

North Crawford Citizens gathered to learn about school referendums

By GILLIAN POMPLUN
Almost 20 citizens and school staff gathered at the Soldiers Grove Fire Department on Wednesday, Oct. 26, to learn more about the two school referendums that will appear on the upcoming November 8 election ballot.

"I live in the district with my family, graduated from North Crawford, and as a taxpayer in the district, these referendums will impact my family just as it will impact yours," Superintendent Brandon Munson said to the group. "But my children attend this school, and so the benefits of approving these referendums will also benefit my family just like it will benefit yours."

One last community information session is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 2, from 6-7:30 p.m., in the school cafeteria. Building tours will also be available at that event.

"Our district has arrived at this point where we need to come to the taxpayers of the district and ask you to approve additional funding to allow the school to continue to offer our programs and services to students, and to make needed repairs to our buildings and grounds," Munson told the crowd. "Across Wisconsin, there are a record number of school referendums on the ballot on November 8, and this is because school districts in Wisconsin have been underfunded for years and no new funding was approved by the state legislature in the last two-year budget."

Munson said that North Crawford, like most other school districts around the state, had been forced to use federal pandemic relief funds to plug the gaps in budgets in recent years. He referred to this situation as a 'fiscal cliff,' where this one-time funding would be used up by 2023, leaving districts without other means to balance their budgets or maintain their infrastructure.

Operational referendum
Munson started first by explaining the need for the operational referendum, citing a list of factors that have led to this point. Those factors include:

- historical increases in staff salaries (four to seven percent)
- continued increases in health insurance (five percent)
- overall increases in cost of general operations (supplies, food, fuel, utilities, etc.)

- no increases in revenue from the State of Wisconsin for the past two years

Munson explained that funding for school districts, which comes mostly from the state, with lesser amounts from federal and local governments, comes in all at one time. A healthy fund balance allows the district to respond to any unanticipated expenses that may come up without having to borrow money and pay interest.

"Our current fund balance is \$2,312,381, and this amount is in line with Department of Public Instruction recommendations for the reserves a district should maintain," Munson explained. "These funds are not meant to cover the recurring expenses of school operations."

Munson explained that because of revenue caps imposed by state statute, school districts are limited in the amount of assistance they have a right to levy for from local property taxpayers. Statute does allow the district to go to the taxpayers with a referendum seeking their permission to exceed the property tax revenue cap.

Recurring referendum

The operations referendum appearing on the November 8 ballot is a recurring referendum. Munson explained the difference between a 'recurring' and a 'non-recurring' referendum to those present.

"Our district has only come to the taxpayers four times in the last 26 years to ask for a revenue increase or capital improvement project," Munson pointed out. "Three of the four times, those referendums have passed, with only the 2015 referendum asking to authorize borrowing to build a wellness center defeated."

- the first of the four referendums was passed by voters in the district in 1996, authorizing the borrowing of \$1,950,000 for purposes of constructing the addition to the current school building

- the second of the four referendums was a 'non-recurring' referendum, authorizing the district to levy an additional \$300,000 per year over the revenue cap from 2003-2009. After 2009, that revenue went away

- the third of the four was a 'recurring' referendum, similar to the one on the November 8 ballot. That 2008 referendum passed handily, and put in place the district's right to levy \$400,000 per year beyond the revenue cap on an ongoing basis

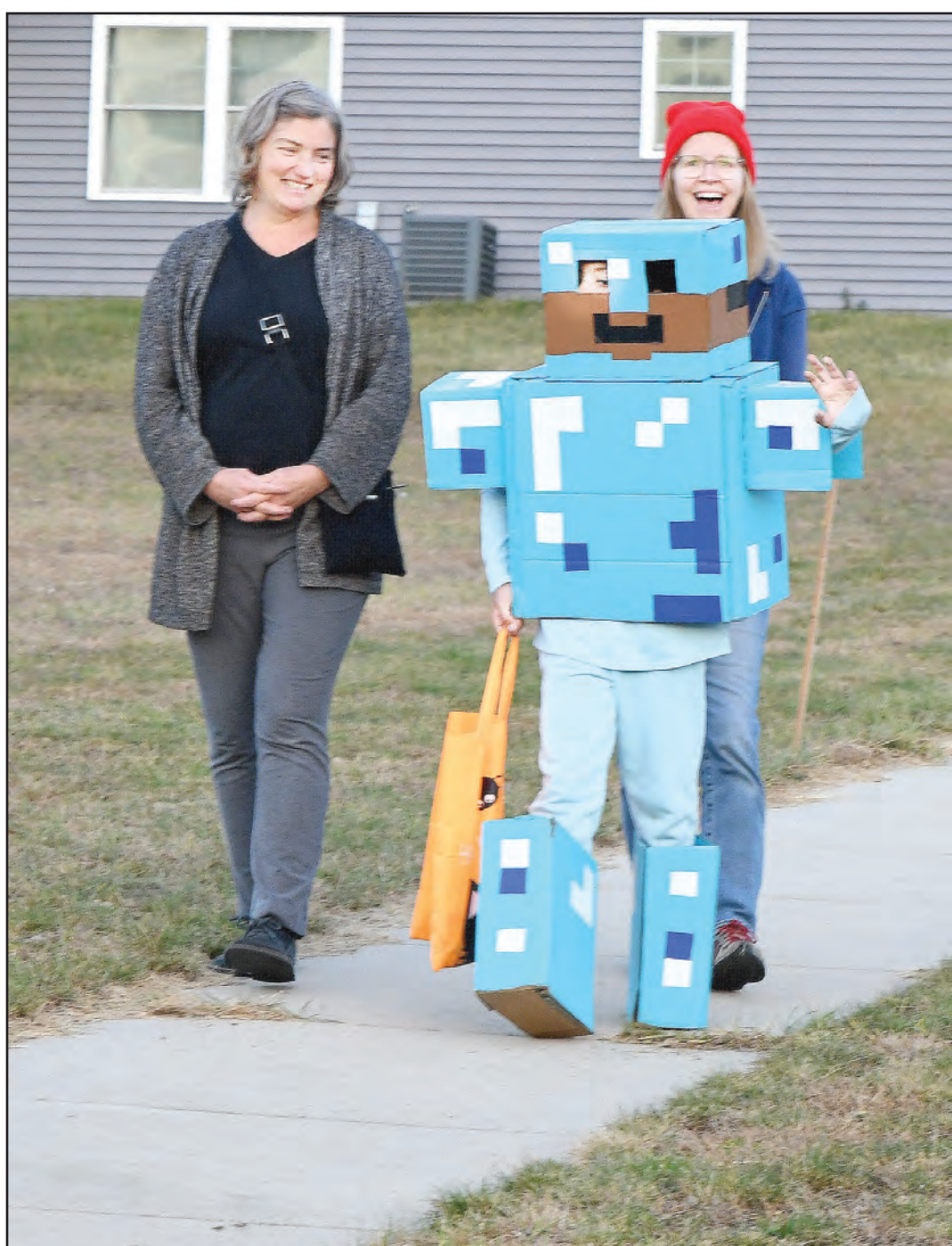
- the fourth referendum, which was defeated by the voters, was for borrowing in 2015.

"The operations referendum on the ballot on November 8, will be a recurring referendum, ramping up to the full requested amount of \$900,000 per year over the course of 2022 through 2026," Munson explained. "Starting in 2027, this means the district will levy above the revenue cap in the amount of \$900,000 per year on an ongoing basis."

What this will mean is a levy of an additional \$300,000 in 2022-2023; an additional \$550,000 in 2023-2024; an additional \$750,000 in 2024-2025; and an additional \$900,000 starting in 2025-2026.

Munson said that because of the recent announcement that equalized property values in the district had increased by 14 percent in the last year, the tax impacts of the operational referendum had decreased.

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Trick or treating in Gays Mills

If there had been a costume contest in the streets of Gays Mills Monday night, Jake Ebby would've been in the running. Jake went as Steve from Minecraft and he built the costume himself. He definitely 'earned' his treats. Walking with him were Scarlet Welander, left, and Charissa Richter.

North Crawford

The 4K students visit Frank's Hill

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

It was a bright, crisp morning last Wednesday, when the big yellow school bus pulled up to the entrance of the Frank's Hill effigy mounds site. The doors opened, and a curious, lively and energetic passel of four-year-olds poured out of the bus, full of questions and chatter, and eager to begin their adventure.

Gently shepherded by 4K teacher Sharon Jeardeau and several other school staff, the bouncing group began their darting march up the hill, with a pause below the 'three

eagles' display. The cultural and historic site is overseen and administered by the Three Eagles Foundation. All three members of the Three Eagles board – Dave Martin, Brian McGraw and Mark Cupp were present to help conduct the tour.

Heading up the grassy path, those who were a little taller began to get a sense of the grand vista offered by the site. Those a little closer to the ground were fascinated with the variety of prairie plants and woolly bear caterpillars. Frank Doerre, retired Spring Green

Hardware storeowner, along with McGraw, discussed the various prairie plants on view as the group made its enthusiastic way toward the summit.

"These seed pods are from the milkweed plant," Doerre told the group. "If we take these and let them blow in the wind, then we'll have food for lots of Monarch butterflies next year."

Safe to say, the typical guided tour talk required a little adaptation for this younger audience, as likely to listen raptly as to run with joyous abandon up the trail, 'planting' milkweed seeds for the butterflies.

The kids caught up with Martin and Cupp at the shoulder of the hill, just before the final ascent to the summit and the effigy mounds. Using a poster providing an aerial view of the site, Cupp told the children about the animal shapes of each of the effigy mounds on the summit.

"The first mound is shaped like a coyote, with a big brushy tail," Cupp told the curious crowd. "The second mound is shaped like a buffalo, the third like a beaver, the fourth like a woman holding stalks of corn, and the last one is a coiled snake."

The "oohs and aahs" were punctuated with excited squeals as children broke away to roll joyously down the hill.

Then the final ascent began, and the group gathered under the ancient cedar tree, near the belly of the coyote mound. Cupp told the kids that visitors to the mounds will stop to say a prayer at the tree, and hang blessings in its branches.

"Do you see anything around the tree or hanging in its branches?" Cupp asked.

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URIAH MATTESON, North Crawford 4K students had a great time ringing the bell in the ancient Cedar tree last week at a visit to the Frank's Hill Effigy Mounds site. Three Eagles Foundation board member Mark Cupp holds Matteson up so he can reach the bell.

In Readstown Remodeled hotel is up and running

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

The Apple House Hotel, and future Cortland Grill, in Readstown are the latest business ventures in the growing portfolio of dynamic local businessman Noel Miller and his partner Harrison Heilman. The two purchased the hotel and event center property in Spring of 2022, and have spent the time since putting their signature touch on the remodeling effort.

"With this new property, we've expanded our offering of all the amenities that our clientele has come to expect from us," Miller said. "Those amenities include eclectic décor and luxury comforts, remote keyless entry, and full or partial kitchens."

As the name 'Apple House Hotel' implies, the decorative themes in the 17 rooms each are dedicated to a different apple. The apple rooms in order are Granny Smith, Duke of Devonshire, Kickapoo Spice, Pippins, Honey Crisp, McIntosh, Creston, Orange Winter, Pink Lady, Duchess of Oldenburg, Sleeping Beauty, Ashmead's Kernel, Wolf River, Rubaiyat, Northwest Greening, and Ambrosia.

Plenty of customers

"We cater to a lot of the same clientele as at our Tobacco Warehouse Inn in Soldiers Grove," Miller explained. "We have a lot of customers that are in the health care field, and stay long term for weeks or months at a time. Hunters and fishers also make up a good portion of our guests, and there is more demand at this point than availability."

Rooms can be reserved using their online website at www.applehousehotel.com.

"The hotel is generally full, especially with traveling nurses responding to the shortage of healthcare workers," Miller said. "If they're going to travel, and live away from home, then they're putting a requirement for clean and comfortable accommodations with amenities in their contracts."

Miller said that other planned enhancements of the hotel in Readstown will include a business center and a fitness center for guests.

Miller said that part of the reason he decided to acquire the hotel was how well the structure was built, with poured concrete walls and the floors made out of spanned concrete. Another reason was the view out of the back.

Improving the property

"We own the property all the way out to Read's Creek, and it is absolutely beautiful out there – we plan to develop the back and eventually create doors so guests on that side of the building can enjoy the view," Miller said. "We have already started with planting trees and shrubs around the property to enhance the natural setting, and we're just getting started."

Miller said that the Cortland Grill, with a projected opening in Spring of 2023, will offer good, clean local and organic foods in season, in a convenient drive-through format. There will be a small number of tables available for dine-in business. While he isn't quite ready to announce what the menu will be, he said it will be satisfying and quick, and sure to please.

"And it's great to have other restaurant/bar and entertainment businesses in close proximity to us in Readstown like Kickapoo Creekside and others," Miller said. "We hope that all the restaurant/bars in the area do better because we are here."

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Don't Forget!
Daylight Savings Ends.

Daylight savings ends this weekend

Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour this Saturday evening. Daylight savings time ends at 2 a.m. Sunday morning, Nov. 6.



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ALMOST 20 CITIZENS attended an information meeting about the upcoming operational and capital improvement referendums for the North Crawford School District. Voters in the district will be asked to vote 'yes' or 'no' on the ballot of the Tuesday, Nov. 8 General Election.

Third referendum meeting yields info

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What this means is that a property valued at \$100,000 in district will see only a \$31 per year increase in property taxes.

Capital improvements

The second referendum that will appear on the November 8 ballot will ask voters to authorize the district borrowing of up to \$4,500,000 in order to complete needed maintenance on the building and grounds. Many of these maintenance projects have been deferred due to lack of funds, and as Munson pointed out, are only becoming more expensive with every passing year.

"All of the main components of our building are original, which is to say they're between 26 and 31 years old," Munson told the group. "The leaking from the roof is wreaking havoc with our ceiling panels, damaging the concrete blocks our walls are built with, damaging windows, and most recently, damaging our small gym floor and insulation over the cafeteria, causing costly repairs."

Munson said the aging components of the building meant that the scope and cost of needed maintenance was becoming more costly with every passing year. This, combined with certain code violations of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the corresponding legal exposure of the district, mean that time is of the essence for these repairs. He also cited changes in the nature of instructional programming over the years and changes in community needs as drivers for the proposed projects.

"The first step in preparing for the needed maintenance of our buildings and grounds was taken in 2016 when the board created a 10-year capital improvement plan for the district," Munson said. "In this last year, we engaged FEH Design, Baird Financial and Kraemer Construction to help assess our facilities and guide us through the referendum development project."

Munson said that multiple meetings of a 'Citizen Advisory Taskforce' had been held in late 2021 and 2022 to obtain citizen input about what kinds of repairs or upgrades

matter to the community. A survey which received over 200 responses had guided the district in the dollar amount of capital improvement projects the taxpayers would support as well.

"Our district had the foresight to create a Fund 46 savings account for capital improvement projects about six years ago," Munson pointed out. "It was our intention to deposit between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year into that account to prepare for needed maintenance, but because of underfunding of school districts by the state, we've not been able to do so."

Munson said the district had been able to accomplish some smaller maintenance projects on the building in that time, with a combination of Fund 46 funding and grant funding. Those projects included preventative maintenance on the roof, HVAC system, boiler and parking lots; replacing of all exterior doors; creating secure entryways for student and staff safety; sealing of the building envelope; installation of LED lighting; replacing flooring in the front hallway; and replacement of diesel buses in the fleet with propane buses.

Priorities for use of the \$4,500,000 in funding on the ballot on November 8 include:

- a complete roof replacement
- upper wall replacement-stucco panels are leaking
- exterior window replacement
- bathroom and shower renovations to comply with the ADA and other health regulations.

Tier two priorities for use of the funding would include:

- parking lot replacements
- flooring replacement
- instructional spaces for consumer and technical education
- storage solutions
- community childcare

"I get a phone call almost every day asking if we have openings in our childcare facility," elementary principal Amanda Killeen told the group. "There is a crying need for quality childcare in our district, and it serves as a student and staff recruitment and retention tool as well."

Early childhood lead teacher Peggy Schmitt told the group that the facility is currently operating at capacity with 25 children and babies, with 17 currently on the waiting list. She said that in order to expand the service, she would need both more space and more staff.

Munson said that due to the 14 percent increase in equalized value for property in the district, the cost of the proposed capital improvement projects had also decreased to \$55 per year for a property valued at \$100,000.

"We also refer to this as the debt service referendum," Munson said. "What that means is that the district would borrow \$4,500,000 over 20 years at an estimated 4.5 percent interest."

To sum it up

To sum it up, if approved the total cost to taxpayers if both referendums were passed on a property valued at \$100,000 would be \$86 per year. The mill rate of the district would be \$8.63, increasing from \$7.77. Over the years, the mill rate has been much higher in the district, at \$9.68 in 2013-2014, \$9.80 in 2014-2015, \$9.35 in 2015-2016, \$9.13 in 2016-2017, and \$9.31 in 2016-2017.

"When people ask me which of the two referendums is more important, I tell them 'yes,'" Munson said. "Both are crucial - our costs will only go up for maintenance if we continue to defer it, but if we have to slash programs and services because of inadequate operational funding, then what will the point be of having a well-maintained building?"

Munson emphasized that the district is not asking their community to spend on things the district 'wants,' but only on things the district 'needs.' He said they are not looking at adding programs or staff, but simply asking the community to reinvest in the future of their community school.

"For the average taxpayer, for less than 50 cents per day, if you vote for these referendums, you will be making a \$5.4 million investment in current and future students, staff and facilities of the North Crawford School District," Munson said.

4K'ers exposed to local historical information

VISIT from Page 1

The group quickly identified a feather lying at the base of the tree, and a bell hanging from its branches. One after another, Cupp lifted the children up to see the bell, and to take a swat at it to make it ring.

Moving around the coyote mound, and into the area between the front and back legs of the buffalo, Cupp paused to talk about the importance of the buffalo to the people of the Woodland culture who built the mounds, explaining that the animal had provided them with food, warmth and bones for tools.

In front of the beaver mound, Dave Martin, President of the Three Eagles Foundation, told the kids about the history of the site, protected from development by landowner Frank Shadewald. Martin also told the kids that his wife had taught Kindergarten at the Riverdale Schools for over 30 years.

Cupp told the group that the mounds had been built using baskets made of reeds and shovels made from the shoulder bones of buffalo.

Sensing the attention of their young audience wandering, Cupp then encouraged the youngsters to 'run'

to the next mound! An explosion of excited voices followed the instruction, and staff herded their smiling, laughing, jumping, leaping, rolling charges to the last mound, where they gathered again for the final story of the day.

"A long time ago, three children came upon an old woman in a cave, stirring a pot of soup," Cupp told the children. "The children asked the old woman what she was doing, and she told them to go and get their parents and return to the cave."

Cupp went on to tell that when the children returned with their parents, the old woman shared the secret of growing and cooking with corn, and told them to watch for the herds of buffalo, which would soon visit their area. She told them that with corn and the buffalo, the people would thrive and never go hungry. The next day, when the children returned to the cave, the old woman was gone but a herd of buffalo had come.

Safe to say, it was a wonderful day for this group of students to experience one of the richest cultural sites in the Driftless Region. The area was once home to thousands of mounds, but most

have been lost in the settlement period as the land was cleared and cultivated.

The Three Eagles Foundation is committed to Frank's philosophy that the mounds should be available for people of all beliefs to visit and to experience. Each year on the summer and winter solstices, and the autumnal and vernal equinoxes, the foundation opens the site to groups who come to mark those celestial turnings of the season.

Frank Shadewald bequeathed the property known as 'Frank's Hill' to the Three Eagles Foundation upon his untimely death in 2013. The property includes an effigy mound group on the ridge east of Highway 193, and a group of small conical mounds, believed to be calendar mounds, on the ridge west of the highway.

Effigy mounds are earthworks in the shapes of birds and animals. Other mounds found in Wisconsin are dome shaped mounds called conical mounds, and long narrow mounds called linear mounds. The effigy mound civilization lived in Wisconsin from roughly 700-1200 A.D. Generally speaking, they consider the mounds at Frank's Hill to be about 1,000 years old.

Apple House Hotel latest in dynamic portfolio of businesses

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Miller also said that acquisition of the new properties in Readstown has slowed down their plans for the 'Harrison's Parkside' restaurant in the Tobacco Warehouse Inn in Soldiers Grove.

"We haven't forgotten," Miller said. "We've just been hustling to get through the tree-selling season and get our new Readstown hotel up and running this summer."

Miller said that demand for rooms at the Tobacco Warehouse Inn has been so great, he and Harrison are planning to add more guest rooms in addition to opening the restaurant and bar business in the building.

In addition to their hotel and restaurant businesses, the two also run the 'Roots to Fruits' tree and fruiting

shrubs business in Soldiers Grove. In the Spring, their products are offered for sale

at the Kickapoo Orchard on Orchard Ridge in rural Gays Mills.



NOEL MILLER, left, and his partner **Harrison Heilman,** are the new proprietors of the Apple House Hotel and future Cortland Grill businesses in Readstown. Miller acquired the property in the Spring, and already the hotel is full most of the time.

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SALE OF FORECLOSED PROPERTY ADJOINING LANDOWNERS ONLY BY: CRAWFORD COUNTY

Sealed bids will be accepted at the office of the Crawford County Treasurer, 225 N. Beaumont Rd, Ste 211, Prairie du Chien, WI 53821 at any time starting October 18, 2022 at 8:00am up to and including 4:00pm, November 4, 2022 for the purchase of the parcels of property described below in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 75.69.

Crawford County acquired these properties by foreclosure per State Statutes and will sell them by sealed bid to ADJOINING LANDOWNERS ONLY, providing such bid meets or exceeds the minimum bid amount. The County reserves the right to reject any and all bids or accept the bid most advantageous to Crawford County. A good faith deposit of 10% of the bid amount must accompany all bids. All bid deposits will be returned to the unsuccessful bidders. You must identify "SEALED TAX DEED BID" on the face of the envelope. If no bid equals or exceeds the minimum bid amount, the property may be sold by the Crawford County Treasurer at any later date, without further notice. All adjoining landowners will be notified by mail with a copy of a map and bid form.

Crawford County will transfer the property by quit claim deed upon closing. Closing to be held within 30 days of bid acceptance. If not paid in full and closed within 30 days of being notified, the bid will become null and void and the County will retain the 10% retainer. All sealed bids will be opened at the following Delinquent Tax Committee meeting in November.

2022 Taxes and prior years will be paid in full by the County. For additional information call the Crawford County Treasurer's Office at (608) 326-0203.

VACANT LAND PROPERTIES minimum bid \$250.00 per parcel: Town of Freeman:

Parcel No. 12-008-1060-0001 THAT PRT OF THE SW 1/4 OF SE 1/4 SECT. 27, T11N, R6W DESC AS FOLLOWS: COMM AT S 1/4 COR OF SD SEC 27; TH N 00° 00'53" E ALG THE W LN OF SW 1/4 OF SE 1/4 OF SD SEC 939.83' TO A POINT ON THE CNTRLN OF RUSH CREEK RD SD POINT BEING LOCATED ON A CURVE; TH ALG SD CNTRLN ON A CURVE TO THE LEFT HAVING A RADIUS OF 325.94' & A CHORD THAT BEARS N 53°59'24" E 242.36' TO A POINT OF TANGENCY; TH N 32° 09'52" E ALG SD CNTRLN 35.69' TO A POINT ON THE E LN OF THE W 215' OF THE SW1/4 OF SE1/4 OF SD SEC 27; TH S 00°00'53" W ALG THE E LN OF THE W 215' OF THE SW1/4 OF SE1/4 OF SD SEC 27 180.53' TO POB; SD POINT BEING LOCATED ON THE CNTRLN OF RUSH CREEK; TH CONT S 00°00' 53" W ALG THE E LN OF THE W 215' OF SW 1/4 OF SE 1/4 OF SD SEC 27 135.76' TO A POINT ON THE CNTRLN OF RUSH CREEK; TH N'LY ALG THE CNTRLN OF RUSH CREEK TO THE POB THE AFORESAID LANDS BEING E'LY OF THE E LN OF THE W 215' OF THE SW 1/4 OF SE 1/4 OF SD SEC 27 & W'LY OF THE CNTRLN OF RUSH CREEK.

Parcel No. 12-008-1069-0002 SECT. 28, T11N, R6W DESC AS FOLLOWS: A PCL OF LAND LOCATED IN THE SE 1/4 OF NW 1/4 FOUND DURING 2015 REMONUMENTATION

Parcel No. 12-008-1253-0005 SECT. 23, T11N, R7W DESC AS FOLLOWS: THAT PRT OF THE NE 1/4 OF SW 1/4 LYG S OF RD EXC WD #303830 AND EXC CSM #904, 905, 887, 883, 880 & 885

(Pub. 10/20/22, 10/27/22, 11/3/22)

WNAXLP

CRAWFORD COUNTY

NOTICE OF LOCATION AND HOURS OF POLLING PLACES

At the election to be held on November 8, 2022 in the County of Crawford, following are the polling place locations:

MUNICIPALITY	LOCATION
Town of Bridgeport	Town Hall, 38446 Old School Lane, Prairie du Chien
Town of Clayton	Town Hall, 13069 State Hwy. 61, Soldiers Grove
Town of Eastman	Community Building, 112 Shanghai Ridge Rd., Eastman
Town of Freeman	Town Hall, 58596 Co. Hwy. B, Ferryville
Town of Haney	Town Hall, 22399 State Hwy. 131, Gays Mills
Town of Marietta	Town Hall, 45550 Maple Ridge Rd., Boscobel
Town of Prairie du Chien	Town Hall, 33890 State Hwy. 35, Prairie du Chien
Town of Scott	Mt. Zion Methodist Church, 21588 Mt. Zion Rd., Boscobel
Town of Seneca	Town Hall, 21041 Town Hall Rd., Seneca
Town of Utica	Town Hall, 15600 Freeman Rd., Gays Mills
Town of Wauzeka	Town Meeting Room, 203A E. Front St., Wauzeka
Village of Bell Center	Village Hall, 430 Bell Center Rd., Gays Mills
Village of DeSoto	Village Office, 115 S. Houghton St., DeSoto
Village of Eastman	Community Building, 112 Shanghai Ridge Rd., Eastman
Village of Ferryville	Village Hall, 170 Pine St., Ferryville
Village of Gays Mills	Community Commerce Center, 16381 State Hwy. 131, Gays Mills
Village of Lynxville	Community Center, 362 Spring St., Lynxville
Village of Mt. Sterling	Village Hall, 155 Second St., Mt. Sterling
Village of Soldiers Grove	Community Building, 102 Passive Sun Dr., Soldiers Grove
Village of Steuben	Community Building, 123 Midway Street, Steuben
Village of Wauzeka	Village Hall, 213B E. Front Street, Wauzeka

Polling places for all wards in the City of Prairie du Chien are located at Hoffman Hall, 1600 South Wacouta Avenue.

All polling places will open at 7:00 a.m. and will close at 8:00 p.m. All polling places are accessible to elderly and disabled voters.

Notice of Meeting of the Local Board of Canvassers

At the close of voting on Election Day, pursuant to the provisions of Wis. Stat. 19.84, the Election Inspectors at each polling place will convene as the Local Canvassing Board for the purpose of conducting the local canvass pursuant to Wis. Stat. 7.51. This meeting will be open to the public pursuant to Wis. Stat. 19.81-89.

(Pub.11/3/22)

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