



Menominee school board bids farewell to Superintendent Sarau

ERIN NOHA
 EagleHerald Staff Writer

MENOMINEE — The mood was somewhat light at Tuesday's Menominee school board meeting, the first gathering after the announcement that Superintendent Rich Sarau was leaving the district.

A recent conference led to his decision, Sarau said during his report.

"Fortunately, the keynote speaker hit a spot for me, and that spot is when I finally made the decision of what I had to do to get home to my family," he said. "He had lost everything — he lost his family because



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Superintendent Rich Sarau explains his decision for resigning from the school district at a Tuesday school board meeting.

of being so wrapped up in the job."

Sarau's family lives in Northern Michigan.

A lot of time, stress and personal investment got school

officials through the last year — a year to the day, exactly — from when the decision-making process began, said School Board President Derek Butler.

"Well, Mr. Sarau, I'd like to

say on behalf of the district and community, thank you for everything," he said. "I reflected a little bit today. A year ago today is when we had to make the hard decision in regard to the abatement starting on the second floor due to the water event. As we all know, it was painful."

The Menominee Junior/Senior High School closed after sustaining flood damage in an estimated 30 rooms on Aug. 1, 2022. Heavy rains overwhelmed the temporary caps placed on five openings in the roof for a new ventilation installation, peeling up asbestos tile.

More **SCHOOL** | **A3**



LOCAL
 Peshtigo 4K classes begin.
A3



Maui resident describes leaving island as wildfires engulf landscape

She said the planned trip to Marinette was a coincidence

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MARINETTE — Mary Carvalho could see flames covering the Maui landscape from the plane.

"We could see the fires burning up on the mountain," she said. "I think I was just in shock, really."

Carvalho left Maui to visit Marinette with her cousin as authorities deemed the wildfires one of the deadliest natural disasters in the state's history. Her departure for a visit coincided with the Maui wildfires.



Carvalho

As of Wednesday, more than 100 people have died in the fires. That number could double, Gov. Josh Green of Hawaii told CNN.

"The night that I was supposed to get on a plane was the night the fire was happening," Carvalho said.

The most fatal wildfire in more than 100 years that started in the early morning on Aug. 8.

The cause of the fire has not been determined, but The New York Times reported that experts suggested a possibility of downed power lines, citing online videos.

Carvalho's flight was eventually canceled on that night. The flight crew was stranded near the fires.

More than 2,000 people were sheltered in place at the airport, with mixed emotions. Tourists who had almost died and residents who had just lost everything were gathered together — tensions ran high a few times, Carvalho said.

More **MAUI** | **A2**

CHURCH WORK



EAGLEHERALD CONTRIBUTOR/PAUL WILLIAMS

Jason Lawrence and Burt Calcari work last week on replacing rotten wood in the bell tower of the Holy Family Catholic Church in Marinette which dates to 1891. The exterior is currently being painted and repaired.

SPORTS

Are you ready for some football?
A17-A24

Good morning,
Betty Englund!
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DEATHS

ANDERSON, Marian
GEHRKE, Carl

More on **A6**

TODAY'S WEATHER

HIGH LOW

76 | **59**

Sunny, warm and humid with light winds.

More on **A28**

Advice.....A10-A11
 Classified.....A18-A19
 Comics.....A10, A12
 Crossword.....A10
 Deaths/Obits.....A8
 Opinion.....A7
 Records.....A8
 Sudoku.....A10
 Sports.....A25-27

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL



EAGLEHERALD CONTRIBUTOR/
PAUL WILLIAMS
Justin Woulf leads a group of his 4K students to Peshtigo Elementary for their first day of school. **RIGHT:** Lincoln Behnke hangs close to his mother, Abbie Behnke, as he seems a bit uncertain about starting his first day of school in Peshtigo.



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School/

from A1
Students returned to school on six months later on Feb. 8.

The decisions required to get kids back in school included engaging the state school superintendent, Sen. Ed McBroom, Rep. David Prestin and the state and treasury departments.

"It actually went to the governor's office," Butler said.

The district resolved the significant environmental issue with a lot of background work that people may never realize or know about, Butler said.

"Through all of that, I witnessed Mr. Sarau struggle with the balance between work and family, and when he came to me with his decision, of course, as a father, I could do nothing but support that," he said. "Rich, we want nothing but the best for you, we wish you nothing but the best for the future, and we will miss you."

Sarau teared up, struggling to get words out.

"Thank you for the opportunity that you guys gave me," he said, wiping his eyes. "I've learned a lot."

Scott Martin, principal of Blesch Intermediate School, thanked Sarau and wished him good luck moving forward during his principal's report.

"Your time here was short, but you made a lot of progress," Martin said. "In the end, the really exciting thing is when you're at home, and your family's going to see you at home. That's what really matters."

Sarau's mood was considerably lighter, and he answered some questions a bit more off the cuff or congenial. People were looking at him intently throughout the meeting. After

wrapping up, he gave a few more statements on leaving.

"It's very difficult, bit-bittersweet. In a year's time, we went through a lot," Sarau said. "Finally, we've made it through the storm, and we're seeing the light out past the storm, and I believe we're headed in a great direction now. We've turned a lot of things around."

He listed achievements like getting through the asbestos issue, progress in leadership, higher test scores, the CTE program and moving the district forward on problem points.

"We're working on some different areas to build the district and make this Menominee again and get past all that bad stuff," Sarau said.

He said he had never had to contact the state and treasury departments, the state superintendent or the governor's office. He received a lot of support from the board to get through.

"As hard as it was, there was still a lot of growth for me here," Sarau said. "I learned so much and got such good support from the board. They've been great with me all the way through this. The board has been supportive, and we worked together, and we got through it."

Many people were willing to help to tackle the asbestos issue, no matter how big or small, Sarau said.

"You kind of get down on the world today, right? It's easy to do with all the negativity out there, but it was good to see there are still good people out there, positive people and support," he said. "No matter how bad it gets, you'll get through it."

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Aging & Disability Resource Center
of Marinette County

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Wheel Hike Together

ADAPTIVE HIKING EXPERIENCE

The ADRC of Marinette County and the Marinette County Parks Department will host **Wheel Hike Together**, an adaptive hiking event at Thunder Mountain Overlook, Crivitz, WI, **October 3 - 8, 2023**. Wheel Hike Together participants and their companions can reserve an all-terrain outdoor wheelchair (OWC) in one hour increments, to explore the parks 3 miles of trails and scenic overlook. Registration begins August 1st at EXPLOREMARINETTECOUNTY.COM or call the ADRC today for more information and to reserve your spot!

