Replace paving at the bus barn \$60,000

Kuhn recognized

Superintendent Brandon Munson started the meeting by recognizing 24-year board veteran and board president Mary Kuhn's years of ser-

"This may be the last meeting that Mary Kuhn participates in as a board member and board chair," Munson observed. "Mary has been on the board almost as long as our new building has been here, and she has always been a good mentor to me in that time. She embodies everything that a true school board member should be – I have often seen her set her own personal beliefs aside to lead the board in making decisions that are in the best interests of the students and staff in the district."

Munson told the board that there is a lot more that goes into being the school board president than is seen in the board's monthly meetings. He said that Kuhn had put in "countless hours" outside of regular meetings, with weekly or even multiple times weekly conversations. committee meetings, fielding phone calls from constituents, and more.

"I have appreciated Mary's leadership, time and guidance," Munson said.

Kuhn told the board that she will miss the challenge of serving on the school board, and being around to help shape the school district in the next few years. She observed that there are lots of hard decisions facing the district in the next few years.

"Serving on the school board has been the most challenging and rewarding job that I've ever had," Kuhn said. "What I won't miss are all the sleepless nights where I worried about decisions we had made, and decisions that we needed to make - I won't miss that part."

In other business

In other business, the North Crawford School Board:

- · heard that the district had received a \$10,000 grant from the DPI that will pay for teacher training in use of a high quality curriculum this will be spent on training over the summer, and online
- heard that elementary counselor Max Moderski had made a presentation recently to school districts across the region about the 'Sources of Strength' curriculum
- heard that the district is still actively recruiting members of the community who may have lessons to share with students to volunteer for the 'Connecting to the Strengths of the Village' en-
- richment program heard that middle school students will be making visits to both UW-LaCrosse and UW-Platteville before the
- end of the school year • heard that high school juniors had done a great job
- taking the ACT exam heard that some middle and high school teachers would be taking additional training in the 'Sources of
- Strength' curriculum • heard that the school nutrition team was recognized by DPI in March with the 'School Breakfast Hero
- Award' • heard that foodservice will offer locally-raised pork from the Durst family in the 2022-2023 school year, to include pork roasts, brats, breakfast links and ground
- sausage • approved a contract with CESA-3 for just under \$27,000, reduced from the 2021-2022 \$66,000 contract
- approved the 2022-2023 school course handbook

· approved making the last

day of school, June 1, an ear-

ly release day where students will be done with school at 1

• Fix the PA system \$50,000 Evers – this amount was au-+ CRAWFORD K-12 SCHOOL SEE 2000 - 2001 300 132 Cafeteria =131 auditorium 200 198 199

THE AREAS of rhe North Crawford Schools building that will be the location of the approved summer of 2022 projects can clearly be seen on the school building schema. According to Superintendent this is a good use of surplus district funds that will produce an immeidate improvement in the quality of work and instructional spaces in the building.

The warming climate will likely result is less corn production

No matter which of the widely accepted global circulation models ultimately comes closest to predicting the amount of warming caused by climate change, corn production will be reduced, according to a new study by Penn State research-

They evaluated the potential impacts of 18 warming scenarios, dictated by various atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations, to determine the potential effects of future climate change on irrigated and rainfed corn yields from the 2020s through the 2090s. Although the research was focused on the U.S.Great Plains -- in the heart of the nation's top corn-producing region -- the results are believed to have global impli-

cations. To estimate yields, researchers employed the AquaCrop model -- a cropgrowth simulation developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations -- to assess the effect of environment and management on crop production, predicting yield response to water. The study site is representative of agricultural management practices in the region and represents the most densely irrigated area in the Central Plains, which is a subregion of the Great

Plains. Corn is susceptible to environmental factors such as increased air temperature, increased radiation, vapor pressure deficit and humidity change, according to lead researcher Suat Irmak, professor and head of the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering in the College of Agricultural Sciences. He and his team noted that irrigated yields will be impacted much less than

rainfed yields. "In our study, depending on the atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations and associated level of warming, we saw declines in rainfed corn yields ranging from 2.2% to 21.5%," he said. "Under those same greenhouse gas concentrations, the range of declines was lower for irrigated yields -- from 3.7% to 15.6%, due to irrigation technologies providing more stable crop growth

conditions under water- and

temperature-stress.'

Global climate is very likely to warm by 2.16-3.42 degrees Fahrenheit from now to 2040, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Irmak explained. The global mean surface temperature was 1.78 degrees F higher during the period 2001-20 than during the pre-industrial period of 1850-1900, the United Nations panel found.

Previous research by Irmak and others has shown that climate change already has impacted crop productivity of major agricultural crops across global agroecosystems. Previously, Irmak found that due to the increase in air temperature, spring frosts are occurring earlier and fall frosts are occurring later. This results in increased growing season length up to 20-plus days, which has significant implications for agricultural production in the

U.S. and globally. The research is important, Irmak noted, because by many measures corn is the country's most important crop. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, corn accounts for 92 million acres of land use in the United States. With a continuous increase in air temperature and atmospheric moisture demand -- coupled with increasingly limited water supply conditions and water quality degradation in the midwestern and western regions -- we may see a substantial shift in corn production to eastern U.S. regions,

he warned. "These analyses can be valuable for policy-makers, decision-makers and agricultural and water resource managers/professionals to evaluate the future tradeoffs among irrigation and rainfed yields," he said. "They need to know how landscapes are projected to perform under two scenarios with respect to climate change."

In findings recently published in Agricultural Water Management, the researchers reported that, based on their modeling results, rainfed yields will decline up to 40 bushels per acre, whereas irrigated yields are projected to decline only 19 bushels per acre. Additionally, rainfed corn yield will be more variable than yields from irrigated corn under most of the global circulation models.

Those declines would be damaging because corn is substantially embedded into our lives, Irmak pointed out. It is used for animal feed, human consumption, fiber production and field production for ethanol. So, agricultural scientists need to analyze the anticipated losses in production and their implications, he suggested. "Climate change is real -- that's the bottom line," he said. "We need to understand how this might impact our national

policies and food supply." Changes in climate characteristics are projected to

manifest as increased mean air temperatures in most land and ocean regions, with hot extremes, heavy precipitation and increased probability of drought and precipitation deficits, Irmak added. Such climate shocks and shifts will impact crop yield, cultivation area and food supply, impacting sustainable agricultural development and poverty-

eradication goals. "But estimating the magnitudes of those changes is challenging because temperatures and precipitation have complex impacts on crop yields, along with other critical meteorological variables," he said. "It only can be done with appropriate crop models. We will be conducting similar long-term analyses for specialty cropping systems, including fruit trees and major row crops, in Pennsylvania as well."

This study is a part of long-term research investigating the fundamentals of coupled climate change and the impact of water, nutrient and crop-management strategies on agroecosystem productivity and environmental relationships for cropping systems, which Irmak started at the University of Nebraska and continues at Penn State.

Contributing to research were Rupinder Sandhu and Meetpal Kukal, who both received their master's and doctoral degrees and worked as postdoctoral research associates under Irmak's supervision at the University of Nebraska. Kukal currently is a research assistant professor in the Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department at Penn State, and Sandhu works with Locus Agricultural Solutions.

 $Source: U.S.\ Department\ of\ Agricul$ ture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture

More resilient grainshed is the goal

By JONAH CHESTER

A new program is seeking to help Wisconsin's grain farmers build more environmentally and economically

resilient operations. The Midwest Grains Resource and Immersive Training (GRIT) program aims to bolster the Midwest's grainshed by increasing the number and diversity of smalland-mid sized farms across the region growing food-

grade grains. Christine Johnson, Midwest GRIT program manager at the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, which oversees the program, said strengthening farmers' resiliency benefits local consumers down the supply chain.

"So having that regional food system established and strong will just help both the farmer and our communities alike going forward," Johnson asserted. According to the U.S. Ag-

ricultural Census, which is conducted every five years, Wisconsin gained small and large farms from 2012 to 2017, but lost more than 4,200 mid-sized farms.

The GRIT program includes a year of paid training and education programs for current and aspiring grain farmers. Applications for the program are open through the

end of March. At least a third of the program's open spots will be reserved for farmers who are women. Johnson, who is a farmer herself, said the initiative includes programming specifically to support gender-specific barriers for female farm operators and entrepreneurs.

"We're also holding space for other communities, such as Black and Indigenous farmers, and really making a point to decrease barriers within our region for all farmers that want to achieve success," Johnson explained. Johnson added Ag Census

data and state grain farmer training surveys suggest only 15 percent to 20 percent of grain farmers in the Midwest identify as female. About 35 percent of all farm operators in the state were women, up 16 percent from 2012.

Source: Wisconsin News Connection

CEMETERY CLEAN-UP VILLAGE OF GAYS MILLS All flowers and memorials will be removed from

the cemetery between April 15 and April 30. If you have items that you wish to keep, please have them removed before this time and can be replaced back Reminder of Gays Mills Village Ordinance 11-3-3 (15)

No pets are allowed in the Cemetery. WNAXLP

(4/7/22, 4/14/22, 4/21/22)

(Pub. 4/21/22) WNAXLP

of Gays Mills shall occur for the 2022 assessment year. Revaluation notices are expected to be sent to property owners in June. Please also notice that the Assessor has certain statuary authority to enter land as described in Wis. Stat. §§943.13 and 943.15. The ability to enter land is subject to several quali-

REVALUATION NOTICE

VILLAGE OF GAYS MILLS

State of Wisconsin

A revaluation of property assessment in the Village

fications and limitations, as described in the statutes. Copies of the applicable statutes can be obtained at public depositories throughout the State of Wisconsin and from the State of Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau website (www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/stats.html), or a copy may be obtained from the municipal clerk. Notice is hereby given this 21st day of April, 2022

Dawn R. McCann, Village Clerk