



Ladysmith News

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Thursday, November 24, 2022

- Enriching education**
LEEF Grants presented Page A7
- A century of farming**
Kenzior family honored Page A11
- Turns world upside down**
Bruce native in Antarctica Page A12

Virtual tour of remodeling unveiled

School board OKs first purchases for renovation work

By Luke Klink

The Ladysmith School Board voted 7-0, Wednesday, to direct its construction management firm to grant limited authorization to proceed with \$2.7 million in material purchases as part of a \$21 million referendum building and grounds improvement project.

The Kraus-Anderson Construction Company and the school district are in the process of negotiating a design-build amendment with respect to the project, but have not yet reached complete agreement upon all of the terms. Both sides desire commencing work on the project before the agreement is reached.

The agreement allows Kraus-Anderson to purchase \$1.77 million in heating/ventilating units from Bartingale Mechanical of Eau Claire, \$559,645 in precast materials from Wells Concrete Products of Maple Grove, Minn., \$332,500 in structural

metals from Structural Steel Supply of Somerset and \$339,000 in bleacher seating and press box system components from JW Industries of Green Bay.

"The numbers I gave you tonight were on or a little under our estimates," said Kraus-Anderson Director of Education Vice President John Huenink.

Board members cited strong interest in mechanicals and building component investments.

"We need to make sure our infrastructure is the top of our priorities," school board member Jeff Wallin said.

Bartingale will provide air handling rooftop units, recovery rooftop units and compressor/condenser units.

Wells Concrete Products will manufacture, deliver and install 32 pieces of precast concrete architectural insu-

Please turn to Page A7

Oily sheen on river persists after spill

By Luke Klink

Work continued last week following the Nov. 6 discharge of 175 gallons of a petroleum product from the Flambeau Hydro Station dam near Ladysmith. The dam is operated by Dairyland Power Cooperative.

Dairyland officials said Wednesday, Nov. 16, the utility's emergency spill contractor, Bay West, anticipated primary remediation will extend through the week. Dairyland, under direction and consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Bay West, will then continue monitoring and mitigation of the discharge area.

On Thursday, Nov. 17, Dairyland officials said Bay West will apply "Simple Green" to a pocket area of the river where physical recovery of the oil discharge has proven challenging due to shallow water and rocky terrain. Simple Green is an American brand of cleaning products produced by Sunshine Makers, Inc. Their best known product is Simple Green All-Purpose Cleaner. It is advertised as an environmentally friendly, non-toxic, and biodegradable cleaner.

The use of the cleaner has been authorized by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Agency, according to state DNR Hydrogeologist Jeff Paddock.

"There is still some material in the river, but it is far reduced from what it was," Paddock said after the application of Simple Green. "The next step is to discuss further options."

The leak occurred on turbine #2, which was immediately taken out of service when the problem was discovered.

The unit was isolated from the river.

When the dam is opened, water runs through a turbine that spins and generates electricity.

The discharged material is nonhazardous petroleum oil, Mobil DTE 26 Ultra, according to Katie Thomson, Strategic Communications Manager for Dairyland Power Cooperative.

The Mobil DTE Oil Named Series oils are high quality, rust- and oxidation-inhibited circulating lubricants. They are used widely in steam turbines and hydro turbines, as well as all other continuous circulation methods involving pumps, valves and ancillary equipment.

In water, the oil acts as a thin surface sheen that is more like gasoline than oil. As a result, it may seep under and around the booms being used for containment.

"Both the state DNR and the EPA approve usage of Simple Green as an environmentally safe, biodegradable product for incident cleanup," Thomson said. "This one-time application will be used by Bay West on approximately 1,000 feet of Flambeau River shoreline for effective remediation of residual discharge in difficult to navigate areas."

Dairyland Power initially estimated up to approximately 20 gallons of oil may have been discharged to the Flambeau River from the dam, located about 3 miles upstream from Ladysmith. More investigation determined the discharge to be actually 175 gallons of oil.

"They are confident they saw stopped that release," Paddock said.

Please turn to Page A7



THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN — Braving cold and windy conditions, Ladysmith Public Works employees install Christmas lights in the city's downtown on Friday, Dec. 18, working here along Worden Avenue.

— News photo by Luke Klink

City council advances street work bonds

By Luke Klink

The Ladysmith Common Council voted 6-0, last week, to sell \$1.045 million in general obligation street improvement bonds to help fund several major street improvements.

Projects identified for improvement with the funds include Flambeau Avenue, W. Fifth Street N, Corbett Avenue E, Fritz Avenue W, E. Second Street N, W. Seventh Street S, Lindoo Avenue E and Adams Avenue E.

"We have some big projects that are coming up," said Public Works Director Kurt Gorsegner.

The city had four bidders on the bonds with the Milwaukee firm, Baird & Co., the low-bidder with an average interest rate of 4.58 percent. Actual rates vary annually during a 20-year repayment

We have some big projects coming up.

— Ladysmith Public Works Director Kurt Gorsegner

period.

The interest rates being bid were within a narrow range which showed competition for the bond purchase, according to Josh Low, a senior financial specialist with the Roseville, Minn., firm Ehlers Public Finance Advisers, that handled the sale transaction for the city.

"You had four bids, which I think is a nice result for a bond this size," Low said. "It wasn't a super-high dollar amount so the fact we got four bids is pretty good."

Pre-sale projections estimated the bonds would come in around 4.68 percent, which was set higher for planning purposes.

"With the facts that the markets moved in the last few weeks with interest rates going up and the Federal Reserve announcing an increase in their federal rate, the fact that we were able to come in under that pre-sale amount is good news in my opinion," Low said. "You got a pretty nice representation of bidders from throughout the Midwest. You can see how closely they were competing for your bond. There was a good bit of attention for Ladysmith."

Interest rates vary annually including 5 percent from 2023-32, 4.13 percent from 2033-2037 and 4.38 percent from 2038-2042. Actual interest paid over the life of the bond will be \$550,744 making total principal and interest about \$1.6 million.

Annual principal interest payments will range between \$76,831 in 2031 and a high of \$84,331 in 2025.

The city is projected save about \$21,000 in interest over the life of the bond repayment due to interest rates being lower than projected at time of being locked in. Low called that savings "an important take-away" from the bond sale, the difference between \$1.616 million and \$1.595 million.

Please turn to Page A7

Shop local this weekend; Winter Magic awaits

By Jerilea Henrick

The Rusk Area Chamber of Commerce, along with the City of Ladysmith, are packing a sleigh ride of fun this holiday season with several opportunities to get out and enjoy Christmas.

November 26

Small Business Saturday, held Saturday, Nov. 26, kicks off the holiday local shopping season. The Rusk Area Chamber of Commerce asks you to support your local businesses and shops this holiday season.

Many area small businesses will be offering specials on Small Business Saturday, including Shinabery Cycle Sales LLC, Lois, Lann & Bean Boutique, Toad House, Offering Hope & Wellness, Miner Station, Colonial Nursery, Ladysmith Federal Savings & Loan, Miner

Theatre, Lil Hunny's and Fringe Salon.

Also on Small Business Saturday, warm yourself by a campfire in downtown Ladysmith and take advantage of Shop Small swag at select stores while supplies last.

December 2

As part of Winter Magic, St. John's Lutheran Church will hold a "Night to Remember" with meal and Christmas Music. Contact Lois at 715-532-9406 for more information.

December 3

The Rusk Area Chamber of Commerce will host Pictures With Santa 9-11 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 3 at the Rusk County Visitor Center. Pictures With Santa are free and while supplies last, there will be candy.

The annual Winter Magic, co-sponsored by the Rusk Area Cham-

ber of Commerce and City of Ladysmith will be held Saturday, Dec. 3 with a string of activities to light up your weekend.

The Winter Magic Holiday Gift Show will be held 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the old Ladysmith Elementary School. Toad House will have a hot chocolate bar 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Also at this time, Plaid Peacock will have a Winter Magic specials. Beginning at 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. event goers can enjoy s'mores in downtown Ladysmith at Centennial Square.

Hope Lutheran Church will hold a Christmas cookie walk at 10 - 11:30 a.m. There will be a gingerbread house display and historic home tour at the Carriage House 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Cookies, carols and crafts will be performed by the Ladysmith High School Choir 10:30 a.m. to noon at

the Rusk County Community Library.

The Miner Theatre will offer a free movie at 11 a.m.

There will be horse drawn carriage rides will be held 1-3:30 p.m. at Memorial Park, Ladysmith.

The annual Winter Magic parade will begin at 5 p.m. in downtown Ladysmith. Complimentary cookies will be available at the start of the parade until gone.

Following the Winter Magic parade, there will be a lighting ceremony at the Armstrong Pavilion at Memorial Park at 6 p.m.

The VMA/Drop Zone Bar & Grill will hold an adult formal winter ball 7-10 p.m. There will be music, dancing and hors d'oeuvres with a cash bar. Tickets are \$10 and are available at the Rusk Area Visitor Center and the VMA.



City: Council advances road work bonding

Continued from Page A1

Prior to this bond proposal, city officials had been asked to consider a referendum to fund street improvement work.

The closing on the bond issuance is set for Dec. 1.

Last May, the city council voted unanimously to proceed with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law/Surface Transportation Program funding that requires an 80-20 local match. In a related decision, the council voted unanimously to proceed with Community Development Block Grant engineering proposals for Miner Avenue from E. Third to W. Sixth streets, roughly from the Rusk County Government Center to just past the Ladysmith Fire Hall.

Through 2026, the state will receive \$138 million in BIL federal funding managed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation STP. The city projects under consideration include W. Fifth Street, from Lake Avenue to North Avenue; Adams Avenue from E. Ninth Street S to Lindoo Avenue; Fritz Avenue from First Street S to E. Fifth Street S; Corbett Avenue from E. Fourth Street S to E. Sixth Street S; E. Eighth Street from Worden Avenue to Miner Avenue; Gustafson Road from Doughty Road to Barnett Road; Barnett Road from Doughty Road to the Industrial Ball Park Road. STP does not finance underground utility work.

Also at the Monday, Nov. 14 meeting, the council voted 6-0 to approve a certified survey map to pave the way for redevelopment of the former animal shelter property. The decision essentially divides the current lot from two to three parcels, one of which a housing developer is looking at.

Last July, the city council approved a proposed new 40-unit development consisting of multiple one-story townhomes on the former animal shelter property. The site is south of Phillips Avenue, between E. Third and E. Fourth streets. It is along the north shore of Flambeau River.

The site development is being prepared by Commonwealth Development Corporation. The com-

pany based in the Madison area is proposing 8 one-bedroom units, 16 two-bedroom units and 16 three-bedroom units. The cottage style buildings would utilize a majority of the 5.25 acre property for the residential development.

Its proposal calls for the city to sell the property to Commonwealth for \$1 "to ensure extensive value engineering is not required and the municipal assistance request remains within reason."

Each unit will feature an attached single-car garage stall. Also planned is a free-standing community building for tenant amenities including a fitness center, business center and leasing office.

The property was formerly used to house a city/county animal shelter, city gravel piles, vehicles, signs and water and sewer utility related materials. The former animal shelter was situated on a concrete slab and was razed in 2018. A city garage on a cement slab and remaining utility materials and gravel piles will be removed prior to transfer of the property. Phillips Avenue was rebuilt in 2017-18 including new water and sewer utility lines and a new paved road surface. The property is set among a number of uses, predominantly R-1 Single Family Residential. The project site is located along the residential Phillips Avenue and shares a neighborhood with both single and multifamily housing in the immediate area.

A leash-free dog park is located adjacent to the property. The city owns the river frontage on the south shore of the Flambeau River. The property is within a Tax Increment District the city formed in January 2021.

Ald. Al Christianson, who represents the area in District 4, spoke about preserving the character of the neighborhood. He cited past area residents who always complained about the unsightly property.

"They are good neighbors, both parties and good people," Christianson said. "We aren't going to please everybody, but we have to do what is best for the neighborhood, and this is that."

In a related move, the council

voted 6-0 to amend zoning for the former animal shelter property as part of Tax Incremental District 14. The decision converts the parcel from R-1 single family to R-3 multifamily residential.

Commonwealth Development Associate Tyler Sheeran told the council the previous guidance on the development had expired, replaced the prior week by new guidance. As a result the proposal is being adjusted, but unit count and bedroom splits are currently projected to remain the same.

"Fortunately not a lot changed, so we still feel really confident in the deal and our ability to get it done," Sheeran said.

Sheeran said the market has changed substantially on interest rates and construction costs since the company made its initial proposal last July. He added the company is still confident in the financing.

"Fortunately one of the biggest changes has been the state allocating more dollars toward each deal than they previously had to shore up any of those gaps we would be facing now," Sheeran said. "So, all in all things are kind of heading in the right direction."

The additional dollars will help reduce cost burdens that might otherwise fall on municipalities, according to Sheeran.

A projected mid-December deadline to submit the proposal has been pushed back to the end of January to accommodate the application and municipal approval process.

Also Monday, the city council:
 ■ Voted unanimously to approve changes to the city's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The updates include additions for ADA compliance, adding the new municipal community center and changes for the hospital property.

■ Heard a public works report that included an update on Flambeau Avenue reconstruction with bidding the project next spring and construction next summer. Area residents submitted a petition with the city earlier this year to have the street work completed, saying the project has been promised without anything done for several years.



LEEF GRANTS PRESENTED — LEEF Awards are presented to Ladysmith teachers (from left) Kari Hetchler, \$175 for "Creating a Generation of Geniuses" plus \$605 for "Enriching Lives Thru Everyday Literature" (grade 3); Amy Besasie, "\$291 for Family = School = Treasure" plus \$285 for "A Generation of Scientists" (grade 3); Mandy Swanson, \$1,044 for "Strong Hands"(K); Jody Schott, \$465 for "Humidifier for Hatching Chicks"(grade 1) and Keshia Kruchten and Crista Bork, \$700 for "STEM Learning" (4K). LEEF's annual Giving Tuesday Campaign is next week. During the period from Nov. 28 thru Dec. 3, all contributions to LEEF received (up to a total of \$5,000) will be quadrupled, thanks to the generous donations from several community members.

Ladysmith teachers awarded LEEF grants

The Ladysmith Educational Enrichment Fund awarded grants last week to eight teachers who submitted applications for their classrooms. Grant applications must illustrate how their fulfillment will enhance the curriculum, particularly in the area of fine arts, English/language arts, social studies, history, foreign language, math and science.

Third grade teacher, Amy Besasie, received a grant in the amount of \$291 for a family engagement night featuring various pirate themed literacy, math and STEM activities. Besasie also received an award of \$285 for Generation Genius Science Kits that will enable the third grade teachers to do interactive science experiments with the students.

Third grade teacher, Kari Hetchler, received a grant of \$175 for a website subscription offering videos and activities to increase understanding in math and science. Hetchler also received a grant of \$605 to purchase copies of "Because of Winn Dixie" to be studied as a class project.

4K teacher, Keshia Kruchten received a \$700 grant for the fund the purchase of STEM resources for the 4K classrooms, enabling students to work with hands on materials to enhance the learning process.

Jody Schott, grade 1 teacher, submitted a request for \$465 to supplement last season's award of incubators. The grant will enable the purchase of humidifiers to increase the success rate of the chickens hatching.

Kindergarten teacher, Mandy Swanson, received a grant of \$1,044 to purchase materials to help students strengthen their fine motor skills, enhancing their ability to operate writing utensils, scissors, etc.

LMHS Reading Interventionist, Gina Baker, received a \$1,000 grant to estab-



TEACHERS RECEIVE AWARDS — LEEF Awards are presented to Ladysmith teachers (from left) Suzanne Colman, grade 6, \$1,999 for "Character Study Through Broadway". Gina Baker, Reading Interventionist, \$1,000 for "STEAM Club" plus \$1,000 for "Family Literacy Night", and Julie Vollendorf, Spanish teacher, \$1,600 for "Vamos a Puerto Rico".

lish a STEAM Cub at LMS to extend student learning in various fields such as science, technology, engineering, art, and math. Baker was also awarded \$1,000 to help cover the costs of the appearance of an author at the Family Literacy Night.

Suzanne Colman, LMS grade 6 teacher, received a \$1,999 grant to provide transportation to Minneapolis to see a Broadway show and witness how professionals develop the characters they portray on stage, and LMHS Spanish teacher,

Julie Vollendorf was granted \$1,600 to help finance the Old San Juan portion of the upcoming Spanish Club trip to Puerto Rico.

The Ladysmith Educational Enrichment Fund (LEEF) is a non profit organization formed to promote and help finance enrichment activities in the School District of Ladysmith. Orga-

nized in 2011, the fund has distributed more than \$70,000 in grants financing experiences that go beyond day to day lessons and open students' eyes to the wider world. The group is governed by a committee of community members, teachers, students, administrators, school board members and alumni.

LEEF's annual Giving Tuesday Campaign is next week. During the period from Nov. 28 thru Dec. 3, all contributions to LEEF received (up to a total of \$5,000) will be quadrupled, thanks to the generous donations from several community members. Your gift of \$5 becomes \$20. As the fund grows, more dollars become available for grants. Since the grant program was started in 2013, over \$70,000 has been awarded.

For more information about LEEF, search LEEF—SDL. Click on this:// sites.google.com/view/leefSDL/home.

School: Board OKs first round of purchases

Continued from Page A1

lated wall, measuring 10 inches by 12 feet, or 12,264 square feet.

American Structural Metals will provide 33 tons of structural steel, 20.5 tons of steel joists and 175 squares of metal deck. Due to current volatility in steel pricing, the company is temporarily modifying its bid procedures with material pricing based on published pricing at time of quote and proposals in effect for 10 days from time of quote.

The 750-Seat "Angle-Frame" Bleacher Seating/Press Box System provides seating for 760 total spectators including 752 bench seats and eight ADA spaces.

It is 12 rows high by 123 feet wide with a row rise/depth of 8 inches by 24 inches. There will be a 4'-7" wide front walkway elevated 4 feet above grade. There will be four seating access aisles with mid-aisle railings and three means of egress including two end stairs and one ADA ramp. The ADA compliant wheelchair and companion seats will be integrated across the front walkway

System Components include aluminum tube/angle frame support system bearing on concrete slab, anodized aluminum bench seating, aluminum riser panel with powder-coat purple finish. There will be a galvanized chain-link guardrail system and front skirt system running full length of front walkway utilizing pre-finished

metal panel system, black in color. The press box system will be of stand-alone design inset within the bleacher system

It will have galvanized structural support system bearing on concrete footings 8 feet deep x 38 feet long with a single-slope shed roof with overhangs on all four sides. Interior compartments will be separated by full partition walls with doors.

System components will have a galvanized structural framing system with pre-finished metal wall panel system and pre-finished metal roof and trim panels with colors to be determined. Finished interiors include insulation, wall/ceiling paneling, carpeting and counters, doors and windows, complete lighting and electrical system and provisions for low-voltage systems included.

The board could begin seeing its first round of project bids at its December meeting, but it will mostly likely not occur until January.

The board also saw samples of construction materials and a 3D virtual tour of the remodeled school. Watch the tour online in the multimedia section of www.ladysmithnews.com.

In other matters, the school board:
 ■ Heard public comment about behavior problems on school buses, including bullying, vaping, fighting and inappropriate language. School officials have met with bus contractors. Law enforcement officers have been brought in to speak to students

during assemblies. School officials say the problems are being caused by a small number of students. The board discussed the matter for 20 minutes, saying it would cost \$4,000 per bus to install a camera on eight buses. The district has suspended about 16 students so far this year over bus behavior, or about 2 percent of the student body of about 750 pupils.

■ Voted unanimously to approve the \$5,000 sale of the grain bin at Ladysmith Elementary School that had been used for pellet fire heat at the building. With natural gas prices so low, the heating system has not been used for many years and is no longer cost effective. It also requires a significant amount of work to deliver pellets, lift them into the system and dispose of the ash.

■ Unanimously approved new courses requests for the 2023-24 school year.

■ Heard an update on a storage shed at the elementary school, being constructed by the high school construction program.

■ Approved employment of Jennifer Gago as high school girls assistant basketball coach and Jessica Bechtel as high school girls head softball coach and resignation of Tammy Pegar as LMHS library paraprofessional and Brian Wilmot as high school head baseball coach.

Oil: Cleanup on Flambeau River continues

Continued from Page A1

Due to the low toxicity, volume released and volume of water flowing through the Flambeau River system, the petroleum sheen and any unrecovered turbine oil should readily degrade or disperse, according to Thomson. Due to these factors, there is minimal risk to the environment and human health, she added.

Cold temperatures may hinder natural disbursement. DNR officials will decide if a larger clean up crew will be brought in.

A data sheet for the product states the material is not hazardous, according to regulatory guidelines with no significant physical or chemical hazards. However,

high pressure injection under the skin may cause serious damage, and excessive exposure may result in eye, skin or respiratory irritation.

There have been no reports of fish kills or wildlife destruction. Bay West is using hundreds of feet of floating yellow booms to contain and direct the sheen. The sheen is then sucked off the surface of the water with the use of Wet-Dry vacuums.

As of last week, Bay West reported that about one dozen 55-gallon drums of oil and water had been collected. Since the drums contain a mixture of oil and water, Bay West isn't able to quantify the exact amount of oil recovered overall.

Paddock said Dairyland Power will

be bringing in engineers to determine how the equipment malfunction occurred, and how the oil discharged into the river.

Law enforcement records show a complaint made on Sunday, Nov. 6, to the Rusk County Sheriff's Department dispatch center of "gas coming down in the water past their house." The caller also reported to dispatch, "they can smell gas."

A river resident who asked not to be identified, said, "When it was calmer out, the sheen was out from the shore about 5 or 6 feet."

Dairyland Power has 45 days to report its findings and document its spill response and submit it to the state DNR.

ATTENTION:

Parents & Elementary Schools

LETTERS TO SANTA

Letters to Santa can be dropped off or sent to The Ladysmith News. We will not be accepting handwritten letters.

P.O. Box 189,
Ladysmith, WI 54848,
advertise@ladysmithnews.com
for publication in our Christmas Section to be published Thursday, December 22, 2022.

DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, DEC. 9TH

Favorite Christmas Photos

Share with us your favorite Holiday photo from Christmas past and they will be published FREE in our Christmas tab on December 22nd.

Deadline to submit photos is Monday, Dec. 12. Please provide a brief description of the photo.

If you would like your photo returned, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

One submission will be randomly selected for a Free One-Year subscription to the Ladysmith News.

Bring in or Mail photos to: LADYSMITH NEWS,
P.O. Box 189, Ladysmith, WI 54848.

Rusk County's Annual

Pictures with Santa!

Presented by:

RUSK
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Saturday December 3rd

9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

At the

Rusk County Visitor Center
205 W. 9th St. So. - Ladysmith, WI

- Free candy while supplies last!
- Free pictures with Santa!

Pictures will be available to be picked up starting on December 12th and must be picked up by December 19th.