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■ The summer/fall edition of the bi-annual Senior Focus publication is included in this week's newspaper.



VILAS COUNTY NEWS-REVIEW

Section A

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2023

Health assessment shows suicide, housing, costs of care, food are top concerns here

By MICHELLE DREW
EDITOR

The Vilas County Public Health Department recently completed its community health assessment, with survey results and input from local representatives indicating some of the main issues the county and surrounding communities are facing.

Through discussions and outreach, a number of other concerns were brought forth including the ever-rising cost of living, lack of affordable housing, and lack of health care available. Data also shows Vilas

County has above-average suicide rates, alcohol-related deaths and drug use.

The purpose of the assessment, which is state-mandated to be completed every five years, is for counties to use the results to create a community health improvement plan to look at ways to address issues going forward.

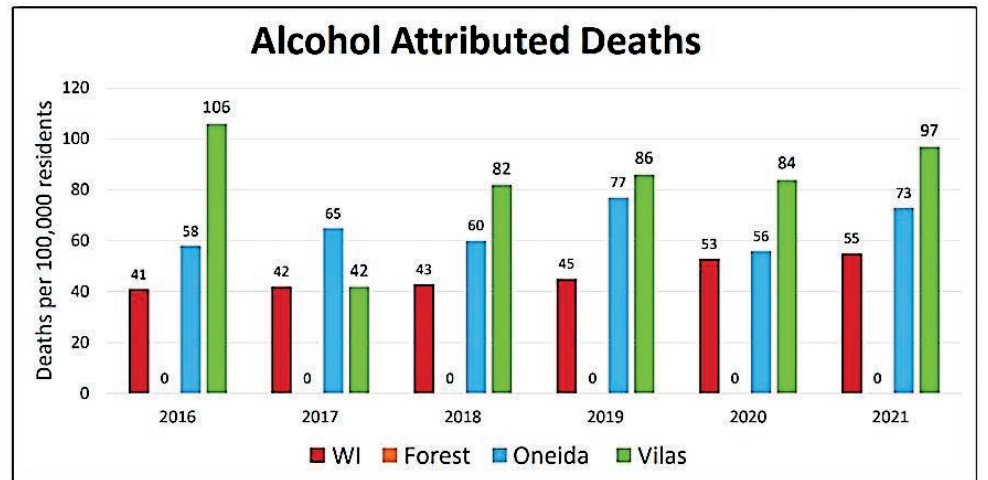
As part of the assessment, Tammi Boers, director of the Vilas County Public Health Department, also gathered information through a Community Café discussion where community members could share their ideas. Seven people attended the discussion,

including participants from the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Vilas County, Vilas County Social Services, Vilas County Veterans Services, Peter Christensen Health Center, and Compassus.

"It was a small group, but there was good discussion around the different areas," Boers said. Those who could not attend the June 26 café in person were able to give feedback afterward and included input from Marshfield Clinic and the Vilas County News-Review.

Boers explained that the community health survey is a piece

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Vilas County leads in crashes and deaths attributed to alcohol compared to surrounding counties. —Contributed Image



PLANE DOWN — A single-engine airplane crashed at the Eagle River Union Airport July 18 at approximately 3:05 p.m. The pilot said the plane was landing when he bounced and the

wind turned him a little sideways. He veered off the runway and the turf caused the plane to catch a wheel and flip. See more photos on pg. 3A —Photo By Michael Anderson

Cash For Kids fundraiser set to begin Aug. 1

By NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

Feed Our Rural Kids Inc (FORK) has announced it will again put on the annual CashFORKids (Cash For Kids) fundraiser beginning Tuesday, Aug. 1, and run through Aug. 31.

Cash For Kids, now in its fourth year, is FORK's largest fundraising event and aims to help feed local children.

"Once again, the program will be a collaborative effort of all Eagle River financial institutions in support of FORK's mission," explained Cash For Kids Chairperson Lexi Scafaro. "Working together, our local banks and credit union will again work to raise the funds needed to underwrite FORK's three nutritional

support programs within the Phelps, Three Lakes, and Northland Pines school districts."

Last August, Eagle River financial institutions provided area children with the equivalent of more than 10,000 meals through their collective participation in FORK's Cash For Kids fundraiser.

"This year we hope to raise \$28,000. That goal is just 4% more than we raised last year," continued Scafaro. "This incremental increase in funds raised is needed to keep up with annualized food cost increases."

Individuals can donate in

To CASH, Pg. 2A

Water rate increase could be in effect at end of year

By KEN ANDERSON
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A proposal to apply for an increase to the water rate for Eagle River was approved last week by the city's Light & Water Commission that would increase the revenue by \$48,000, according to office Manager John Laszczkowski.

"The last time we had a water rate increase was May, 2018," Laszczkowski said.

Eagle River Light and Water provides water services to about 2,600 households within the city.

Water Department Manager Mike Sanborn indicated a project to restore water in 2025 will cost about \$600,000.

"We need a 6.5% rate of return and this will give us 2.75%," Sanborn said, adding the utility will be looking for a water resource bond.

The committee approved an application to the state Public Service Commission to increase the water rate, which could go into effect near the end of this year.

Sanborn also brought the commission information on the utility.

"Overall the electric and water are doing well, with customer payments very strong — only 1.2% are past due," he said.

He also indicated well No. 3 has been having problems and expects there will be a need to overhaul the electrical system.

In other actions, the commission approved the purchase of 41 red pine utility poles at a cost not to exceed \$28,000, and to purchase a new utility truck not to exceed \$330,000. The 21-year-old truck will be placed on the state surplus auction site.

Lastly, the commission was presented a report from WPPI representative, Jake Oelke, who listed the top 2023 initiatives as long-term planning, interconnection process for solar, and organizing staff development.

Ride with Leinie slated this Saturday on bike trails in Conover, Phelps area

Ride with Leinie, coming up this Saturday, July 29 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., offers guided bicycling in the Conover and Phelps area, and a chance to enjoy samples of Leinenkugel beer during a lunch, live auction, and raffle drawings emceed by Dick Leinenkugel himself.

The day of cycling in the North Woods will begin at 9 a.m. at the Conover Town Park, located at 4697 Park Circle.

"The Conover-Phelps Trail is the perfect venue for this event and the Conover Town Park provides a wonderful facility for the pre- and post-ride activities. We're so fortunate to have such a great spot to host this event," said Laura Van Valkenberg, ride director for Ride with Leinie.

"We're thrilled to have Dick Leinenkugel lead the 20.4-mile trail ride from Conover to Phelps and back this year," she continued. "His daughter Katie Leinenkugel will lead off



Riders can participate in Saturday's Ride with Leinie event by choosing from several bike ride options or non-rider events in Conover. Dick and Jean Leinenkugel will again participate in the annual event benefiting area bike trail systems. —Contributed Photo

the shorter 10.4-mile trail ride halfway to Phelps and back to Conover."

A picnic lunch featuring Trig's Smokehouse brats and a Leinenkugel's beer

tasting will be held at the park following the ride. This event is open to the public, both riders and non-riders.

There will be a bucket raffle with lots of great

prizes as well as a raffle for a chance to win a Trek Verve+2 e-bike, a Mon-goose Dolomite fat tire

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