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■ Ahead of the Memorial Day holiday, Nicolet College will host The Wall That Heals this month. See story on pg. 3A.



Section A

# VILAS COUNTY NEWS-REVIEW

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2023

## Downtown historic district moves forward

By MICHELLE DREW  
EDITOR

The possibility of establishing a historical district in downtown Eagle River was met with positive response and plans were made to move forward with the designation at an informational meeting held the morning of May 3 at Eye On Entrepreneurs.

Attending the meeting were business owners, chamber officials and local representatives who have been an integral part in spearheading the project.

Karen Margelofsky, executive director of the Eagle River Revitalization Program, and Karen Sailer, executive director of Eagle River Historical Society, organized the

meeting, and Elizabeth Hilton, National Register coordinator for the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), part of the Wisconsin Historical Society, was here from Madison to provide information on the benefits a district could bring to the city.

Hilton talked about how the designation as a historic district can not only boost heritage tourism to an area, but it also opens up opportunities for property owners to benefit from tax credits offered by the state and federal government for work that would maintain the historic value of these buildings.

One of the main catches to these types of designations is the cost that can accompany hiring a consultant to help with the process. But, thanks to a stroke of good

luck, Margelofsky shared with attendees that the city of Eagle River is in a rare position where it would be able to take advantage of a technical grant offered by the Wisconsin Main Street Program which would cover that cost.

“There would be no up-front cost to businesses,” Margelofsky said regarding the fees.

The reason these consultants’ fees are so pricey is they complete a lot of the digging into a property’s history so they know everything, which can be very time consuming, Hilton said. They also are well-versed in the paperwork aspect of applying, which can be daunting for the average person to undertake.

Margelofsky has worked

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Karen Sailer, Elizabeth Hilton and Karen Margelofsky were the driving force behind the meeting held last week to share how a historic district could benefit the downtown Eagle River area and local businesses. —Staff Photo By MICHELLE DREW



OPENING SUCCESS — Jim Rickleff of Lac du Flambeau had some luck fishing opening weekend on a Sayner area lake. Fishermen reported good action on smaller bodies of water, river systems and those lakes with stained water. —Staff Photo By DOUG ETTEN

## Covid health emergency officially ends

By MICHELLE DREW  
EDITOR

The federal government has announced the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency will end May 11, meaning funding for some requirements and services will see changes in the near future.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) in Wisconsin, case numbers, hospitalizations, and deaths from Covid are significantly lower than they were during the surge in late 2021 and early 2022, and the DHS has been making plans to move away from an emergency response to the virus.

The federal public health

emergency has been in place since early 2020, and it gave federal and state governments flexibility to waive or modify certain requirements in a variety of areas. Associated legislation provided funding and additional flexibilities to help combat the virus.

DHS continues to transition its emergency Covid-19 response programs and services. Some programs, including Covid-19 testing and vaccine services, will continue to undergo changes in the coming months.

“The declaration of a

To COVID, Pg. 8A

## Broadband expansion making headway in the North Woods

By JON EICHMAN  
ASST. EDITOR

The Vilas County Economic Development Corporation (VCEDC) has been an integral part of area broadband expansion strategies and projects since March, 2020, in order to bring quality service to residents of the North Woods.

In that time, the area has gone from having small areas covered by high-speed broadband, to entire towns and large portions of other towns now having access to this improved internet service. The change came from the \$66 million of broadband investment ongoing in Vilas County.

Area broadband expansion projects have been funded federally and from the state to get high-speed broadband access to nearly 12,000 North Woods homes and businesses.

VCEDC Executive Director Kathy Schmitz noted that



Utility locators Jordan Cook (left) and Will Scoins of the U.S. Infrastructure Corporation worked to find and test communications cables in Eagle River. —Staff Photo By JON EICHMAN

“broadband for all” is the ultimate goal of Wisconsin Broadband Office, and that mission has strong support in Vilas County.

“The best thing we did

was to create the Broadband Buddy program, which is made up of representatives from each town in Vilas County and the Lac du Flambeau Tribe, to lead the

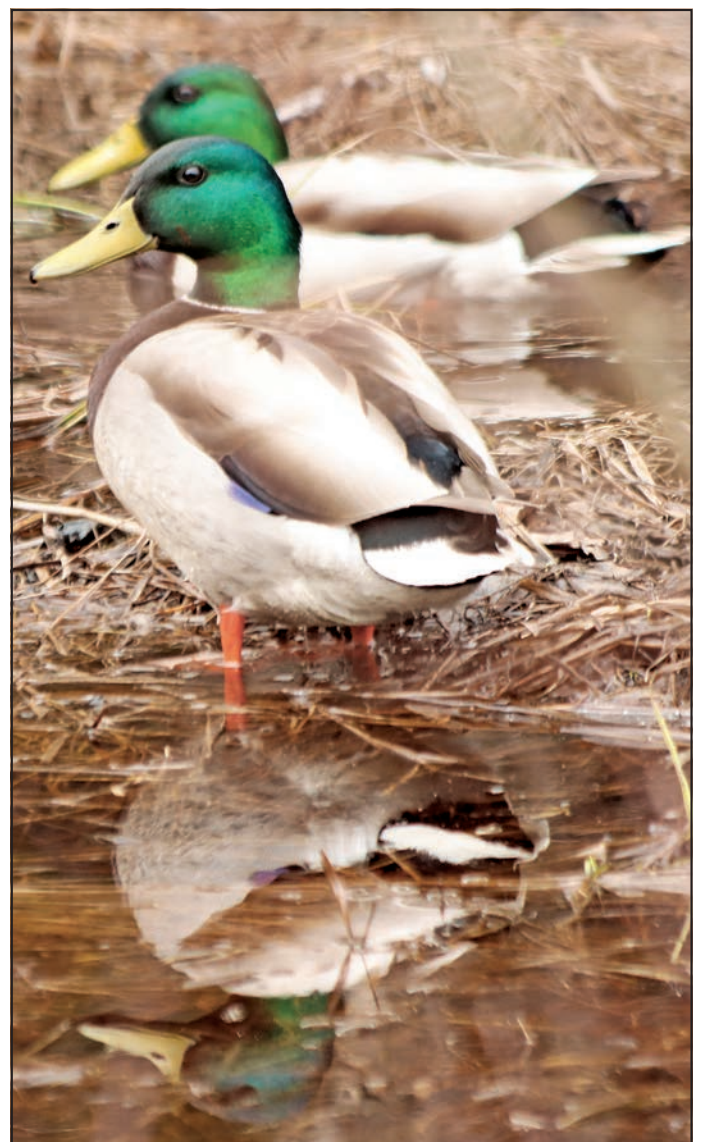
broadband developmental program in their communities,” said Schmitz. “Vilas County community leadership has stepped forward and have started talking with one another. New leaders have emerged to help create a terrific, long-lasting result.”

In the past year alone, VCEDC has partnered with Charter Communications and secured funding, helped write grants, and supported town governments for extending high-speed fiber networks to the towns of Arbor Vitae, Cloverland, Conover and Lincoln.

The VCEDC has also aided SonicNet in securing funding to expand its fiber network to the town of Washington, helped with a grant submission for Manitowish Waters, and has also been on board with Plum Lake getting broadband with Charter as well.

Additionally, the organization has propelled Charter

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GREENHEADS — Male mallards hang out in a marsh while the hens sit on a nearby nest. —Staff Photo By KURT KRUEGER