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County set to get windfall from opioid settlement

By Richard Moore
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

The state of Wisconsin and 71 of the state's 72 counties are all set to get a big payout in the recently announced nationwide opioid settlement between large pharmaceutical companies and distributors and an array of state and local governments that filed lawsuits against the companies.

The lawsuits accused the defendants of creating and fueling the nation's opioid crisis. The largest defendants included drug distributors and wholesalers AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson, and Big Pharma giant Johnson & Johnson.

Wisconsin counties played an integral role in producing the historic settlement earlier this year, filing some of the first lawsuits in the country in 2017. All but one (Polk County) of Wisconsin's 72 counties participated in

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Council votes to offer city administrator position to Michigan candidate

By Heather Schaefer
OF THE RIVER NEWS

The Rhinelander Common Council believes it has found the city's next administrator.

Following a closed session

discussion that lasted less than 20 minutes, the council voted unanimously Monday to "proceed with the contract process" to hire Patrick Reagan, manager/clerk for the Village of Lake Odessa, Mich.,

a community of approximately 2,000 people situated between Lansing and Grand Rapids.

The city began the process of recruiting a new administrator in early August after former adminis-

trator Zach Vruwink announced plans to leave his employment to take a job with the League of Wisconsin Municipalities.

Originally hired as a con-

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PHOTO BY BOB MAINHARDT FOR THE RIVER NEWS

CLARA AND THE NUTCRACKER

Members of the Northwoods School of Dance continued a holiday tradition on Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022, performing their version of "The Nutcracker" in the John and Dori Brown Performing Arts Center at Rhinelander High School. Pictured: Clara (Annalyse Schoppe) and the Nutcracker (Julia Wacker) dance together after Drosselmeyer turned the wooden Nutcracker into a living person.

Crescent electors approve levy, board approves budget

Town chairman highlights progress

By Trevor Greene
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

Crescent electors, during a town meeting on Dec. 8, approved the town's 2023 tax levy of \$626,130.

Following that approval, the Crescent town board adopted a 2023 town budget of \$855,835 during a special town board meeting.

Town chairman Joel Knutson reviewed the more notable changes in the budget for next year during the budget hearing conducted before the town meeting and the town board meeting. He also said the budget process could have been concluded at an earlier date.

"This is coming up a couple weeks

after we originally scheduled it because the board deemed we had not met the proper posting requirements the first attempt," Knutson said. "We are good to go now."

The town's tax levy didn't change much, increasing only one per cent. The budget itself didn't see much change either, showing an increase of \$2,656.

Knutson said it took the board three budget workshops to prepare, and he was "happy to say" it didn't change much. He described Crescent's financials as being on a solid "trajectory."

"When this board was essentially new in (the spring) of 2021 ... we only had about \$45,000 in reserves in the town of Crescent," Knutson said. "That's the general fund balance. You'll see that the projected fund balance at the end of this year is esti-

mated to be close to \$270,000."

The board, he said, was able to get to this point by not increasing the town's taxes.

"What we've largely tried to do is chase bigger ticket items as they've become available," he said. "The town is competitive now for a series of larger grants ... that has put us in a capacity of infrastructure investments on a scale that we've never been before."

Rebuilding the entirety of River Road in the near future is the biggest example of that, Knutson said.

He said the board has worked to capitalize on bigger grants while maintaining the town's basic maintenance as well.

"But also, understand that part of chasing bigger ticket items is being ex-

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