



INDEX

OPINION 10B
 SPORTS 10A
 OUTDOORS 8A
 LIFESTYLE 1B
 OBITUARIES 4A



INSIDE

Easter services set at churches

■ Area churches will hold their Holy Week services ahead of the Easter holiday April 9. See listing on pg. 1B.



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Section A

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2023

Wake boat advisories on spring survey

Public input sought April 10-13

By MICHELLE DREW
EDITOR

For the first time ever, a state entity is asking the public to weigh in on the use and regulations of wake boats on waterways in the state during the annual Fish and Wildlife Spring Hearings which will take place virtually April 10-13.

Put on each year by the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the survey focuses on natural resource-related questions, proposed rule changes, and advisory questions.

Wake boats, also called ballast boats, are designed to generate a large, magnified wake that people can wake surf on by taking in thousands

of gallons of water then displacing it to create the wake.

The use of wake surfing has been on the rise on Wisconsin lakes. This has led to concern from lake groups, water recreation enthusiasts and anglers, as well as environmental advocates, who say these new boats create safety hazards to others using the lake, damage the environment and local wildlife habitats, destroy personal property and erode the shoreline.

On the other side, wake boat advocates say the issues presented are overblown, and when the rules that are currently considered the “industry standard” are followed, these wake boats do not do the kinds of damage alleged.

Jeff Meessmann, a retired professional engineer and director of the Last Wilderness Alliance (LWA) conservation group based in Presque Isle, has pressed the WCC to have these advisory questions added to the survey in the interest of protect-

ing area lakes, which he calls the “backbone of our tourist economy.”

The text included in WCC’s survey describes wake surfing as requiring the generation of a “large hazardous wake.” A hazardous wake is defined as “a boat wake that is intentionally magnified through the use of ballast, design features or operational procedures to amplify the wake’s height and consequently generates a large, dangerous wave.”

It goes on to say that unregulated wake surfing has the potential to churn lakebeds with downward prop wash, creat murky, turbid water and destroy aquatic plants; destroy spawning beds; swamp loon nests; and transfer invasives via residual ballast water.

These boats also can fertilize algae blooms, erode shorelines, endanger others through poor forward visibility, and endanger others through generation of hazardous wakes incompatible with

other lake users, and damage the local economy, according to the DNR.

The advisory questions ask for public input on limiting wake boats causing hazardous wakes to be more than 700 feet from shore or other water users; prohibiting wake boats from causing hazardous wakes on lakes less than 1,500 acres; and the WCC amending existing statutes that prohibit operation of a boat that intentionally creates a hazardous wake within 700 feet of any dock raft, pier, buoyed or restricted area, shoreline, or any other watercraft.

Also queried on the survey will be the creation or amendment of state statutes regarding operation of boats that create hazardous wakes on lakes of specific size, depth, length or width; or intentionally magnifying wakes for wake surfing on lakes less than 1,500 acres.

Meessmann said a number of current studies exist

To WAKE BOATS, Pg. 6A



Public input is requested on six advisory questions regarding the use of wake boats on Wisconsin lakes this April. —Contributed Photo



APRIL FOOLS — The snowfall that hit the North Woods April 1 was no joke. The city of Eagle River issued a state of emergency Saturday morning urging people to stay home while crews worked to clear

roads, which was not lifted until about 2:30 a.m. Sunday morning. Approximately 15-plus inches fell in Eagle River with higher amounts reported in surrounding towns. —Staff Photo By MICHELLE DREW

News-Review takes top honor in ‘excellence’

By NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

The Vilas County News-Review has picked up a first-place win in the General Excellence category in addition to 26 other awards won in the 2022 Wisconsin Newspaper Association Better Newspaper Contest.

This is the fifth time in 25 years staff at the News-Review has secured the coveted win.

In addition to General Excellence, staff at the News-Review also took home first-place honors in other big categories including Best Front Page, Best Feature/Lifestyle Pages, Best Opinion Pages, Best All-Around Newspaper Photography and more.

The contest celebrates newspapers statewide provid-

ing the best writing, photography and advertising design to their readership. The annual awards banquet was held March 24 at the Madison Concourse Hotel in downtown Madison to celebrate the 2022 winners.

Publisher Kurt Krueger said the paper’s varied awards reflect the excellent work being done by the entire editorial, advertising and production staff.

“It’s important to note that our first-place honors came in the categories of most importance to community newspapers, and that general excellence has always been

To EXCELLENCE, Pg. 2A

Wildfire protection grants awarded to two area towns

By JON EICHMAN
ASST. EDITOR

As part of a nationwide effort to aid in wildfire protection, the towns of Washington and Conover were recently announced as two of many selected recipients of funds from the Community Wildlife Defense Grant (CWDG) Program.

In order to expand their community wildfire protection plan, reduce fuel usage and to support annual chipping operations at the town’s brush disposal site, the town of Washington is set to receive \$246,939 from the program. The town of Conover plans to use its \$470,000 in distributed grant funds to create fuel breaks between forested and residential areas to reduce the risk of wildfire in the community.

Washington Town Chairman Jim Egan commended Supervisor Carole Linn for dedicating a large amount of hours to writing the grant. He highlighted that these additional funds will be used to purchase a Diamond Bloom Mower to cut brush back along the sides of town roads.

Conover Fire Chief Robert Martinson Jr., noted that the town is in a literal “bullseye” zone when it comes to wildfires, and their plan is along the same lines as the town of Washington in terms of getting brush cleared from the sides of town roads. Awarded grant funds will be used to purchase an all-two-wheeled excavator to help in creating

To WILDFIRE, Pg. 3A

Groom to Ride fundraiser brings in over \$42,000 for 3 area clubs

Despite the snowstorm that hit the area Friday night and into Saturday, the raffle drawing for Groom to Ride, a major fundraiser for local snowmobile clubs, went on as scheduled at Track Side in Eagle River.

The annual event generated a whopping \$42,296 in profit which was shared between the three co-sponsoring clubs — the Conover Sno-Buddies, Eagle River Sno-Eagles, and Northern Lights Snowmobile Club of Three Lakes. It is hosted and sponsored each year by Track Side, which also donates the grand-prize snowmobile — this year a 2023 Ski-Doo 600 — won by Chris Philbin of Glenview, Ill.

Second-prize winner was

William Smart of Three Lakes, who won 2024 World Championship Snowmobile Derby tickets for four reserved indoor Hot Seats including admission and parking donated by the World Championship Derby Complex.

Third prize went to Dawn Steinhaus of Three Lakes for a two-night stay at the Northernaire Resort donated by the Northernaire, dinner for two at SpiritView Lakeside Restaurant donated by Laura Forsyth-Madl and Jessica Czaplinski, and dinner for two at 32 South Bar and Grill.

Jordan Boney of Argonne won fourth prize, a

To RAFFLE, Pg. 4A



Representatives from the Eagle River, Three Lakes and Conover snowmobile clubs took part in the annual raffle, along with Sno-Eagle Olivia Hunter. —Contributed Photo

