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## County to vote on federal funds plan

### Interest from ARPA set for general operations

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

The Winnebago County Board of Supervisors is set to consider a resolution that would allocate \$1.4 million in interest earnings from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to fund county government projects and funnel future interest earnings to the county's general fund.

According to a memo from the coun-

ty executive, the final rule from the U.S. Treasury on ARPA spending expressly allows interest on the federal funds to be placed in the general fund.

The county received \$33.3 million in federal pandemic relief in 2021 and 2022, which it designated the "Spirit Fund" to be spent in the spirit of ARPA.

The funds were divided into the categories of "county government projects" proposed by the county executive and department heads; and "government identified projects" intended to be a partnership among county departments and

the community.

To date, the county has approved 65 projects and disbursed \$23.5 million in ARPA dollars, according to the county's new online Spirit Fund dashboard.

With not all ARPA dollars having been disbursed, the county has continued to collect interest earnings on the money, which now amounts to \$2.5 million. Of that, \$1.4 million in interest was earned from the funds in the government identified projects category and an additional

SEE **ARPA interest** ON PAGE 7

## INSIDE



### Snap specialist

Neenah grad in middle of Hawkeye action  
Page 8

### Family relief

Focus on Freedom grows in its 5 years  
Page 3



Photo by David Hall

### Metal mastery

A blacksmith explains how he makes a medieval dagger at the Art After Dark renaissance fair last weekend at Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass. The event featured a variety of entertainment that included blacksmithing, glass blowing, music and magic.

## Harrison Street stormwater project area clears hurdles

### Efforts made to add trail, other amenities

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

After more than three years of construction, the city's Harrison Street stormwater pond, which features a waterfall and walking trail, is nearing completion.

Public Works director Gerry Kaiser anticipates the project will be finished by the end of the year and said it will aesthetically and environmentally enhance the area.

Situated at 716 Harrison St., the pond is along Winneconne Avenue west of the Canadian National railroad tracks. The lo-

cation led officials to design the site with better aesthetics than typical stormwater ponds.

"With that location along Winneconne Avenue, which is one of our main entries into the city, across the street from a regional park – Washington Park – we felt that it needed to be something a little more special than just the standard hole in the ground," Kaiser said. "So some effort was made to create some amenities with a little more attractiveness to the pond site itself."

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the four-acre site has seen various uses, including several residential



Neenah News

Though the waterfall is not yet working, city officials expect the Harrison Street stormwater project to be completed by the end of the year.

SEE **Harrison pond** ON PAGE 7

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Michelle is a Menasha native who has been working for Westgor Funeral Home since September 2009. She is currently the President of the Fox River Valley Funeral Director Association and was a charter member of the Rotaract Club of Neenah/Menasha as well as a member of the Neenah Kiwanis Club.

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### Corrections

It is the policy of Neenah News to correct all errors of fact. For correction information call 920-385-4512.

### About the newspaper

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# War monument being added at Oak Hill

Neenah News

Dedication of a military monument at Oak Hill Cemetery to honor service members lost during the Persian Gulf War and Global War on Terrorism is set for 1 p.m. Sunday in the military section of the cemetery.

Jill Fritsch has been leading the effort to add recognition to service members from recent conflicts at the Neenah cemetery to join other established memorials there while honoring her late husband and his comrades' service.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Fritsch served 20 years in the military, including part of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, before retiring in 2021 and passing away in 2023 from brain cancer.

The ceremony will include the Neenah Menasha Veterans Honor Guard among other veterans groups and speakers, with other public officials in attendance.

The Persian Gulf War (1990-1991) included Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. The Global War on Terror describes the U.S.-led global counter terrorism effort in response to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York City and



Submitted photo

This monument honoring those lost in recent American wars will be dedicated Sunday at Oak Hill Cemetery in Neenah.

Washington, D.C.

Fritsch said many groups were involved in the process, including Twin City Monuments, Michael Kading from the city's Parks & Recreation Department, local veterans groups and county Veterans Services officer Jeff Bucholtz.

"I'm grateful to everyone who helped me make the idea that my husband shared with us a reality. This monument com-

pletes the military history here and leaves room for other military history on its back if needed," Fritsch said.

"When we come here on Memorial Day next year to remember all who served and are still serving; while we visit my husband SFC Daniel Fritsch as he wanted, the war he and his fellow service members fought will be seen, will be honored and will never be forgotten."

# Salary scale for county's executive post approved

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

The annual salary for the Winnebago County executive position has been set through the end of 2028 after the county board recently passed a resolution that fixes the compensation for the upcoming four-year term.

Under state statute, changes in compensation for elected officials must be estab-

lished at least 90 days before an election. The county executive position will be on the ballot in April.

County Executive Jon Doemel's current annual salary is \$122,896. He also receives health, dental, life insurance and long-term disability insurance benefits, and participates in the Wisconsin Retirement System.

Doemel was elected in 2021, replac-

ing Mark Harris who held the position for 16 years. At the time he was elected, the county executive's annual salary was \$107,188.

Doemel initially faced some criticism after hiring a chief of staff without county board approval, with an annual salary of \$52,000. He also created a department of administration and implemented a new director position, with an annual salary of \$135,890-\$150,989.

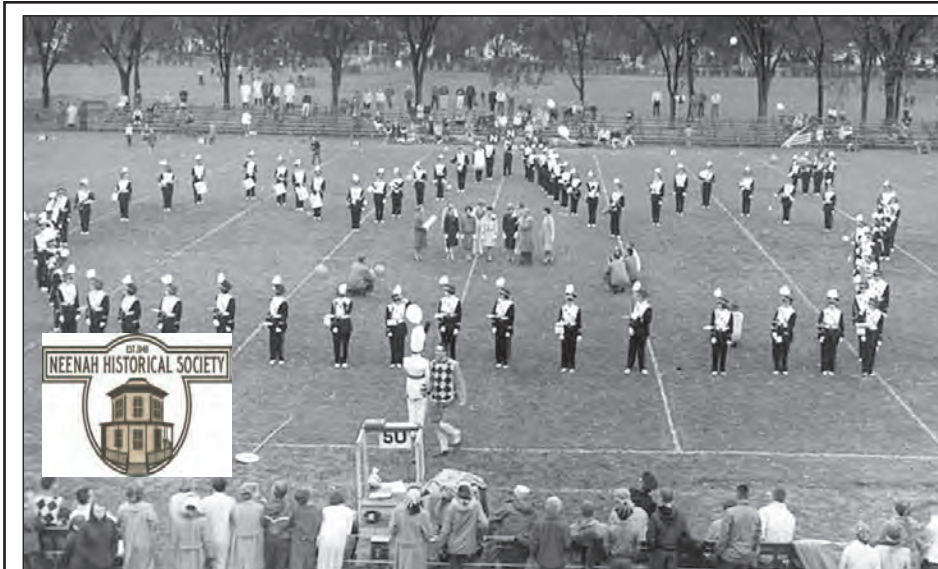
Of all Wisconsin counties that have county executives, Dane and Racine have the largest populations and pay their executives annual salaries of \$146,692 and \$131,950, respectively.

Bordering Brown and Outagamie counties, which both have larger populations than Winnebago County, pay their county executives annual salaries of \$107,330 and \$113,422, respectively.

Historically, Winnebago County has increased the salary of the county executive position by 2% each year since 2015. This year, director of human resources Mark Habeck recommended increasing the executive's salary in 2025 by 3% and by 2.5% each year from 2026-2028.

Under the approved schedule, the position will come with an annual salary of \$126,583 through March 2026. It will increase that April to \$129,747; increase in 2027 to \$132,991 and in 2028 to \$136,316.

Several supervisors spoke in favor of the pay increase at a September meeting before voting it in, noting that competitive salaries are necessary to attract well-qualified candidates to elected positions.



Neenah Historical Society photo

## Homecoming honors

The Queen and her Court are crowned at halftime of the Homecoming football game in this undated image. The high school field is the present-day Shattuck property.

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# Business grows mission to help disabled be more independent

## Focus on Freedom offers children, parent programs

By MaryBeth Matzek  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Marla Kopecky Penney worked for 20 years with people who had disabilities and noticed a gap between the support systems at home, in the community and at school.

She decided to launch Focus on Freedom to help those families in 2019. Five years later, the organization is busier than ever.

"I noticed there wasn't a lot of wraparound care, independent living skills or career planning for disabled children and adults," Penney said.

"We come in and provide these much-needed training and skills."

Focus on Freedom works with clients in Outagamie and Winnebago counties starting at age 8 who have physical, cognitive or developmental challenges, including autism, Down syndrome and cerebral palsy. The program is paid through the Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) waiver program.

The business offers multiple programs for clients including daily living skills training, career planning and respite care. For caregivers, Focus on Freedom provides communication coaching, communication consulting and foundations in caregiving programs.

"Through our personalized, one-on-one training, we focus on building self-confidence and empowering individuals with disabilities to reach their goals and live as independently as possible," Penney said.



Penney

Daily living skills training helps customers master age-appropriate daily routines and activities independently, such as hygiene skills, food preparation and doing the laundry.

"Daily living skills can also be about finding hobbies whether it's putting a puzzle together or working on arts and crafts since for many children, technology is their sole source of leisure," Penney said. "We also practice going out in restaurants and how you behave in one type of restaurant is different than a fast-food restaurant."

Penney also provides clients with career planning assistance. For many students with disabilities, they are not sure of what they will do after high school. She works with students to uncover their interests and chart a plan forward.

"Some students want to attend college so what does that look like for them? For example, we can focus on study skills," Penney said. "We also talk about emailing teachers and not being afraid to ask questions."

For students unsure of what they want to do after high school, Focus on Freedom offers job shadowing opportunities.

"A client may have one view of what a career is like versus the reality, so job shadowing helps with that," she said.

Focus on Freedom also provides programs for families, including a communications program. Parents are also asked to attend a fundamental skills program since "there's no manual on how to parent children with disabilities," Penney said. "We provide the family and client with communication supports and talk about modeling behavior for their child."

Some children with disabilities, for example, take what parents say literally. If a parent says, "I'll be there in a minute," they think it



Submitted photo

Focus on Freedom works with clients who have physical, cognitive or developmental challenges.

will really be a minute so Focus on Freedom employees help parents learn how to phrase things so their child understands correctly.

Focus on Freedom continues to work with clients as long as there are more goals for them to achieve and they are making progress.

For people living outside of Focus on Freedom's service area or who are on a wait-

list, they can sign up for assistance through Empower Freedom. The program provides quick read articles, social stories to help children learn different skills and quick link resources. There is a fee, but Penney said it's reasonable since she wants families to feel empowered.

"My goal is to help as many families as possible," she said.



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# Meal programs help residents in need stay connected

Neenah News

With the growing need to provide elderly and disabled residents with nutritious meals in the region, community action agency Advocap continues to seek donor support to maintain its ability to serve that population.

Home-delivered meals and those offered at designated dining sites are part of Advocap's mission in Winnebago, Fond du Lac and Green Lake counties that also helps the agency stay connected with the overall health of those living in poverty.

Dawn Paterson, nutrition director at Advocap, said resident needs have grown every year throughout Neenah and Menasha for its programs backed by grant money and individual donors.

"There is a huge need for this program," Paterson said. "We are donation based. There is no charge for the meals, only donations (contributions). We do not turn anyone away regardless of their income."

"Everything is done anonymously. Our average donation is \$5 per meal. Without proper funding, we will need to increase that, plus even cut out some meals. We do not want to see anyone go without."

Food is provided to anyone over age 60 or disabled who lives in Winnebago County. If homebound, they receive the meals at home. If they can get out, there is a congregate site at the Menasha Senior Center.

Paterson said the meal service includes wellness checks on individuals, allowing Advocap to deal with the nutritional needs of individuals that can improve their mental and physical health.

"We do not just leave the food; we make



Photo from Advocap

Advocap's regional meal program both delivers directly to residents or offers a space for dining to those who qualify for the nutritional initiative.

sure we see or hear someone. If we do not, we have emergency protocols in place," she said. There have been multiple times that we have found people who are lying on the floor, in need of medical attention, or even worse."

Paterson recounted a participant who was found on the floor by one of their drivers. She had been getting meals Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and had fallen on a Monday night and wasn't found until that Wednesday's lunch time.

"Because everything that she went through and needed, we got her sheets, compression socks, a bed rail and talked her into eating on Monday through Friday," she said, "so if she fell, she would not

## Valley VNA names new chief executive

Neenah News

Valley VNA Senior Care has named Becky Reichelt as its next president and chief executive to replace Theresa Pichelmeyer, who announced her retirement after 17 years with Valley VNA.

Reichelt, who was executive vice president at St. Paul Elder Services in Kaukauna for the past 15 years, is joining Valley VNA as the organization opens its final wing of a \$9.5 million remodel of the assisted living portion of its community. Pichelmeyer will remain on staff through the end of the year.

"I feel very blessed to serve as the



Reichelt

be on the ground for so long."

Advocap's meal program follows U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture dietary guidelines, including specific requirements for folate and vitamin B12, both connected to depression when the supplements are found to be deficient in people. Food insecurity is also connected to lower cognitive function, anxiety and decreased quality of life.

"Our senior population is already facing food isolation; without funding this would be detrimental to both physical and mental well-being," Paterson added. "We would also have to cut back how many days of the week we would be able to deliver food. This would deter our daily wellness checks, which, if not done, would be life threatening to our participants."

Advocap also provides essential services such as transportation, preschool education, family development services, case management, weatherization, adult education and life skills training.

Paterson said the agency served 21,629 meals to Neenah and Menasha residents from June 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024. "This number is getting larger every day," she said.

Go to [www.advocap.org/Donate-2](http://www.advocap.org/Donate-2) for information on how to donate or support the meal programs.

next CEO of Valley VNA Senior Care, a well-respected, mission-focused senior services leader in our Fox Valley Community," stated Reichelt, who brings more than 30 years of health care experience. "Their already established commitment to excellence, community connections and quality care complement my commitment to embracing the rich history while enhancing innovative approaches and services to meet the ongoing and future needs of seniors living in our community."

Valley VNA, a nonprofit organization based in Neenah, provides in-home care for seniors and both independent and assisted living. In-home caregivers help individuals and families in the region with personal care, homemaking and companionship, and coordinates the VNA Meals-on-Wheels nutrition program for seniors in Neenah and Menasha.

## Education advocates release voter guides

Neenah News

In cooperation with the League of Women Voters in Winnebago County and Appleton/Fox Cities, Fox Cities Advocates for Public Education (FCA4PE) surveyed all legislative candidates in the area with the responses released in its K-12 Public Education Voter Guide.

Eleven legislative districts were surveyed with 13 candidates responding and nine others who did not respond. The nonpartisan group did not identify candidates by political party and encourages voters to use

the issues to inform their opinions.

The survey asked for written responses on the issues of public school funding, special education reimbursement, private school vouchers and mental health concerns.

The voter guides can be found on the Fox Cities Advocates for Public Education Facebook page.

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Neenah News

FVTC staff, students and supporters were invited to sign the final steel beam before it was lifted into position at the new construction training site on Waupun Road.

## FVTC construction center ready for hands-on training

By Jonathan Richie  
NEENAH NEWS

On a sunny and breezy morning Fox Valley Technical College officials, students and supporters grabbed markers and signed the ceremonial steel beam that was the final piece of the college's new construction training center in Oshkosh.

The FVTC construction training center (CTC) will see students get real-life experience of being at and working on a construction site while learning what goes into putting up a commercial or residential building.

FVTC President Chris Matheny said the experience students will gain from this new site is immeasurable.

"They were operating out of a small lab and now they've got this great, open space to experience a real-life construction setting," he told the Herald. "Students will get to understand what the day-to-day of the job is while employers will get workers with that real-life construction experience on day one."

In remarks made before the official ribbon-cutting ceremony, Matheny called the CTC an 'exceptional learning lab.'

The CTC was built on 2.6 acres of college-owned property on Waupun Road in Oshkosh. The site includes a 5,000-square-foot building to store reusable materials and equipment, a field office and site storage typically seen on a commercial construction site.

The college broke ground on the unique \$1.4 million outdoor training facility in September 2023. In May, the modular field office was delivered by Boldt to serve as a break area as well as an office to mimic the type of field office that is common on construction sites.

The new facility allows students in the Construction Management Technology (CMT) associate degree program to fully construct and deconstruct a one-story, 1,000-plus foot mock building each semester.

"We are developing project managers; the premise of the CTC is to introduce students to building products, site sequencing, logistics and installation methods," says Rich Cass, department chair of construction management technology. "When students are budgeting, scheduling and managing the work they will be better equipped to do so after building it themselves in a controlled, realistic environment."

The CMT program has seen consistent growth since it launched in 2009 and has outgrown the indoor lab it uses at the S.J. Spanbauer Center in Oshkosh. The new CTC has enough room for 16 students to work together at one time at the job site.

Graduates of this program continue to be in high demand in the workforce. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the construction management profession is projected to grow by 9% between 2023 and 2033, surpassing the national average. FVTC's program boasts a 100% placement rate for students within six months of graduation.

Chris Dragosh, FVTC dean of manufacturing, agriculture and construction technologies, said this is the only offering of this type of training in all northeast Wisconsin.

Students will be building up and tearing down the same type of commercial or residential building every semester. Cass said students will oversee everything from exterior masonry to installing interior windows and doors.

"It brings reality to the study. Students will experience what they would see on a worksite," Dragosh said.

After the final beam was signed it was lifted into position and a group of FVTC students secured it into place. Students had been working at the site this spring and will continue to work there this fall.

The project was made possible, in part, from donors who made in-kind contributions. They include CR Meyer, Boldt, Omni Glass & Paint and Wells Concrete.

## New superintendent sets informal meetings

Neenah News

Neenah Joint School District Superintendent Steve Harrison is holding informal community meetings to gather feedback from district residents this month.

Harrison, who began in his role July 1, will hold four meetings at local establishments to give residents an opportunity to meet him and share thoughts about the schools. Guests are welcome to order a beverage or food and have a conversation.

The meetings are set for 6 to 7 p.m. Tuesday at Zuppas, 8 to 9 a.m. Oct. 17 at Shellatte's, 8 to 9 a.m. Oct. 23 at The Plaza downtown, and 6 to 7 p.m. Oct. 30 at Cafe Nutrition in Fox Crossing.

Specific topics include what people are most proud of in the district, what they value about the district, challenges they would like to see dealt with, how to engage the community on those challenges and what the district should start, stop or continue doing.

## Business news roundup

A new military hiring portal providing access to the military talent pipeline is available now for companies in the region. A talent-attraction tool of **New North Inc.**, the portal can be found at [thenewnorth.com/military-hiring-portal](http://thenewnorth.com/military-hiring-portal). A partnership with **Mission: Workforce Alliance**, businesses in the New North region are able to create a profile in the hiring portal, along with having access to additional resources that can enhance their hiring practices.

**Kimberly-Clark Corp.** marked the 100th anniversary of Kleenex tissues last week with a tour at its Experimental Mill in Neenah where it tests its brands ahead of production. The global company founded in Neenah also announced the

donation of 10,000 boxes of Kleenex to the Neenah Joint School District among other school districts.

**J. J. Keller & Associates** ranked No. 61 on Deloitte's listing of the 75 largest private companies in Wisconsin based on sales revenue. J.J. Keller previously ranked 64 on the Wisconsin 75 list and has been on the list eight times.

**Cozumel Neenah**, a new family-owned Mexican grill and bar, has opened at 111 Westowne Drive in Neenah, the second location for Cozumel that is also at 2065 Witzel Ave in Oshkosh. Lunch specials will be offered from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

# Calendar of events

cheon, noon, 2913 County II

**Thursday, Oct. 10**  
Peanuts and Crackerjacks: History of Menasha Baseball, 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

**Friday, Oct. 11**  
The Hallows haunted trail walk, 6:30 p.m., Memorial Park  
Lori Beil in concert, 6:30 p.m., Faith Global Methodist, 1025 Tullar Road

**Saturday, Oct. 12**  
Future Neenah Farmers Market, 8 a.m., Shattuck Park  
Build a Scarecrow, 10:30 a.m., Riverside Park pavilion  
The Hallows haunted trail walk, 6:30 p.m., Memorial Park

**Monday, Oct. 14**  
Historical Homes of Wisconsin Avenue Walk, 9 a.m., Riverside Park

**Saturday, Oct. 19**  
Monster Mash Dance Party, 10:30 a.m., Neenah Public Library

**Thursday, Oct. 24**  
Oak Hill Cemetery: Uncovering 175 Years of History, 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

**Saturday, Oct. 26**  
Old Fashioned Saturday, noon, downtown Neenah locations  
Debunking the Paranormal at Gainor's Tavern, 1 p.m., Neenah Public Library  
Trunk or Treat, 6:30 p.m., Peace Lutheran Church, 1228 S. Park Ave.  
Unfinished Business by Fox Valley Chorus of Sweet Adelines, 7 p.m., Jane Bergstrom Fine Arts Education Center

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## ARPA interest

FROM PAGE 1

\$152,000 in that category has not been allocated.

The ARPA Strategy and Outcome Commission held two meetings in September to discuss the interest and how to proceed with the remaining resources.

Under a proposal from the county executive's office, the interest and remaining unallocated government identified project funds with a combined total of \$1.5 million would be used for county government projects. Interest accrued beginning Nov. 1 would be moved to the general fund for use in county operations.

Examples of county government projects funded with ARPA dollars include a Facilities Condition Assessment and a Facilities Master Plan, which are planning documents that the executive's office wrote are overdue and their completion necessary for budgeting decisions moving forward.

"Based on those documents, the county would be in (a) better position to ensure effective investment of the remaining dollars," the county executive's office wrote.

## Harrison pond

FROM PAGE 1

dwellings, a credit union, box company, telephone company, carpentry shop, delivery business, creamery, beer storage facility and two gas stations. Most recently, the site was owned by Neenah Foundry and used as a parking lot for semitrailers.

The location was identified in 2004 as in need of a retention pond to reduce flooding risks. The city purchased it in 2018 for \$1,000, with an agreement to accept liability for environmental issues. That included underground tank removal and soil clean-up to get rid of contaminated soils.

Galloway Co. covered the cost to purchase a house formerly at 502 Monroe St. that was razed for the project, as the pond assists the company with a cooling requirement for clean process water entering the storm sewer system.

Work on the \$1.8 million pond, waterfall and sidewalk began in October 2021, with the pond operational in early 2023.

"It's accomplishing what all of our retention ponds are designed to do, which is clean up the stormwater before it gets to a water body," Kaiser said.

The pond outfalls to Neenah Creek and serves an area of 217 acres. It is expected to remove 74% of suspended solids and 54% of phosphorus from stormwater entering the system.

"We're helping with that watershed, removing suspended solids, removing phosphorus from the storm water before it gets to the creek," Kaiser said.

The parcel includes a warehouse building along the east side that is used in part by Parks and Recreation for equipment storage and part is leased to Neenah Boat and Dock. Plans for the site include planting trees to screen the warehouse.

A retaining wall with a railing forms the west side of the project site, with a sidewalk circling the pond. Between the sidewalk and Harrison Street is a concrete patio with steps leading down to the retaining wall.

The focal point of the project is the stacked limestone waterfall on the east side of the pond. A manhole near Monroe and Union streets diverts flow toward a second manhole where pumps carry the water to the top of the waterfall.

One waterfall flows at the Harrison Street side of the rock outcropping and a

second flows toward the warehouse side. Kaiser said the waterfall facing Harrison Street is not yet operational due to issues with the pump. The waterfall pump has presented one of several challenges for the project. Kaiser noted delays were caused by subcontractor responsiveness on certain tasks. In addition, the weather impacted construction throughout much of 2022.

"We got hit heavy with spring storms," he said. "It was heavier than normal (that) spring into early summer, and basically made it unworkable for them for quite some time."

After construction was underway, Kaiser said challenges arose with the stonework under the eaves of the warehouse building. "We were seeing when we had rain events, that water coming off that roof of the warehouse was causing some erosion on the slopes heading toward the pond, so we added that stone in to just dissipate that and channel where that water is going to go," he said.

Looking forward, Kaiser said over the next two weeks workers will be grading and paving the walkway between the warehouse and pond. "It's going to be a lot of the cleanup, tidying up, top soiling and getting a grass cover crop down in a number of areas, and really just doing final cleanup," he said.

Kaiser acknowledged the project has taken longer than typical for completion, "but it's going to be a beautiful, functional project for us for a very, very long time," he said.



Photo by David Hall

## Halloween trail

The annual Hallows Haunted Trail Walk at Memorial Park in Neenah is drawing visitors to see who and what they will meet in the woods starting at 6:30 p.m. for the next two Friday and Saturday evenings in a fundraiser for Youth Go.

## Town fire department giving special rides to school

Neenah News

The Town of Neenah Fire Department will be taking eight local children to school in October after they were selected to get a lift to their classes in a fire truck during Fire Prevention Month.

The Ride to School in a Firetruck program is a new initiative to engage with students in fourth grade or younger in the Neenah area. The eight students' names have been drawn and the rides to school started Thursday and will run through Oct. 29.

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# Neenah alum Elkin finds success snapping for Hawkeyes

By Steve Clark  
NEENAH NEWS

Luke Elkin has been a fixture on the University of Iowa football team the past four years.

He's just had to carve out his niche one play at a time.

The former Neenah High School stand-out is in his fourth season as the long snapper for the Hawkeyes, trotting out onto field when called upon to initiate a play by zipping the football to a teammate to be punted away or kicked through the uprights.

"I've enjoyed my stay here the past four years. It's been awesome," Elkin said in a recent phone interview. "Being around my teammates, a lot of cool guys that I've been able to meet. Just being around a great group of guys is something that I've enjoyed."

Elkin has been the long snapper for the Hawkeyes since the second game of his freshman season – nearly 50 games heading into Saturday's contest against Ohio State. He arrived in Iowa City as a walk-on but went on scholarship following his sophomore season.

The 6-foot-1, 200-pounder who was named to the 2024 Patrick Mannelly Award Watch List, an honor given to the best long snapper in college football, said he takes pride in executing his job when called upon.

"When we get the ball, my one mindset is that we are going to punt the ball or if we get into field goal range we are going to get the field goal," Elkin said. "You have to stay focused but not too focused. Do it, get a quick debrief and then relax a little bit. But every time we get the ball back you have to



Photo courtesy of the University of Iowa

Neenah High School alum Luke Elkin (39) is in his fourth season of serving as the long snapper for the University of Iowa.

get back to it."

Elkin said he started long snapping in eighth grade when the team was looking for players to fill the kicker, punter and long snapper roles.

Because he had played quarterback, he was certainly capable of throwing a football but he wasn't sure how it would be from a different position.

"Throwing a football is pretty easy for me but doing it upside down, I was just giving it a shot," Elkin said. "I could do it and from there it just kind of took off."

Elkin said he was the varsity long snap-

per as a freshman at Neenah and continued to hone his craft.

The summer following his junior year of high school, he attended a camp for specialists at the University of Iowa and opened the eyes of the coaches there.

"I came to that and did pretty well at that camp and stayed in touch with the coaching staff and from there it kind of took off on them wanting me to come here," Elkin said. "I just got better and better at it as the years went on in high school."

When his Rocket career ended, Elkin had the opportunity to play safety/linebacker at the non-Division I levels of college football but opted to head to the Iowa program as a walk-on.

"When you get the opportunity to walk on at a Big Ten university, it's really hard to say no to that and I couldn't pass that up," Elkin said. "I'm glad I made that decision because of what I've been through the past four years has been something I've enjoyed a lot."

Elkin said that there is a lot that goes into executing a perfect snap, from the way he chooses to grip the ball to the exact placement of where it goes once he releases it.

On a punt, it's a 15-yard snap that he

aims to place right at the punter's right hip. On field goals and extra points, the distance is cut in half and his aiming point is the holder's hand that is over the spot where the ball will be placed.

"There's a lot more into it than people see," Elkin said. "There are a lot of minor details."

Working with the holders on field goals and extra points is the most technical and takes the most work to perfect.

"The biggest worry for me and the holder there is to get the laces out so he doesn't have to spin the ball. It takes some tinkering, but you figure that out in fall camp before the season," Elkin said. "It just takes a lot of reps and we have been working on it since spring."

Having been part of the Iowa football team, Elkin has had the chance to visit such legendary venues like The Big House at the University of Michigan, the Horseshoe at Ohio State, Camp Randall Stadium at Wisconsin and Happy Valley at Penn State.

Not that he pays much attention to what those sites are like when the game is going on.

"For me it's kind of hard to take it in because I'm going there to do my job and I'm focused on what I need to do," Elkin said. "But there are obviously times like pre-game when we are walking around the stadium and you can look around and realize that this is pretty special."

"Not a lot of people get to experience it so I'm grateful I'm able to be here and play in front of this many people. It's just an awesome experience and play in front of 80,000 and 90,000 people."

Although he doesn't pay too much attention to the venue he's in, there is a game which stands out over the rest.

SEE **Elkin** ON PAGE 15

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# St. Mary Catholic edged in fifth set in loss to Rebels

By Steve Clark  
NEENAH NEWS

After four sets of hard-fought volleyball, one little hiccup was too much for St. Mary Catholic to overcome.

Laona-Wabeno scored five of the first six points in the decisive final set and the Rebels were able to hold on for the non-conference win, beating the Zephyrs 25-21, 17-25, 25-22, 18-25, 15-10 on Tuesday night in McClone Gymnasium.

“You can’t get down four points, five points (in a fifth set) because you don’t have 20 more to make them up,” St. Mary Catholic head coach Mike Mauritz said. “They got off to a good start in that last set and we didn’t. That was the match.”

Autumn Crowe’s spike from the back row led to the Zephyrs’ only point at the start of the final set as Laona-Wabeno grabbed a 5-1 lead. St. Mary Catholic would get within two points four times during the final set but the Rebels built as much as a six-point lead during the set, getting to match point with a 14-8 lead.

Luci Nackers then blasted a spike for St. Mary Catholic and Anna DeWitt followed with a kill off a Rebel overpass, but a missed serve by the Zephyrs provided Laona-Wabeno with its final point.

Losses are never good, but we can learn from this,” Mauritz said. “We had to go five (sets) and we got pushed. It gave us some things to work on and a lot of things to reflect on tomorrow that we did really well. It’s a positive. It doesn’t feel like it right now, but it really is.”

After the teams split the first two sets, Laona-Wabeno seized control midway through the third set turning a three-point deficit into a 21-11 lead over the Zephyrs.



Neenah News

The Zephyrs’ Kate Nackers tips the ball over the net against Laona-Wabeno on Tuesday.

But St. Mary Catholic didn’t wither after the outburst.

Maria Johnson bumped a ball over the net for a sideout and ignited a 6-1 burst by the Zephyrs, which included aces by Luci Nackers and Sammie Weiss, and a kill and a block from Eliana Brenn.

Then, with the Rebels reaching set point, St. Mary Catholic rattled off four

straight points capped by back-to-back aces by Stella Virlee.

Laona-Wabeno ended up closing out the set, but the momentum from the Zephyrs late charge carried over into the fourth set as they grabbed an early 9-2 lead with all nine points coming on the serve of Luci Nackers.

“I think they took a breath after the first set and started a little flat,” Mauritz said. “That gave us the opportunity to make a good run.”


St. Mary Catholic extended the lead to 14-5 on a run of four points capped by another Virlee ace, while a Crowe kill, two aces by Brenna and a spike off a Rebel dig attempt by Kate Nackers gave the Zephyrs their biggest lead of the set at 24-13.

Laona-Wabeno rattled off five straight points to extend the set before St. Mary Catholic finished things out to set the stage for the fifth set.

Weiss finished with 20 assists and 12 digs for the Zephyrs, while Ava Rankin led the team with 23 digs.

At the net, Crowe tallied a team-high 18 kills to lead a balanced attack, while DeWitt and Brenn each had seven.

“Our right-sides did a nice job tonight with Anna (DeWitt) and Maria (Johnson) and our setters (Weiss and Virlee) do a decent job of distributing the ball so everybody gets the ball,” Mauritz said. “With this group of kids, we need everybody. That’s the only way we are going to beat anybody who is really good.”



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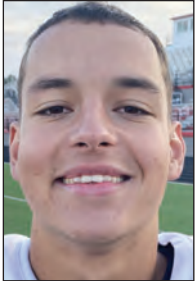
# Rockets gear up for powerhouse Papermakers

By Steve Clark  
NEENAH NEWS

There is one way for high school football coaches to avoid the usual distractions of Homecoming week for their teams.

Schedule the top team in the state.

Neenah will host Kimberly at Rocket Stadium on Friday night following a week of festivities at Neenah High School, but head coach Steve Jung believes that – even with the hoopla of a Homecoming week – his team will be focused and ready when kickoff against the

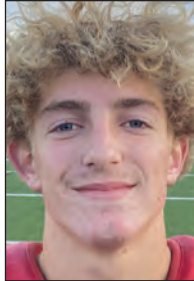


Alatorre

Papermakers hits.

“They know they have to rise up to play Kimberly so I don’t think we’ve been distracted. I think our kids have always come out and played hard (during Homecoming),” Jung said. “There’s no doubt about having Kimberly as our opponent for Homecoming helps keep the team focused. Kimberly brings out the best in every opponent they play and that’s very true for us.”

And it’s not that there aren’t activities that are going to pull at the players’ focus.



Weinke

There have been those over the course of the week.

It’s just that when playing an opponent like Kimberly – ranked No. 1 in the state in Division 1 – when it’s time to practice and prepare, everything else needs to take a backseat.

“With Homecoming, there’s a few distractions but the coaches told us just to have fun with it and enjoy the week like we normally would,” senior center Alex Alatorre said. “I think it’s going to be a big game for us and it’s a game we look forward to every year no matter what’s going on for the week.”

The Rockets enter the game with back-to-back wins under their belts, including last Friday’s 25-14 victory over Appleton North last Friday.

The Rockets scored 15 points in the fourth quarter to pull out the win, getting a pair of touchdown runs from Grant Dean, who returned to the lineup after missing two games with an injury.

“We tried some things at the start of the Appleton North game but then we got back to what we are good at – just running the ball down their throats and it worked in the second half,” Alatorre said. “(The offensive line) all loves running the ball like that. We told coach we just want to keep running the ball up the middle and be physical every play.”

Jung was happy to get Dean back in the lineup, who was injured in the first half against Kaukauna three weeks ago.

He finished with 80 yards on 15 carries and will be provide a big offensive threat against the Papermakers.

“Having Grant back brings a little bit of good mojo,” Jung said. “Just the fact that

## Week 7 games

### Fox Valley Association

(records reflect FVA games)

- Kimberly (4-0) at Neenah (3-1)
- Appleton North (3-1) at Kaukauna (4-0)
- Fond du Lac (1-3) at Hortonville (1-3)
- Oshkosh West (0-4) at Appleton East (0-4)

he can break a play and be gone on a run play or a pass play is really good for us.”

Quarterback Evan Vanevenhoven ran for 99 yards and a touchdown against the Lightning, while also throwing for 105 yards.

Vanevenhoven did not play against Kimberly last season because of injury and having the two big offensive threats coming off a strong performance and ready for the Papermakers will give Neenah a boost.

What it’s going to take to beat them is how we played the second half of the Appleton North game. We really executed well. We were physical. We moved the ball and maintained control of the ball,” Jung said. “And then we got stops on defense.”

Neenah’s defense held the Lightning to just more than 200 yards of total offense in continuing its strong play this season.

The Rockets have allowed more than 17 points just once this season – a season-opening loss to Muskego – and the unit will look to have another strong performance against the Papermakers.

“Our discipline is key. Know our keys, know our reads and know our calls,” said junior linebacker Hunter Weinke, who led

SEE **Neenah football** ON PAGE 15



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# St. Mary Catholic still seeking first EWC victory

Neenah News

St. Mary Catholic will hope the hoopla of Homecoming will help carry the team to its first Eastern Wisconsin Conference victory of the season when the team hosts Roncalli on Friday night.

The Zephyrs are coming off a 42-14 loss to Kohler/Sheboygan Lutheran/Sheboygan Christian last week as they slipped to 0-4 in league play.

Despite the loss, St. Mary Catholic had one of its best performances running the ball this season as Daniel Harness averaged five yards per carry and finished with 60 yards on 12 carries. He also scored a touchdown in the game.

But turnovers again plagued the Zephyrs as K/SL/SC picked off a total of four passes in the game and blanked the Zephyrs 21-0 in the first half.

Roncalli enters the game with a 2-2 mark in league play and are coming off a dramatic 28-27 win over Brillion on the road.

## Week 7 games

### Eastern Wisconsin Conference

(records reflect EWC games)

- Roncalli (2-2) at St. Mary Catholic (0-4)
- Kiel (4-0) at Chilton (2-2)
- Brillion (2-2) at New Holstein (3-1)
- K/SL/SC (2-2) at Valdres (1-3)

The Jets have played a slew of close games this season having posted three of their four wins by eight points or less, while also suffering a two-point loss to New Holstein in Week 5.

Roncalli is led by running back Drew Reimer, who has amassed 513 yards in the first six weeks, while quarterback Landon Chalupny has thrown for nearly 1,200 yards and 11 touchdowns.

The Jets have also allowed at least 27 points in three of the last four weeks which may give the Zephyrs the chance to get on track offensively.

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# Healthy Brenn provides leadership for Zephyrs

By Steve Clark  
NEENAH NEWS

One of the toughest things for an athlete to deal with is when an injury affects his or her ability to perform.

In most cases, whatever the ailment is, it gets diagnosed, treatment is given and then there is a recovery period with rehabilitation. Most cases.

St. Mary Catholic's Eliana Brenn spent her junior volleyball season dealing with pain in her back that left multiple doctors perplexed about what the injury was. So there was no sure diagnosis, no treatment and as she battled to stay on the court for the state-bound Zephyrs, unfortunately no sort of recovery.

"It was hard because we didn't know what was going on. We went to a bunch of different doctors and nobody could tell me what was wrong," Brenn said after a practice earlier this week. "It was definitely a hard thing to grasp around. It was kind of like will I ever play at 100 percent again and be able to fully swing at a ball without it hurting."

Despite not being healthy, Brenn earned first-team all-conference honors while ranking second on the team in kills and blocks. She also led the team in service aces, while helping the Zephyrs reach the WIAA State Tournament at the Resch Center in Green Bay.

After the season, Brenn was finally diagnosed with a stress fracture in her spine and had to rest for eight weeks – causing her to miss a chunk of her junior basketball season.

But at least, there was a return to being healthy.

"Just over time, with club and everything, it just got worse and worse and playing five days a week didn't help it," Brenn said. "Obviously rest is what I needed. I sat out for eight weeks. It was tough but the sitting really helped and now I'm back and full go."

A now-healthy Brenn is a force in the middle for a Zephyr volleyball team that has opened up some eyes this season.

After graduating the bulk of the varsity lineup from last year's state-qualifying squad, St. Mary Catholic has had to turn to a much younger roster and is currently tied for the lead with Manitowoc Lutheran in the Big East Red Division.

"I feel like it's going really well, better than I would have expected. We are clicking really well as a team," Brenn said. "Coming from a group last year that was really senior strong, it's cool to see the underclassmen kind of step up a little more."

Brenn said she learned a lot from playing with last year's talented senior class and it wasn't just about the physical aspects of the sport.

She watched how her teammates displayed leadership on and off the court and has tried to emulate that. Brenn highlighted Lauren Fischer – now a member of the UW-La Crosse volleyball team – as a player she tried to pattern herself after as a leader.

"She was always positive. Always lifting people up on the court. Even though she was obviously one of our main people, she never acted like that. That's what I'm trying to replicate when I'm on the court," Brenn said. "I just really try to be as encouraging as possible and not get down on anyone because if they make a mistake, they know what they did wrong. They don't need me



Neenah News

Senior Eliana Brenn was a first-team all-Big East selection last season and has returned healthy this season for the Zephyrs.

telling them what they did wrong. It just makes people feels worse."

There is also an aspect of Brenn's leadership that may stem from something not volleyball related.

Brenn admits she likes things in a specific order in her life and has seen how being a bit of a neat-freak has carried over to the chaos of volleyball.

"I like to organize. I like everything to be in a certain spot and a certain place. So when I'm not at a sporting event or at school or going to bed early, I like make sure everything in my room is in its place and clean," Brenn said. "At the end of certain plays where we are really scrambling and it seems to happen a decent amount with our team. It's nice to kind of pull everyone together and say take a deep breath, we got it and get everyone on the same page again."

Being a part of last year's team also meant that Brenn did get to play in the Resch Center.

She called it her best volleyball memory – so far – and would love to lead the Zephyrs to a return visit.

"It was an indescribable experience. I hope we go there again this year, but every team hopes they can go," Brenn said. "We

did move up a division this year so we will see how we stand. But we're going to play hard and see where that gets us."

Just like last season, Brenn is one of the leaders in both kills and blocks for the Zephyrs from her middle hitter position.

Although she excels in both facets at the net, she doesn't have a favorite choice between the two to score a point.

"Getting a stuff block is awesome. I love getting stuff blocks, especially against a really good hitter who really pounds it and you stuff it right down to the ground," said Brenn, who plays club volleyball with FC Elite. "But getting a really good hit in a big game too is also super awesome. I do love a good hit."

Either way, those kinds of points can change the momentum and potentially the outcome of a volleyball match.

"Those big plays can give teams different amounts of energy," Brenn said. "I feel like with the right team and right amount of chemistry on the team, one of those big plays can go really far for a team and give them the momentum to win a game."

Brenn has experienced a lot of athletic success at St. Mary Catholic.

In addition to last year's state run for the volleyball team, she has been a member of

## Senior Standout



sectional-qualifying basketball and soccer teams.

It certainly has made things enjoyable but she also wants to make sure the reign of Zephyrs will continue.

"It's definitely fun, I mean who doesn't like to win?" Brenn said. "It is a little pressure now that I'm a senior and all the years before me all the sports have done well, I don't want to be the one to stop that tradition. It's fun. Pressure is a privilege."

Brenn hasn't decided on what lies ahead after high school but, if she can stay healthy, she would embrace the opportunity to continue to compete on a volleyball court.

If not, she certainly has plenty of memories and just as many life lessons to take with her from being a standout for the Zephyrs.

"I take pride in my schoolwork and, especially during basketball season when club volleyball is going on, I still need to remember to prioritize my school work over the fun things sometimes," Brenn said. "Obviously that will help me later in life when I'm busy but still need to get my work done."



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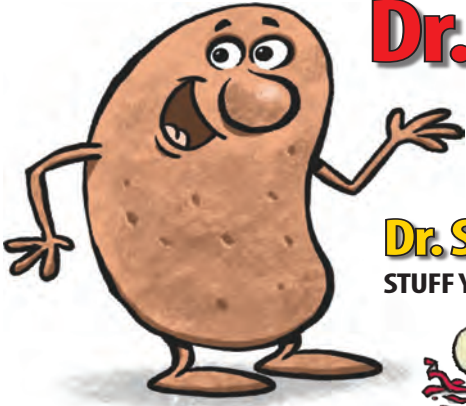
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## Dr. Spud Wants to Know!



Can you taste the difference between an apple, a potato and an onion? Believe it or not, it is difficult to taste the difference between a potato and an onion if you can't smell it. Don't believe me? Try my experiment!

Only the nose knows for sure!



### Dr. Spud's Tasteless Experiment

STUFF YOU'LL NEED:



1. Grate the apple, potato and onion separately. Wash the grater before grating each of the foods. Put each grated food in a separate bowl.



2. Blindfold a friend or partner. Have your partner hold their nose tightly.



3. Place a small amount (about 1/4 teaspoon) of one of the foods on your friend's tongue. Tell your friend not to chew the food, but to roll it around their mouth. Ask your friend to guess which food is in their mouth.



4. Repeat with each of the foods. Be sure to have your friend rinse their mouth between tastings. Do three taste tests with each food item. Use the chart to keep track of the taste tests.

WHAT WAS TASTED	WHAT TASTER THOUGHT IT WAS

### Potato Maze

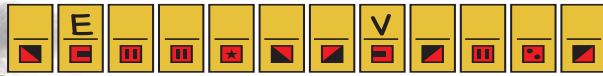
Find your way through this spud-filled maze!



The "Keystone State" could also be called the Potato Chip State, since it's known as the Chip Capital of the World! Dozens of snack food companies got their start in this state. Use the code to find out the name of this state.

**SECRET CODE**

A =	■	N =	■
E =	■	P =	■
I =	■	S =	■
L =	■	V =	■
M =	■	Y =	■



### Extra! Extra! Find 5

Look through today's newspaper to find:

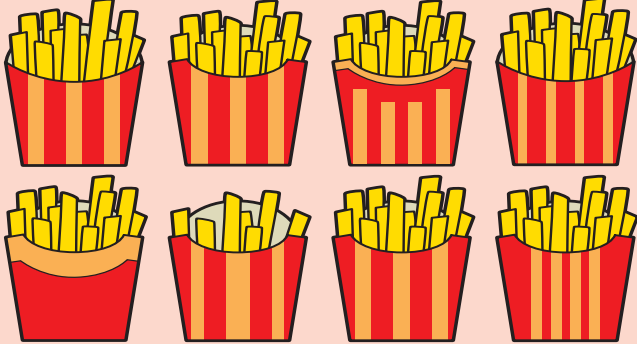
- 5 words that describe a taste
- 5 snack foods
- 5 fruits or vegetables

Standards Link: Use the newspaper to locate information.

### Kid Scoop Puzzler

#### French Fry Fun

Look closely! Can you find the two identical boxes of fries?



Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

### Double Double Word Search

APPLE  
BOWL  
CHART  
CHEW  
CHIP  
CODE  
FOOD  
NOSE  
ONION  
POTATO  
SMELL  
STATE  
TASTE  
TESTS  
WORLD

Find the words by looking up, down, backwards, forwards, sideways and diagonally.

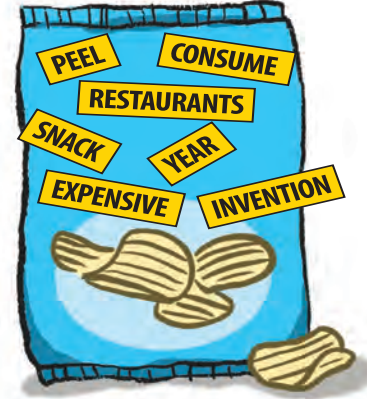
S J E L G E T A T S  
T M C B L V S F W P  
A Y E P I H C O L Z  
S J P L O Q B O N V  
T A M K L T E D O C  
E B A E Z B A Y N H  
S W O C H A R T I E  
T I J W O R L D O W  
S C U H L V X U N Z

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

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Then in 1920, with the \_\_\_\_\_ of the mechanical potato peeler, potato chips jumped from a special restaurant treat to a top-selling \_\_\_\_\_ food.

Today, Americans \_\_\_\_\_ more potato chips than any other people in the world. We eat about 1.85 billion pounds each \_\_\_\_\_. That's an average of about 6.6 pounds per person!

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# Mendoza's late goal lifts Rockets past Wildcats

By Dustin Riese  
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

The unmistakable clank of a soccer ball hitting the crossbar couldn't have sounded better for the Neenah Rockets.

Oshkosh West hit the crossbar on a rebound shot with about five minutes left in Tuesday's Fox Valley Association and the Rockets responded with a push to notch the game-winning goal by Rylan Mendoza in a 2-1 victory over the Wildcats.

"The boys will play until the last game, last minute to earn what they've been working for," first-year coach Martin Valenzuela said. "There are not many conferences as competitive as this one, especially this season."

The win keeps Neenah in the hunt for a second

straight FVA title as the Rockets are tied with Kimberly atop the FVA standings with a 5-0-3 record. Hortonville also hasn't lost a conference match this season and sits behind the league co-leaders with a 4-0-4 record.

Neenah closes out the conference season at home against Appleton West on Tuesday with a win clinching at least a share of the FVA title.

To get into that position, though, the Rockets had to rally from a 1-0 halftime deficit to beat the Wildcats.

Trey White's goal off an assist from Ayden Weisbrod early in the second half knotted the game at 1 and set the stage for the dramatic finish.

With less than 10 minutes to play in the match, the Wildcats moved the ball the

length of the field and generated a dangerous scoring chance. Neenah goalkeeper Pierce Hanson, however, stopped the breakaway opportunity and the rebound shot from the Wildcats just missed the mark, ricocheting off the crossbar to keep Neenah's hopes for a win alive.

After failing to convert on a long free kick a few minutes later, the Rockets' offensive pressure blossomed into the scoring chance for Mendoza, who got possession of the ball after a Grant Romjue pass was deflected and buried the ball in the back of the net.

"Great work (by) Rylan Mendoza for being where he needed to be on that goal," Valenzuela said.

The Rockets didn't seem to be clicking

right at the start of the match and West was eventually able to capitalize on a Neenah turnover and take the lead midway through the first half.

Neenah had its best scoring chance of the first half shortly after but Romjue's shot was saved by West goalkeeper Owen Ervin and the Wildcats maintained their lead.

After Romjue's scoring chance, the Rockets finished the first half strong and continued to control possession into the second half leading to White's goal.

"The boys can be one of the best teams in the state when they are on," Valenzuela said. "Unfortunately, it took us until the second half to get to the intensity we wanted. Luckily, the boys' talents really showed at the end of it by getting the win."

## Prep sports roundup

### GOLF

#### Neenah's Searles advances to sectionals

Annika Searles tied for fourth overall at the WIAA Division 1 sectional golf meet at Winagamie Golf Course, but the Rockets fell just short of advancing to sectionals as a team.

Neenah finished in fifth place with a score of 386, just six shots back of Appleton North and 10 strokes behind Apple-

ton West.

Searles will be moving on to sectionals as an individual after posting a round of 82 to finish in a tie with Appleton East's Jaelyn Feller. The two golfers finished one stroke behind a trio of Kaukauna golfers who tied for medalist honors with an 81.

Lily Quella added an 89 for the Rockets, while Adrienne Oitzinger shot a 100 and Jordyn Brockman carded a 105.

Last week, Neenah finished fifth at the Fox Valley Association meet hosted by Chaska Golf Course. The Rockets posted

a team score of 381, one shot better than Appleton West and two ahead of Kimberly.

Searles led Neenah with a score of 85, with Quella adding an 89 and Brockman and Oitzinger finishing with 102 and 105, respectively.

### SWIMMING

#### Neenah finishes seventh as invite hosts

Anna Mulroy notched the top individ-

ual finish to lead the Rockets at their own invite on Saturday.

Mulroy took second in the 100-yard butterfly for Neenah, while also swimming on a pair of top-three relay teams.

Mulroy, Kacie Stamm, Bridget Bloomhuff and Rylie Bauman teamed up to place second in the 200-yard freestyle relay, while Mulroy, Bauman, Stamm and Breleigh Maurer were third in the 200-yard medley relay.

SEE **Prep roundup** ON PAGE 15

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## Prep roundup

FROM PAGE 14

Bauman picked up a pair of fourth places for the Rockets earning the spot in both the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard freestyle, while Maurer in the 500-yard freestyle and Stamm in the 100-yard backstroke were each fifth.

The Rockets totaled 212 points to finish seventh in the 10-team event. De Pere/West De Pere won the team title with 354 points.

### TENNIS

## Zephyrs breeze to win over Wayland

St. Mary Catholic won all three doubles match by 6-0, 6-0 margins in a 6-1 win over Wayland Academy on Tuesday.

Adel Schneider and Vivie Auth at the No. 1 flight, Nadia Alexander and Emily Vogel at No. 2 doubles and Nolie Anderson and Lorelai Miller at the No. 3 flight combined to complete the perfect performance.

Earning singles wins for St. Mary Catholic were Ella Chier at No. 2, Alice Cole at No. 3 and Kaylee Sommerfeld at No. 4.

### CROSS COUNTRY

## Neenah girls win title at Midwest Invitational

Mazie Olkowski finished second out of 305 individuals and the Neenah girls topped the 46-team field to claim the title at the prestigious Midwest Invitational in Janesville on Saturday.

Olkowski was runnerup to Deerfield/Cambridge's Emmerson Drobac, while her time of 18-minutes, 14.90-seconds was more than 15 seconds ahead of the third-place runner.

Natalie Schultz joined Olkowski in the top 10 with a sixth-place finish, with Elsa Gruber taking 12<sup>th</sup> and Maddie Schoonover finishing 16<sup>th</sup>.

Izzy Malloy rounded out the scoring



Submitted photo

Neenah runners Elsa Gruber (1551) and Natalie Schultz (1656) helped the Rockets claim the title at the 46-team Midwest Invitational in Janesville on Saturday.

runners for the Rockets in 35<sup>th</sup> place, one spot ahead of teammate Natalie Willes.

The Rockets totaled just 70 points in winning the team total and were the only squad to finish under 100 points. Madison West was runner-up with 109 points, followed by Appleton North with 162 and Kimberly with 204.

The Neenah boys edged Shorewood by one point to place 11<sup>th</sup> overall, 14 points behind Madison West.

The Rockets were led by Zach Verhagen's 39<sup>th</sup> place among a field of 358 runners. Braedy Klawikowski was the next Rocket finisher in 59<sup>th</sup> place, followed by

Harmon Posegate in 68<sup>th</sup>, Bly Wheeler in 77<sup>th</sup> and Carson Verhagen in 81<sup>st</sup>.

## Ripley, Higgins lead Zephyrs at invite

Lauren Ripley and Claire Higgins each finished in the top 25 as St. Mary Catholic finished 16<sup>th</sup> out of 18 complete teams at the Rosholt Invitational.

Ripley placed 15<sup>th</sup> out of 118 runners in the field to lead the Zephyrs, while Higgins placed 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The boys finished 17<sup>th</sup> overall at the meet, with Nathan Seiske leading the way in 49<sup>th</sup> place.

### SOCCER

## Neenah splits pair of matches last week

The Rockets posted a 2-0 win over Appleton East in a Fox Valley Association match last week. Neenah then dropped a 2-1 decision to Sussex Hamilton at home on Saturday.

### GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

## Neenah breezes to sweep of Spartans

Eleven different players were credited with at least one kill as the Rockets rolled past Oshkosh North 25-17, 25-6, 25-13 in a Fox Valley Association match last week.

Julia Gross led the balanced attack with six kills, while Paige Hoelzel, Lily Bosovic and Lilly Romjue each had four.

The Rockets racked up 13 aces in match led by four apiece from Maddy Lautenschlager and Savannah Blocksom, while Lautenschlager also paced the team with 15 assists.

Ella Lindgren led Neenah with nine digs.

### BOYS VOLLEYBALL

## Weaver leads Rockets to nonconference win

Miles Weaver finished with 11 kills, seven digs and three aces as Neenah rolled past Sheboygan North 25-15, 25-10, 26-24 in a nonconference match last week.

Ben Donaldson added nine kills for the Rockets, while Cam Diekfuss finished with 31 assists and five aces.

Neenah then fell to conference-leading Kimberly, 25-13, 25-14, 25-20 on Tuesday.

Weaver finished with 13 kills, while Julian Kuehn added six and Donaldson chipped in five for the Rockets.

Diekfuss totaled 25 assists in the match, while Diekfuss and Eli Yoder each had a team-high six digs.

## Elkin

FROM PAGE 8

The Hawkeyes played at rival Minnesota in the fall of 2022 and the temperature made things pretty chilly.

"It was like negative-10 degrees," Elkin said. "That's one game I will always remember because of just how cold it was and we ended up winning that game with a field goal toward the end of the game."

When Elkin's college career ends at Iowa, he may not be done with football either.

Being on the Patrick Mannely watch list means he is one of the top long snappers in the nation and is hoping he gets the chance to compete at the next level up – the National Football League.

"It's definitely a passion of mine. I've always dreamed of playing in the NFL since I was a little kid," Elkin said. "Right now I'm not too focused on it because I still have my senior year of college and I want to make sure I'm at my best."

Making that jump to playing on Sundays would be a dream come true for Elkin and he can always rely on the lessons he learned as a Rocket to help him reach that plateau.

"The big thing that we did at Neenah is learn to create connections with each other," Elkin said. "When you have connections with each other, the connections can mean a lot when you get out on the field and it's a lot easier to trust the people around you. We were always big on making sure what you do melds together."

## Neenah football

FROM PAGE 10

the team with 11 tackles against Appleton North. "Their QB likes to take the ball and run it a lot. We have to be able to take him down and focus on him a lot."

Kimberly quarterback Braedon Ellefson is the team's second-leading rusher behind Kegan Pleau and has also thrown for seven touchdowns to just one interception.

Offensively, the Papermakers are aver-

aging more than 40 points per game this season and have yet to be held to less than 35 points in a contest.

It will certainly be a test for the Rockets, but a challenge the team is looking forward to tackling.

"I am really excited to play them. I wish we could play them right now," Weinke said after practice on Tuesday. "We really want it this year and I think we have the team to do it. The energy this week (for Homecoming) is really different. We are excited to play and really locked in."

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5.5 ACRE HORSE HOBBY FARM. Newer 2 story house 36x100 Barn w/Horse Stall's 30x50 Barn for storage 715-823-3052

CRANDON WI. (Forest County) 10 acres on a town road, power Land Contract Avail, \$89,000. Also 36 Acre Active gravel pit. For Sale Boulder&Stone 715-493-6121

FOR SALE: DIXIE LUNCH RESTAURANT & Fifth Avenue Supper Club at Antigo, WI. Oldest running cafe in the State of Wisconsin. Excellent gross business & financials. \$250,000.00. NOLAN SALES LLC, Marion, WI - 715-754-5221 or 800-472-0290. www.nolansales.com

# ENHANCING INNOVATION AND EXPERIENCE

## You're invited to our surgical robotic open house

Thursday, October 17 • 3 to 5 p.m.  
Hospital Main Entrance, Theda Clark Way

### Meet the da Vinci Robot and Get a Hands-on Experience

ThedaCare recently became the first health system in the state to add the da Vinci 5 robotic surgical system. You're invited to help us celebrate this milestone.

Our specially trained surgeons will be on hand to answer questions and share about the capabilities and benefits of robotic surgery. The da Vinci 5 robot will also be making an appearance. Take part in the opportunity to interact with the robot through fun, entertaining games and demonstrations.

### Ongoing Investment in Innovation

Our 115-year history is rooted in caring for our communities. We remain committed to carrying on that legacy.

Throughout the years, ThedaCare has also continued to invest in innovation. Through robotic surgery, our highly trained surgeons can offer enhanced care to our patients. This means they can experience less pain, a more seamless recovery, and a faster return to living their unique, best life.

**Please plan to join us at this special event! Light refreshments will be served.**



**ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Neenah**  
130 Second Street • Neenah

**ThedaCare.org**