

Arrows Golf clears sectional to head to Madison SEE SPORTS

## State-bound



Take a closer look at the sights of the annual parade SEE PAGE 2A

## Harvest Festival

### Businesses impacted by lack of childcare

Mirroring last week's parents' results, companies finding the atmosphere tough

BY DAVID TIMMERMAN  
NEWSEDITOR@TDS.NET

Last week, we reviewed results from parents who responded to a Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Grant County Herald Independent survey asking them how the availability of childcare affects them and what they can do for work.

In conjunction with that survey, the Chamber and newspaper also conducted a survey for businesses, sending the survey to chamber members.

From their responses, businesses are also being hurt by the insufficient level of childcare in the community.

When asked if they have had to consider work-from-home options to attract or retain staff, 33 percent of the businesses that responded said they have begun offering the option to hold onto workers.

There were 25 percent of the businesses that also said that childcare affects how early or how late their employees can work, and thus have an impact on their business hours.

There were one-third of respondents that stated that childcare was the top issue impacting them, above available housing, transportation, inflation, and broadband, when it came to attracting workers.

Half of the respondents said it was the second highest issue, most of those people stating inflation was the biggest issue.

"Lack of childcare may be our biggest reasons for not getting a member," one business said.

"Daycare costs are through the roof," said another business representative.

Businesses said summers are particularly impacted, as parents cannot find childcare when school-age children are home, and too young to watch themselves.

For those parents who have to shuttle their children from summer school to summer recreation programs, that too takes workers away.

One business representative conveys that this is not simply a Lancaster issue - while fully staffed, sister branches of the business are struggling to find workers.

When asked if there was a large-scale childcare facility in the community, would they consider giving money to that program to keep it in the community, one quarter of businesses said they would give.

One individual states they have a family member who has children in need of childcare, and they have taken off work to help their family members, as they do not have the ability to take off work when care falls through.

One employee stated that when they had a chance to come back to Lancaster due to a potential job transfer to their hometown, the opportunity was almost sunk by the fact that they could not find childcare right away.

### County gets closer to 2023 budget

Finance Director suggests using existing funds to help cover shortfall

BY DAVID TIMMERMAN  
NEWSEDITOR@TDS.NET

When you have a budget in excess of \$50 million, lots of factors control that bottom line, as the members of the Grant County Board found out Tuesday, when getting an update on next year's county budget.

With the budget only one month away from being adopted, the amount for revenues and expenditures are still not the same yet, but County Board Chair Robert Keeney feels that things will align by the time the board meets next month.

"Balancing the budget is well within reach," Keeney told the rest of the board Tuesday.

The projected revenue for next year for the county is \$54.096 million, and along with another \$548,396 in

carryover, mostly from this year's sales tax revenue that was above estimates, the county is still short \$937,939 at this point, but a far smaller number than the \$4.3 million the county was at when the process started this summer.

It was the largest disparity between revenues and expenditures for a county budget at the start of the process, impacted by estimated wage increases of 3 percent, along with increases in the health insurance costs by 8 percent.

This was only countered by an increase in the county's general levy by 1.058 percent, matching the amount of new construction in the county in the past year. That percent increase only allowed for \$120,000 in the levy increase.

To make up the difference, the county looks to be shifting some of its

payments for capital projects to the debt levy.

Since the mid 1990s, the state has imposed levy caps on all local governments and school districts. For counties, which only see increases based on new construction, they have the ability to place capital projects they borrow for on the debt levy, which sits outside the cap.

Under the options shared with the county board Tuesday, one idea is to shift \$741,825 of the payments for the Community Services Building (which houses the jail, Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management, Social Services and ADRC) to the debt levy, while retaining \$779,625 of the bond payments within the general levy.

Another idea is to pay off the \$1.211 million owed for the new

communications tower outside of Lancaster. The tower is to be the central hub of the new county communications system, and had to be built first to allow communications to come out of the new Community Services Building (before it was built, communications were being relayed through the tower at the old jail).

Originally, the idea was to fold the debt for the new tower into a larger borrowing package for the entire communications system, but doing this reduces that overall longterm debt.

Other ideas that Finance Director Amanda Degenhart will be recommending to eliminate the shortfall for this coming year include utilizing money in the county's fund

County | SEE 2A



## Glow Run

The Friends of Winskill held a Glow Run at the high school track Friday night.

### Hunter shoots self getting into boat

A 49-year-old Mukwonago man was shot in an apparent hunting accident on the Mississippi River Sunday afternoon.

Scott Imes was taken by Med Flight helicopter, which landed on at the Wyalusing boat landing on the backwaters of the Mississippi River near Wyalusing State Park. Imes' condition was not reported.

The Grant County Sheriff's Office received a radio report from Clayton County Sheriff's Office Dispatch that a person had been shot in the arm and leg around 2:30 p.m.

According to the Grant County Sheriff's Office, Imes was duck hunting with his wife, Dawn Imes, 51, and their two dogs. Scott Imes was getting into his boat when his firearm discharged, striking him in an arm and leg.

Bagley Fire and First Responders personnel used a boat owned by a Cuba City firefighter to get the Imeses to the Wyalusing boat landing, the Sheriff's Office said.

West Grant EMS, Bloomington Fire and Department of Natural Resources conservation wardens assisted at the scene.

The DNR is investigating. The Sheriff's Office news release said the shooting "does not appear to be suspicious in nature."

### CHC update

BY STEVE PRESTEGARD  
EDITOR@THEPLATTEVILLEJOURNAL.COM

While work continues erecting the massive towers that will hold it, the next stop for the Cardinal-Hickory Creek power transmission line project in the court system took place Wednesday.

The power line's developers appeared in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit appealing a federal district court decision preventing the power line from crossing the Mississippi River.

U.S. District Judge William Conley ruled March 1 that the project could not be built through the Upper Mississippi National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, calling U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval through the wildlife refuge was "arbitrary and capricious."

American Transmission Co., ITC Midwest and Dairyland Power Cooperative issued a joint news release after the court session on their position that Conley's decision should be reversed.

"Together with the U.S. Department of Justice, our legal counsel asserted that the environmental impact statement for the project by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service

CHC | SEE 5A

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