



### OVERFLOW

Flooding forces another sewage release in Bay

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### I DO!

CTA play follows fraught and funny marriage

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# Ashland Daily Press



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## Sanborn, counties still seek tax solution

**TOM STANKARD,**  
tstankard@ashlanddailypress.net

Ashland County Administrator Dan Grady was in Madison Wednesday to lobby lawmakers on behalf of Sanborn residents whose property taxes skyrocketed this year as the result of a recent court ruling.

Eighty-five percent of the town's land was declared tax-exempt when a federal appeals court ruled that Bad River tribal members who own property that was once sold to non-native tribal residents but has come back to tribal members cannot be taxed under the 1854 treaty between the United States and the Ojibwe nation.

The ruling leaves the remaining 15% of property owners bearing the tax burden for the entire town — and that might be just the beginning. Tribal members also are seeking about \$750,000 plus interest in tax refunds dating back to 2015 on taxes that shouldn't have been collected, according to the town.

The town has passed a resolution imploring state representatives to provide immediate financial assistance to help meet its costs.

Grady said during a recent meeting between the County Board and Bad River Tribal members that he is still waiting to hear back from lawmakers about what to do next.

"I don't know what they're going to do, actually," he said. "I know there's a lot of discussion about forming an agreement."

No matter what happens, Grady said, "I want everyone to be treated fairly."

More **TAXES** | A5



CONTRIBUTED GRAPHIC

The city of Washburn is moving forward with a plan to add RV camping spots, yurts and other amenities to Thompson's West End Park Campground, despite the objections of several residents.

## Washburn moves forward campground expansion

**TOM STANKARD,**  
tstankard@ashlanddailypress.net

The city of Washburn is moving ahead with plans to expand a local campground over the objections of several residents who spoke in opposition to the plan.

The council voted Monday to award Cooper Engineering of Rice Lake a contract to draft final plans and cost estimates to add more RV camping, an area for yurt camping and a year-round bathhouse

to Thompson's West End Park.

Several residents argued during an hour-long public comment hearing that the camping area should not be expanded due to their concerns about the future of the lakefront trail that runs through the park, environmental impacts the expansion may have and the need to preserve the city's natural waterfront beauty.

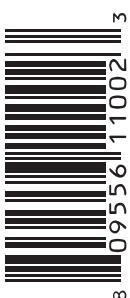
More **EXPANSION** | A5



TOM STANKARD/STAFF PHOTO

Washburn resident Teena Racheli encourages council members Monday to consider the environmental impact that expanding camping in Thompson's West End Park might have.

MAILING LABEL ONLY



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### DEATH NOTICES: A6

**EMPEY, Veronica L.**

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(USPS/340-240)

**Taxes/**from A1

The town of Sanborn could seek a loan from the state Department of Revenue, the Department of Administration or the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands.

“Let the state clean up the mess they created,” Grady said during the meeting.

Due to the court’s decision, taxes have gone up from about \$2,168 on a \$100,000 property last year to \$4,438 this year in Sanborn.

As dire as that sounds, Bad River Tribal Chairman Mike Wiggins Jr. said tribal members suffered more over the years as they were unfairly taxed.

“It was unbelievably painful to go through the litigation with what was at risk, looking at all the people, families and children that were really impacted in a negative way,” he said.

In addition to Sanborn, the Bayfield County town of Russell has been hit hard by the court’s decision as taxes were hiked by roughly 30%.

Like Grady, Bayfield County Administrator Mark Abeles-Allison has been working with lawmakers to better understand the situation. A proposal has been drafted requesting the Legislature’s help.

“I’m hoping a short-term solution can be conceived while we look to address a long term one,” he said.

**Officers/**from A4

**OFFICERS DOWN**

Shockwaves rippled through the tight-knit communities of Chetek and Cameron Saturday when residents learned Officer Emily Breidenbach, 32, with the Chetek Police Department and Officer Hunter Scheel, 23, with the Cameron Police had been killed during a traffic stop.

Few details of the incident have been released by the state Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation, which is handling the investigation.

Breidenbach and Scheel conducted a traffic stop at approximately 3:38 p.m. in Cameron based on a warrant that had been issued on March 30 against the suspect, 50-year-old Glenn Douglas Perry, because he hadn’t made a court appearance in a divorce case in Barron County. They also were to check on the his welfare as he had been exhibiting “concerning behavior.”

During the stop gunfire was exchanged, costing the officers their lives at the scene. Perry, who had been convicted of disorderly conduct in Barron County Court in October 2020, while charges of battery and bail jumping were dismissed according to online court records, died later at a hospital.

Barron County District Attorney Brian Wright said the DCI’s investigation will take about 30 days and then a report will be



PHOTO BY MICHELLE JENSEN

Mourners hold a Thin Blue Line flag across the street from the funeral home in Barron.

sent to his office. He plans to quickly disseminate information after a review, saying the two “outstanding” officers deserve an expedited response.

“That’s the least we can do for the families of both officers, and certainly for the community as a whole,” Wright said.

**EMOTIONAL DEVASTATION**

At a press conference on Monday afternoon, the toll that the officers’ deaths have taken on the Barron County law enforcement community was apparent in the faces and voices of Sheriff Chris Fitzgerald, Cameron Police Chief Adam Steffen and Chetek Police Chief Ron Ambrozaitis. Voice wavering at times and

laden with emotion, Steffen said the event was “tragic to say the least.”

“In addition to changing the lives of their family and friends forever, this event has touched me, my department, local law enforcement and law enforcement around the world,” Steffen said.

Scheel, who had served six years with the Army National Guard, joined the Cameron Police Department in 2022 and was described as a dedicated officer who was passionate about his job.

Ambrozaitis emotionally thanked the community for its support.

**TO HELP AND HONOR**

Sarah King Glaze recommended the following to help the families and communities in the wake of the officers’ deaths:

A group is making ribbons to put up in the community and donations of any blue ribbon material are appreciated.

Put up blue lights to show your support for all survivors of this tragedy.

Donate gift cards for food in the area. These can be given to the families, local law enforcement and all those from out of town helping.

Donate gift basket items for the children to entertain them at the funeral and comfort them, such as kid-friendly snacks, coloring stuff, board games, etc. Stuffed animals and blankets can be comforting, but please know that they will be inundated with them. Consider things to keep them busy

Keep praying. There is going to be a lot of healing needed for the entire area and those so closely impacted

Sarah Glaze can be contacted on Facebook and will gladly collect anything people want to donate and get it where it needs to go.

**Expansion/**from A1

Resident Roth Edwards has for months been a sort of ringleader for local opposition and he on Monday renewed several objections about the loss of local green space. He also read a letter from former Mayor Edith Merila, recalling how local volunteers helped build the city’s walking path while she was in office from 1976-1980.

“The people wanted it and made it happen. Washburn, its citizens and the lakeshore are an example of what public involvement can accomplish,” he read from the letter. “It’s interesting to see citizens value the lakeshore as much as they did back in 1976.”

Current Mayor Mary Motiff said that the expansion plan should not affect the walking trail at all.

“The path will be preserved, along with a good amount of green space,” she said.

Resident Teena Racheli said she is worried that the expansion will further erode the park’s open field which already shows signs of decline.

“It needs action and public policy to understand the goal of restoration and healing. The proposed yurts and other recreational camping, while exciting-sounding, I don’t find these projects to be environmentally focused. Let’s minimize damage and be responsible,” she said.

The land once was home to the city’s booming lumber mill, but has spent decades as an open plot along the lakeshore and Racheli said it should remain that way.

But Council Member Thomas Neimes Jr. said the expansion will “generate some serious revenue for the city,” which badly need it.

And Council Member Jennifer Maziasz she was struggling with how the city should provide for both residents and visitors.

“I’m trying to balance things for the community and things for tourists. There’s a lot to consider,” she said. “What does Washburn really have if we take away the lakefront?”

When Maziasz wondered if the time is right for the project, City Administrator Scott Kluver said, it may not be considered again for several years if it fails now.

After more detailed plans are released, the city will develop costs of construction as well as costs for upkeep and management of the expanded campground and how long the city might wait to see a return on its investment.

But resident Lee House

cautioned council members not to rush forward with the project, reiterating Maziasz’s comments about preserving the lakeshore. He and Edwards said the entire city should be allowed to vote on whether the plan is approved.

Not everyone felt the same. Resident Jared Trimbo encouraged council to get the project approved and underway.

“These discussions have not been easy, but it’s what the city needs to stay ahead of finances. It’s a small tradeoff. We don’t want to see Washburn deteriorate,” he said.

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**3 Things/**from A3

**• CHEQUAMEGON AREA CHOIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY SPRING CONCERT**

When: Sunday starting at 4 p.m.

Where: St. Louis Catholic Church: 217 W. Seventh St., Washburn

What to expect: “A Golden Opportunity” directed by Michael Powers and accompanied by Myra Bliss.

**• RANDOM THEMED DANCE PARTY: THE ‘80S**

When: Friday starting at 9 p.m.

Where: Stagecoach Bar & Grill: 315 Main St. E. in Ashland

What to expect: Come dressed up in your favorite ‘80s attire or come as you are. The theme changes every month.

**Chequamegon Area Choir**  
Presents  
**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Spring Concert**  
*A Golden Opportunity*  
Director: **Michael Powers**  
Accompanist: **Myra Bliss**  
**Friday, April 14, 2023**  
**7:30pm**  
**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**  
Ashland, WI  
**Sunday, April 16, 2023**  
**4:00pm**  
**St. Louis Catholic Church**  
Washburn, WI  
Make-up date (if needed)  
**Monday, April 17, 2023 • 7:30pm**  
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