

Town of Utica Man sustained severe injuries in air accident

On Friday, May 26, at 8 p.m., the Crawford County Sheriff's Department responded to a report of an ultra-lite aircraft crash at 51676 O'Neil Road in the Township of Utica.

Gary Tainter, 75, Gays Mills, was operating the aircraft near his residence and crashed into a pasture/ field area, according to Crawford County Sheriff Dale McCullick. Tainter sustained life-threatening injuries, and was airlifted from the scene.

The aircraft was severely damaged. At this time, the cause of the crash is unknown. The FAA has been notified of the crash.

A powered parachute

Another source familiar with the accident described the aircraft involved as a powered parachute.

The Crawford County Sheriff's Department was assisted at the scene by Ocooch Mountain Rescue, the Gays Mills Fire Department, the Seneca Fire Department, the Wisconsin State Patrol, and Gundersen Air.

Crawford & Vernon Evers approves of Highway 27 improvements

To invest in Wisconsin's transportation system, Governor Evers recently signed a \$6.8 million contract to resurface Highway 27 from south of County C in Fairview and Brookeville Road in Viroqua. The work Vernon and Crawford counties is scheduled to begin June 5.

Mathy Construction is the prime contractor for the project. The project is designed to replace deteriorating pavement along the project corridor. Additional improvements include inlet and culvert replacement, and guardrail replacement.

During construction, Highway 27 will remain open for the majority of construction under flagging operations. Highway 27 will be closed June 7-30, weather dependent, for culvert replacement.

Project completion is scheduled for mid-September. The schedule is dependent on favorable weather conditions and construction progress.

For more information regarding traffic impacts, transportation news and improvement project updates in Wisconsin's Southwest Region: Follow us on Twitter: @WisDOTSouthwest Visit the region's 511 website: SouthWest - 511 WI Projects

Motorists are reminded that using handheld cell phones in Wisconsin work zones is illegal. Alerts and updates provided via these sites are not intended for use while driving. When driving, your focus should always be on driving.



ON MEMORIAL DAY, Veteran Jeff Olson addresses the crowd at the Gays Mills Cemetery as members of Ladies Auxiliary listen, holding wreaths that will be placed on the War Memorial Monument later in the ceremony.

In Gays Mills Memorial Day is observed

By CHARLEY PREUSSER

It was a patriotic crowd that gathered for the Memorial Day observance in Gays Mills on Monday.

The parade featured the American Legion Color Guard, the Ladies Legion Auxiliary and members of the Legion Youth Shooting Sports Program. There were also a few Gays Mills Fire Department trucks, including the restored antique truck the village purchased about 100 years ago.

Following the parade, the crowd moved to the Gays Mills Cemetery for the Memorial Day Ceremony featuring the Ladies Auxiliary's Pacing of the Wreaths on the War Memorial Monument.

Gays Mills McCormick-Rose Post 308 Commander Lewis Knutson began by welcoming everyone to the event.

Roger Dahlberg gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The North Crawford High

School Band played the Star Spangled banner.

Jeff Olson, a member William Schoville Post 220 in Soldiers Grove, delivered the Memorial Day Address. Olson served 20 years in the Army National Guard, including a deployment to Afghanistan.

Olson emphasized that Memorial Day was meant to honor those, who lost their lives in defending the country. He explained that World War I, which was called the 'war to end all wars,' actually produced a mass scale of casualties the world had never seen.

"Thousands gave their lives before and after World War I, the war to end all wars," Olson said. "Then, there was World War II.

"We must never forget the cost of war," Olson told those assembled in the Gays Mills Cemetery on Memorial Day. He reminded everyone that it was a duty to honor those that made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom. He also pointed out that it was appro-

appropriate to honor the families of those who sacrificed their lives. He explained the hardship those family members felt with the loss of their loved ones.

Of those who gave their lives, Olson asked that we remember them, their dreams and their stories.

"We have the opportunity to make the country a beacon of hope for the free world," Olson said.

"Memorial Day is not a day to be celebrating. It is a day to commemorate and respect the sacrifices of so many," Olson said. "It's not about barbecues and blowout sales at furniture stores. It's about those who sacrificed and died to give us the freedom we enjoy. Memorial Day should never be a celebration."

Following the Ladies Auxiliary placing wreaths on the monuments, Roger Dahlberg said the benediction and the Firing Squad fired a salute to the Departed Comrades.

At North Crawford Construction begins

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

The North Crawford School Board heard about the kickoff of construction projects and set daycare rates for the 2023-2024 school year at their meeting on May 24.

Construction projects on the building and grounds began immediately following the end of the school year on May 19. The first projects tackled are flooring in the area behind the large gym, demolition and replacement of the locker rooms, addition of four family-style restrooms, and removal of the rock on the roof over the large gym.

"We held the first of the weekly construction updates this afternoon, and so far, all projects are on time," Superintendent Brandon Munson told the board. "As the summer goes on, I will provide weekly or at least bi-weekly updates."

Munson said a truck and crew from Great Lakes Power Vac (Pewaukee, Wisc.) was there last week removing rocks) from the building's current roof. He said that some of the washed river rock will be reused around the facility.

Then early next week, Higher Ground Roofing (Kewaskum, Wisc.) will begin removal of the old roof membrane, install new insulation board if needed, install new cover board, and adhere a new membrane to the roof. Roof replacement will begin with the high roof over the large gym.

Board member Jerry Coleman asked how the noise from the roof replacement activities would impact summer school.

"I have gone and listened to what it sounds like when

they're removing the rock," Munson responded. "It sounds similar to hail hitting the roof or rain from a thunderstorm."

Munson said that another job, not on the list of referendum projects that is underway is the resanding and repainting of the large gym.

"Preparations have begun on refinishing the floor in the large gym," Munson explained. "A crew from Stalker Sports Floors (New London, Wisc.) is onsite sanding and staining the floor. Over the next couple of weeks the floor will be repainted, and a couple of coats of finish will be applied to the floor."

Munson said that much of the building is still accessible to staff, students, and the public.

"We ask any visitors to the building to park in the front (south) parking lot, and use the middle/high school entrance to come into the building," Munson said. "Currently, the hallway behind the large gym, all locker rooms, the maintenance hallway, and the west half of the middle school hallway are off limits to the public."

Day Care rates

The board labored long and hard over the decision about day care rates for the 2023-2024 school year. Elementary Principal Amanda Killeen reported that it would be impossible to operate the facility on or close to a 'budget neutral' basis without raising the rates and evaluating the age mix of babies and children receiving care.

See BOARD Page 12 Col 4

First two of four Meetings to discuss learning to live without dams held

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

The first two of four planned community education/discussion meetings about learning to live without the flood control dams in the Coon Creek and West Fork Kickapoo watersheds were held in rural Coon Valley on May 25. The two meetings drew a total of almost 50 participants, and were sponsored by the Coon Creek Community Watershed Council (CCCWC).

The last two in this series of meetings are planned for Thursday, June 1, at 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. at the Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center in rural Coon Valley.

"These meetings are not about the decision of whether or not to decommission the dams, but rather about our communities learning to live without them in place," CCCWC president Nancy Wedwick explained. "Watersheds connect us all, and don't care about political boundaries - we need to start to think about things differently now that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has put forth the decommissioning proposal."

The proposal calls for a 45-day online public comment period in July and August, and then decommissioning 23 PL-566 flood control dams in the two watersheds in the summer and fall of 2024. LaCrosse, Monroe and Vernon counties would have to approve the proposal for the Coon Creek dams, and Vernon County would approve the proposal for the West Fork Kickapoo dams.

Information about NRCS' planning can be found at www.wfkandccwatersheds.com.

"After the rain event that led to historic flooding in August of 2018, when five flood control dams failed in one night, we've had to learn to think about water differently," Wedwick said. "Our ancestors here in this landscape were very brave in facing their problems with soil erosion and water runoff, and they figured it out - now it is our generation's turn to face our problems and make the changes needed for ourselves and future generations."

Wedwick, whose ancestor was active in the Coon Creek Watershed Council in the 1950s and 1960s, told the story of her own learning journey about land use, soil erosion and flooding.

"My training is as an attorney, and I didn't start out knowing very much about conservation," Wedwick said. "My husband and I own property both on the ridge and in the Village of Coon Valley, and in 2018, the first I knew about the valley flooding was when my brother-in-law arrived at my house in the middle of the night asking to stay with us because the house in the village was flooded."

Wedwick said that the next day she had gone down to Coon Valley to see what had happened and what needed to be done, and was overwhelmed with the level of community engagement and support that she encountered.

See DAMS Page 12 Col 1

In Crawford County The dairy celebration begins with banquet

By CHARLEY PREUSSER

It was a beautiful night for a party, when Crawford County dairy farmers, joined their friends and families gathered for the annual banquet in Eastman last week.

The delicious meal served at the Eastman United Methodist Fellowship Hall featured plenty of dairy products from the cheese tray introduction, to the unlimited supply of milk and chocolate milk, right up to the popular ice cream desserts.

However, there were plenty of treats in the room in addition to the desserts. The 2022-23 Crawford Dairy Princess Aisja Achenbach started the banquet with a warm welcome to all who attended.

Aisja was joined by 2022 Little Miss Squirt Erin Nolan in giving reports of the year's activities, and there were plenty of appearances for the local dairy ambassadors at banks, schools parades, stores and much more.

However, the night belonged to the 2023-24 Crawford County Dairy Royalty and the outgoing Royalty made sure they felt welcome.

See DAIRY Page 12 Col 4



LITTLE MISS SQUIRT Ivey Achenbach, left, joined Dairy Princess Ellaree Young at the Dairy Banquet at the Methodist Fellowship Hall in Eastman on Thursday, May 25 after being crowned Crawford County Dairy Royalty for 2023-24.



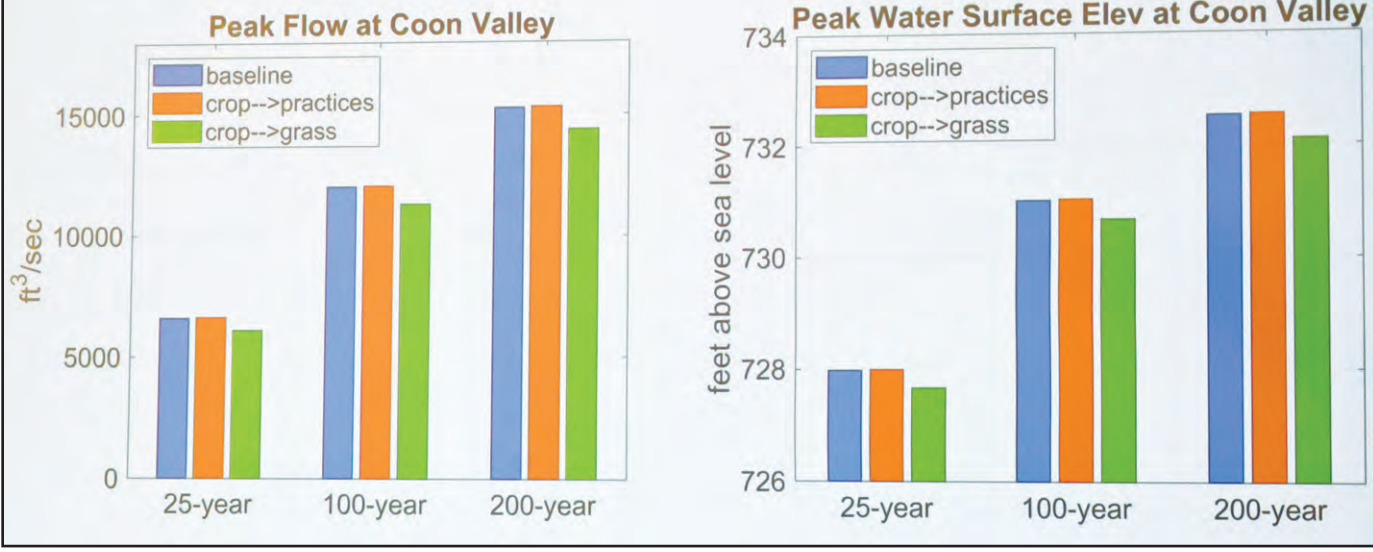
FREE SKIN CANCER SCREENING

Free skin cancer screenings are available at the Prairie du Chien Clinic the entire month of June. Schedule your appointment today at 608.357.2500!

Crossing Rivers Health Clinic

Now open in our new location at 37868 US Hwy 18, Prairie du Chien, WI

Possible paths forward: estimated outcomes



For flood control benefits

Only more grass shows potential to replace dams

DAMS from Page 1

"I realized that the land use choices that we make on the top impact what happens to people in the valley," Wedwick said. "Right then and there, my husband and I decided to re-install the contour strips on the land, implement crop rotations and plant shrubs and trees - we had learned that having living roots in the soil year round is what will make running water walk."

Everyday solutions

Vernon County Zoning and Sanitation Director Matt Albright, who previously served the county as a conservation technician, discussed the steps that homeowners, landowners and farmers can take to reduce soil erosion and stormwater runoff.

"We have to remember that the dams in the Coon Creek Watershed only controlled 17 percent of storm water runoff, and that the rest was up to land use decisions," Albright emphasized. "With the increasingly intense rainstorms we're seeing, and the high gradients of our hills and valleys terrain, we're always going to see storm water runoff - the questions are how much and how quickly."

Albright reminded the groups of the sheer volume of rain that had impacted local watersheds in August of 2018, from August 26 through September 5. Amounts ranged from 23.42 inches in Elroy, 19.06 inches in Hillsboro, 18.06 inches in Westby, 15.57 inches in Ontario, 14.40 inches in LaFarge, 11.56 inches in Readstown and 9.62 inches in Viroqua.

In his presentation, 'Our Watershed,' Albright said that all properties - large or small - in a watershed can be part of the solution or part of the problem.

"Everyone's choices matter, and everyone can be a part of the solution," Albright stated.

Albright listed simple practices homeowners can use to infiltrate, retain and slow runoff from their properties. Those practices include use of rain barrels or installing rain gardens, aerating lawns and planting more diverse and deep rooted plant species in the lawn, and mowing the lawn to only a three-to-four inch height. Green infrastructure options include permeable patio pavers, sidewalks and driveways, and adoption of more clean energy options.

Landowners, according to Albright, have two major options that have potential to make a big difference. The first is woodlot maintenance, especially controlling invasive species to increase the diversity of species in the understory to soak up more rain. The other is maintenance of stream buffers along with planting deep rooted native species.

For agriculture, Albright emphasized use of true no-till, planting cover crops, adoption of managed rotational grazing, and the planting of native buffer strips on less productive acres. Infrastructural solutions include small dams and farm pond water retention structures and terraces and diversions.

Since that storm event in 2018, interest in solutions to erosion and flooding in the Coon Creek and West Fork Kickapoo watersheds has been increasing. Both watersheds were the location of early work by the Soil Conservation Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s and 40s, where the success of the work done there inspired the nation and the world.

With climate change fueled problems impacting communities across the nation and the globe, the hope is that the region will once again be a laboratory of solutions and an inspiration.

"The university community recognizes the rich history in the Coon Creek and West Fork Kickapoo watersheds and the spirit of collaboration and experimentation that helped turn things around in the period from the 1930s to the 1970s," UW-Madison research hydrologist Eric Booth told the group.

Since 2018, this has meant that the university community in particular kicked into high gear on research about the changing definition of rainfall events, land use changes and their implications for water infiltration and erosion and runoff prevention, and how the culture and economics of farming can best be supported while also providing multiple co-benefits for the environment and surrounding communities.

Eric Booth, research hydrologist from UW-Madison, and Randy Jackson and Claudio Gratton from Collaborative Landscape Design in Grassland 2.0's Ridge & Valley Learning Hub addressed the group at the two meetings on May 25.

In their talks, the scientists talked about the new tools their teams have developed to help farmers and landowners make decisions about their operations designed to increase profitability, and provide co-benefits such as

storm water runoff and soil erosion control, carbon sequestration, pollinator habitat, and more.

Those tools are the Grazescape, Smartscape and Heifer Compass tools, and the Floodscape tool. The first three are designed for farmers to make the best decisions for profitability in their operations, and Floodscape helps farmers and landowners see how their land use decisions can best support reduction in flooding in their communities.

"Land use changes alone can't prevent flooding, and I'd argue that historic replanting of steep hillsides in trees did as much or more than changes on agricultural lands," Booth said. "And the predominant land use in all the watersheds is in forest, with 48 percent of lands in the Coon Creek watershed in deciduous broad-leaf forest, and only 19 percent in crop production and 25 percent in pasture."

Booth explained that the major benefit of the flood control dams in the Coon Creek and West Fork Kickapoo watersheds was twofold:

- reducing the threat of flash flooding in an area of about two-to-three miles downstream, and
- retaining and slowly releasing about 17 percent (25 percent in WFK) of total storm water runoff, giving communities downstream more time to prepare.

"We believe that about a 10 percent increase in acres in grass in the Coon Creek Watershed could reduce flooding

levels in communities downstream by about half a foot," Booth said. "This impact would be similar to having the dams in place."

In the end, Booth's Floodscape modeling suggests that even with adoption of more conservation practices on cropland such as the planting of cover crops, the change in runoff will be relatively small. He said that the modeling results indicate that it is more acres in grass and better woodlot management that will move the dial on storm water runoff.

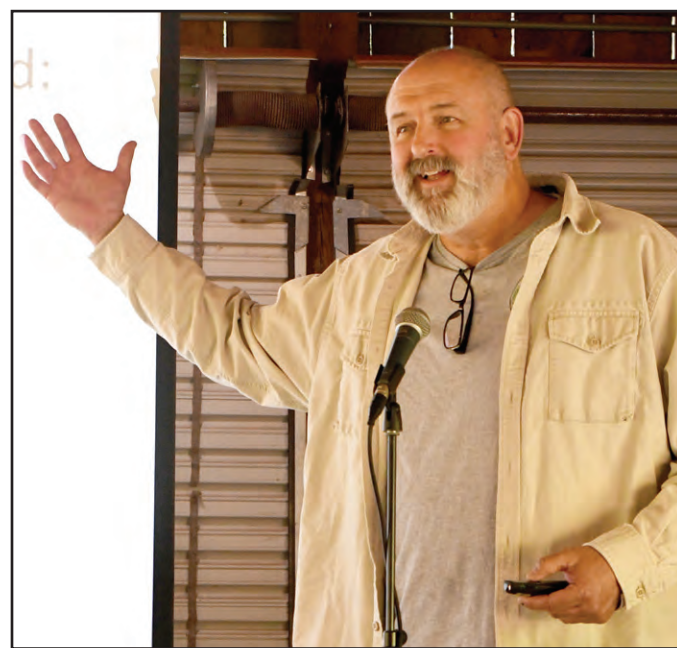
Grass is the answer

Grassland 2.0's Randy Jackson pointed out that from a profitability standpoint, corn and bean rotations are only really profitable with government subsidies added in. He said that the average net return from a corn and beans operation per acre is \$204. He contrasted this with net return per acre from contract heifer grazing of \$247 per acre, and net return per acre from owned land and cattle heifer grazing of \$264 per acre. He said the net return per acre from beef stockers during the grazing season was \$169.

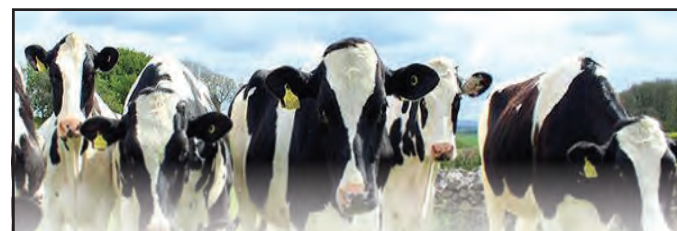
In addition, Jackson emphasized the many co-benefits realized from a managed rotational grazing system for the landowner, the community and the environment.

Those co-benefits include potential soil carbon gains (rather than losses), biodiversity and habitat for birds, pollinators and game, little use of inputs and antibiotics, increased animal welfare and well-being, more opportunities for new generations of farmers, diversified rural landscapes and communities, and increased marketing opportunities for high-value, healthy and nutritious products.

"If managed rotational grazing is more profitable, and you can also realize all of the co-benefits, why wouldn't you do it?" Jackson asked.



GRASSLAND 2.0'S Randy Jackson explains the profitability scenarios of various methods of agricultural production used in the Driftless Region, and their co-benefits or lack thereof, and gave people something to think about.



Crawford County Dairy Breakfast

Saturday, June 3, 2023 6AM-10AM

HOSTS: Alan & Kathy Flansburgh Family
LOCATION: 58153 US Highway 60, Prairie du Chien

Tickets: \$3.00

Serving: Pancakes, sausage links, cottage cheese, cheese slices, cheese curds, apple sauce, milk, Culver's custard and Vesperman's ice cream.

Parking is limited & busing will be available to the farm from Piggly Wiggly and PDC High School South parking lots continuously starting at 5:45AM-9:15AM.

Sponsored by: The Crawford County Dairy Breakfast Committee
The Crawford County Dairy Promoters
The Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin

Will be held rain or shine!

At North Crawford

Daycare rates are set

BOARD from Page 1

"Access to childcare is very hard to find in our community, and has an impact on staff and community mental health and the early development of young children," Killen observed.

The administrative team presented four scenarios for continuing to operate the daycare, with the only one that was budget neutral involving large rate hikes, and restrictions on the number of babies enrolled in the program. Babies require higher levels of staffing, according to guidelines from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.

"The first two scenarios where we keep rates the same, or where we raise the rates beyond what our families can realistically afford are not really options for the district," Munson said. "The second two involve decisions that would involve more modest rate increases, but restricting the number of babies in the program."

In the end, the board decided to raise the daily rate per child to \$35 per day, up from \$30 for children ages two-to-four, and to \$40 per day, up from \$35 for children ages zero-to-two. Because the benefit of having in-house daycare has greatly aided the district in recruitment and retention of staff, the board decided to offer staff an \$8 per day discount.

2023 Dairy Royalty announced

DAIRY from Page 1

During her speech, the 2023-24 Little Miss Squirt Ivey Achenbach, the daughter of Darci and Adam Achenbach, informed the crowd that she was being sponsored by her grandparents Steve and Terri.

Ivey attends Prairie Catholic School. She enjoys being on the farm and taking care of cows. As for her new position representing Crawford County Dairy, the 2023-24 Little Miss Squirt had no problems telling the assembled crowd her ambitions.

"I want to do something that's interesting and important," Ivey said.

The 2023 Dairy Princess Ellaree Young was no less enthusiastic than Ivey, when she introduced herself with a brief speech at the banquet.

Ellaree is the daughter of Harry and JoEllen Young of Soldiers Grove. She is a sophomore at Kickapoo High School and serves as the secretary of the Kickapoo High School FFA.

Ellaree told the crowd that while she currently lives on a beef farm, her past, present and future are deeply tied to the dairy industry.

Wedeburg Farm is the sponsor of 2023-24 Crawford County Dairy Princess Ellaree Young.

Another change is that the daycare will be operating throughout the summer next school year. The daycare is closed this summer while renovations are made to expand the available space for the program. The board also discussed the possibility of school age childcare during the summer break. This option would allow the district to further support district families, and help move the program toward budget neutral operation.

Even with the changes adopted, in order to continue to offer the daycare option, the board discussed the potential need to use the district's Fund 80. Fund 80 is used to account for activities such as adult education, community recreation programs, elderly food service programs, non-special education preschool, day care services and other programs which are not elementary and secondary educational programs, but have the primary function of serving the community.

"The district is actively hiring for daycare positions," Killen said. "Part-time shifts, either for a few hours a day or a few days a week, are compensated at a rate of \$14 per hour. Full-time positions offer a rate of \$15 per hour, and include family benefits. Those interested in learning more or applying can contact Director Peggy at childcare@ncrawford.k12.wi.us"

Ellaree said that growing up, her family had rented a dairy farm, and been involved in raising 40 dairy bulls. Both her dad and grandpa have been involved in the dairy industry on many different levels.

Ellaree hopes to become a cattle feed nutritionist and make her contribution to improving agriculture.

"I love cows," the dairy princess said. "My life revolves around cows. I love being around cattle."

"We all owe a lot to our farmers and what they do," Ellaree explained. "I want to contribute by being a cattle nutritionist."

In particular, Ellaree wants to be a dairy nutritionist. That may be, but on her way to becoming a nutritionist, she has become the 2023-24 Crawford County Dairy Princess - and it's pretty clear she'll do a great job at that.

While the crowning of the Crawford County Dairy Royalty may have been a highlight of the banquet, a few other things happened.

Ed Steger, a longtime supporter of the dairy industry and big part of dairy breakfasts over the years, was named the Honorary Dairy Month Chairperson.

June is Dairy Month! Buy some cheese!

Driftless Area Art Festival

SPRING GALA

Thursday, June 8, 2023

The Old Oak Inn Bed and Breakfast
500 Church St, Soldiers Grove, WI 54655

*** LIMITED SEATING ***

Culinary Arts
Old Oak Inn Chef Debra Arndt
Featuring Local Food, Wine, & Beer

Performing Arts
Featuring Jake Stephens & Sophia Landis

Visual Arts
Silent Auction
Wares of art donated by Driftless Area Artists
Experiences Live Auction

Purchase Tickets @ www.driftlessareaartfestival.com

