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INSIDE



Sweet move
Wilmar Chocolates
coming downtown
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Resident helps pull two from burning vehicle

Neenah News

Two people were injured in a vehicle that left the roadway and crashed Monday night with police crediting a neighbor who helped remove both people from the burning car in subzero temperatures.

Neenah police said Tanner Ater, 30, responded to the accident before officers arrived on the scene in the 1300 block of Gillingham Road. The vehicle was southbound when it left the roadway, struck a fire hydrant, turned down an embankment and struck a tree before landing on its passenger side.

Ater lives nearby and heard the crash, then heard a passenger scream for help. He took a fire extinguisher and used it on the engine compartment that was emitting smoke while the passenger climbed out of the vehicle with Ater's help.

A Winnebago County sheriff's deputy close to the scene was the first officer to arrive and Ater climbed on top of the vehicle and helped the deputy up, and together were able to get the driver out of the car before the engine compartment reignited and became engulfed.

Ice arena transfer headed for vote

County's ownership would go to nonprofit

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

The Winnebago County Board of Supervisors is considering turning over ownership of Tri-County Ice Arena in Fox Crossing to the nonprofit organization that operates it about four years ahead of schedule.

Neenah News first reported in November that Appleton Ice launched a fundraising campaign to raise an estimated \$5 mil-

lion for improvements to Tri-County Ice Arena and Appleton Family Ice Center in Memorial Park, which are both in need of repairs.

Board member Tommy Wroblewski said Appleton Ice has now narrowed in on the budget and made significant progress on a \$4.1 million capital campaign to fund renovations at both facilities. The fundraising campaign has already raised \$925,000 and Wroblewski said Appleton Ice believes that taking over ownership of Tri-County will help secure additional financial commitments from donors.

The facility was constructed in 1974 at

700 Shady Lane and named Tri-County because it was intended to be owned by Winnebago, Outagamie and Calumet counties. Calumet County backed out on the arrangement and Outagamie County sold its share to Winnebago County for \$1 in 2012.

Winnebago County entered into an agreement with Appleton Ice in 2014 for the nonprofit to lease Tri-County for \$1 per year. As part of the agreement, if Appleton Ice maintains the building at its expense and continues operating it as an ice arena,

SEE **Ice arena** ON PAGE 6

Lake ice boaters seek thrills, chills

Long-standing sport finds smoother sailing

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

Lake Winnebago's vast frozen landscape was a sea of white last Thursday that blended seamlessly with the sky as a trio of boats gracefully glided across the icy horizon.

It's a storied tradition dating to the 1800s on Winnebago, where each winter boaters get out on the lake to experience the thrill of sailing on ice.

Bill Staffeld of Neenah, who is 70 years old, is a member of the Neenah Ice Yacht Club, an informal hobby group who meet each week.

"It's basically a half a dozen to a dozen guys in a dusty old garage, sometimes repairing pieces and parts for boats, and having a few beers and some peanuts and popcorn and talking about what we're going to do tomorrow," he said.

Though the Ice Yacht Club is not affiliated with the Neenah Nodaway Yacht Club, they share many of the same members, as ice boating gives "soft water" sailors the opportunity to sail on "hard water" in winter.

"It's something you almost wouldn't be interested in unless you are already in love with sailing in the summer," Staffeld explained. "That's how I got into it."

Ice boats are designed to glide across frozen surfaces on runners, which resemble the blade on the bottom of an ice skate but thicker and sturdier to support the boat's weight. A sail is used to harness the power of the wind to propel the boat across the frozen lake, while hand controls or foot pedals are used for steering.

Ice boaters have taken to Winnebago for more than 100 years, both for fun and sport. Ice boat racing contests, called re-



Neenah News

A blade called a runner is shown on a handmade wooden ice boat as Bill Staffeld of Neenah prepares to sail on Lake Winnebago last Thursday.

gattas, still take place on Winnebago each winter.

A Neenah Daily Times article from Jan. 6, 1896, noted that ice boating was becoming as popular as bicycling was the previous summer.

"Lake Winnebago is literally dotted with ice boats, and some exciting races can be witnessed at most any time of day on the lake," the article stated.

Today, spectators often park in Rec Park

or at the lake viewing area at the end of East Wisconsin and Lakeshore avenues near Kimberly Point Park to watch the ice boaters. An occasional figure skater, ice fisher or dog walker can also be seen out on the lake.

Though ice boating was initially considered a sport for the wealthy due to cost, during the Great Depression in the 1930s

SEE **Ice boaters** ON PAGE 7

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Jade Petri, an Oshkosh native, graduated from Milwaukee Area Technical College with her Associate's Degree in Funeral Service/Mortuary Science in May of 2024. She began her funeral director apprenticeship in the Appleton area in 2023 and came to Westgor Funeral Home in 2024 as a licensed funeral director. In her spare time, Jade enjoys spending time with her fiancé, Jemiah, and their son, Grey, along with their two cats, Zelda and Steve.

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Publisher

Karen Schneider, 920-858-6407
karen@oshkoshherald.com

Editor

Dan Roherty, 920-508-0027
editor@oshkoshherald.com

Corrections

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

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Lost dog's journey drew caring residents

Neenah News

A family dog that went missing for more than two weeks became the search focus of Neenah area residents and a dog search group that helped spread the word and awareness leading to the 5-year-old terrier's return home.

Ryan Pfister and his family were out of the area for the holidays when Coco left his home on New Year's Eve and eluded a dog sitter. After days with no sightings, Coco's family returned home to start searching, before even unpacking, while staying in contact with Get Toby Home, which created an online chat and staged road signs around south Neenah.

Pfister said that while some dogs don't shy from strangers, many are like Coco and stay away from people, which he expected happened during that stretch. He learned she initially left their home near Wilderness Park, traveled down Park Street to Bill Miller Park and the Bell Street area before visibility was lost for days.

"I think there were some (New Year's Eve) fireworks and us being gone already for four or five days, just the combination of that" may have contributed to her running away, he said.

A Coco sighting was reported near Lake and Main streets Jan. 5, indicating the signs were working. But several days of no reports followed, which led Pfister to consider offering a reward. Get Toby Home organizers discourage that strategy as it can draw scammers during a stressful time.

"Rewards also cause people to call out or chase your already scared dog, which is one of the biggest threats to a lost pet," the group posted on its Facebook page.



Photo from Get Toby Home

Live cameras captured Coco just before she entered the cage that secured her in the area she had been seen near Neenah Creek.

Coco was seen again Jan. 11 in a driveway and the family reached out to the property owner where a cage trap with cameras was staged and several other sightings followed.

During a cold stretch that likely restricted Coco's movements, the cage was closed for safety reasons. Postings started coming in again when temperatures rose about the dog's movements along Neenah Creek while some new snow created tracks that were spotted.

The trap was moved to that area and Coco appeared on camera and she stepped into it, securing her after 16 days on the loose. Pfister said that despite many burrs in her furry coat, she was in good health considering the length of time and conditions.

"There were so many people we knew and didn't know in Neenah who helped and cared and gave positive vibes over

those two weeks," Pfister said. "It goes to show that overcoming anything large scale like that takes more than just a few people."

Get Toby Home volunteers posted that a dog's survival skills kick in during cold weather and they seek warmer locations that are hidden or protected, which they expect Coco did to stay warm.

Pfister said his family plans to host a future public gathering in support of Get Toby Home and to thank everyone who helped. The organization's Winnebago County volunteer group led the efforts for Coco's return.

"Everybody was super nice and receptive who tried helping and tried looking," he said. "There were so many people who knew the story."

"It was awesome to get to know people and how accepting of the situation they were."

LEGO Day celebrated with coloring contest

Neenah News

In anticipation of National LEGO Day on Tuesday, the Fox Crossing Police Department is holding a coloring contest and prize giveaway with the help of Bricks & Minifigs Fox Valley.

Children between prekindergarten and eighth grade can pick up coloring pages at the police station counter from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays to put their creative touch on them and either bring them back to the station or mail them by Monday to Officer

Dan Wiechman, LEGO Day Contest, Fox Crossing Police Department, 2000 Municipal Drive, Neenah, WI 54956.

Any medium can be used to create a custom artwork. Officers will vote on their favorite pieces and winners will be contacted to pick up their LEGO prize the following week.

Include the participant's name, age and parent contact information on the back of the artwork. Limit entries to one per child.

Found items being held by police department

The Neenah Police Department is sharing its updated Found Property list for people who may have lost something that was recovered by police. The list can be found on the police department website at ow.ly/8vkV50UGYYw.

For those who believe an item on the list might be theirs, stop by the station at 2111 Marathon Ave. between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday or call 920-886-6000 with information to demonstrate a right to the property.



Neenah Historical Society photo

Racing legacy

An iceboat is pictured on Lake Winnebago in 1898. The Neenah Ice Yacht Club was formed in 1896 and disbanded in the late 1940s. In 1975 the group reformed and has been gathering to participate in the winter sport ever since. At the sport's height, more than 200 boats would race in regattas on Lake Winnebago.

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Wilmar Chocolates bringing sweets, ice cream downtown

Appleton-based retailer taking Sew Biz location

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

A new confectionary will soon be offering sweet treats for sale out of a storefront in downtown Neenah.

Wilmar Chocolates of Appleton will open its second location across from The Plaza later this year after the sale of the building at 220 and 224 W. Wisconsin Ave. was finalized this week.

The confectionary is owned by father and son John E. and John O. Houlihan, who also own a Four Brothers Handcrafted Chocolates store in Wheaton, Ill., and in Fontana, Wis., alongside a Blue Heaven Ice Cream store the two also own.

Wilmar Chocolates specializes in traditional chocolates, nuts, caramels, toffee, chocolate bars and snacks. The business is known for its gold boxes filled with a variety of milk and dark chocolate assortments.

John O. Houlihan, who lives in Appleton, said the new location will have the same goodies as the Appleton location. Other treats available in Neenah will include 16 flavors of ice cream and seasonal favorites such as caramel-covered apples in the fall.

Sew Biz is relocating in May to make way for Wilmar after owner Lori Burr sold



Photo from Jonathan Glassco

Wilmar Chocolates will be moving into the building that has housed Sew Biz in downtown Neenah.

the building to the Houlihans. The other business with a storefront in the building, Elements Unleashed, recently signed a five-year lease and will continue operating next door.

Jonathan Glassco with NAI Pfeiffer brokered the sale and noted both Burr and Houlihan were a pleasure to work with.

Houlihan had been searching for a downtown storefront for about two years. He previously contacted Future Neenah

to inquire about buildings that may be coming available for sale and the nonprofit organization that works to enhance the city connected Houlihan with Glassco.

"I think downtown Neenah is such a unique downtown in the Fox Cities," Houlihan said, adding that the new storefront is in a shoppable and walkable area and was the only business missing.

"You've got a great coffee shop, you've got a cocktail house, you've got gift stores,

you have a bread store, and I was standing there, and I'm like, there's no chocolate shop. Like, this is the last thing you need to come," he said.

Glassco said he told Houlihan about Future Neenah's annual "A Very Neenah Christmas" event that attracts thousands to the downtown and "that event right there is going to seal the deal for you that this is going to be a huge success for you."

"Events like that just show how businesses like this one coming up are going to be really successful just due to that and all the other events they have downtown; concerts, a skating rink across the street," he said.

Both men expressed gratitude to Future Neenah staff for making the downtown favorable for businesses.

Houlihan said he plans to remodel the storefront and give it a fresh look. Renovations will take place this summer, with plans to open in the fall.

The first Wilmar Chocolates location on North Superior Street was founded in 1956 by Wilbur and Mary Jane Srnka. The Houlihans purchased the business in 2021 from the Garvey family, making them the third owners of the iconic downtown Appleton shop.

"It's just been so awesome to steward and take care of this historic brand in the Fox Cities," he said. "We're so excited to grow it and go into Neenah with it."

Calendar of events

Monday, Jan. 27

Wayne Salzman Trio, Xe 54, 1350 West American Drive, Fox Crossing
Big Band Reunion, 7:30 p.m., Cranky Pat's, 905 S. Commercial St.

Saturday, Jan. 28

Free Dirt record release show, 9 p.m.,

Cranky Pat's, 905 S. Commercial St.

Wednesday, Jan. 29

Robert Ellis, 9 p.m., Cranky Pat's, 905 S. Commercial St.

Friday, Jan. 31

Movie Talks, 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Saturday, Feb. 1

Art Activity Day, 10 a.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

Monday, Feb. 3

Big Band Reunion, 7:30 p.m., Cranky Pat's, 905 S. Commercial St.

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UW Oshkosh photo

Members of the UWO biology faculty, along with a pair of alumni employed at Kimberly-Clark, are shown at the Neenah Kimberly-Clark plant.

Kimberly-Clark donates new microscopes

UW Oshkosh Today

University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh biology students will study with advanced microscopes, thanks to a donation from Kimberly-Clark Corp.

Several members of the UWO biology faculty – Andrew Bosma, Lisa Dorn, Courtney Kurtz and Greg Potratz – traveled recently to K-C headquarters in Neenah to accept the donated microscopes, including computers and software. Lyndsay Poeschl, an alumna of UWO biology and current employee of Kimberly-Clark, led and helped drive the donation partnership.

Members of the department say they look forward to training students on the confocal and fluorescent microscopes through coursework and independent re-

search projects.

Kurtz noted that faculty are already discussing ways to use the new equipment in the classroom and are very excited about the donation's teaching-and-learning potential.

"UWO Biology is excited to accept another donation from Kimberly-Clark, a company that has generously donated advanced research equipment to us in the past," Kurtz said. "These new microscopes will not only advance research at UWO but will provide opportunities for students to learn how to use advanced histology equipment for research and diagnostics. Our students will now have a chance to gain hands-on experience with confocal microscopy, which is used in research and diagnostic labs throughout the world."

Meeting offered ahead of annual bird count

Neenah News

An informational meeting ahead of the Great Backyard Bird Count organized by Winnebago Audubon is being presented at 6 a.m. Feb. 6 in Oshkosh Food Co-op Community Room at 155 Jackson St. in Oshkosh.

The in-person meeting and presentation will discuss the bird count and how to enter GBBC sightings online using eBird through the account setup and protocols. More information about the GBBC is at www.birdcount.org.

Winnebago Audubon will hold its bird count Feb. 15 starting at 9 a.m. at Kimberly Point in south Neenah with a focus on ducks, mergansers and eagles, then moves to Wilderness Park to look for finches, woodpeckers and other winter birds with the count continuing throughout the day.

Viewing birds near the lighthouse at Kimberly Point can be accomplished from a vehicle or by taking a short walk to the nearest vantage point. At Wilderness Park there is a quarter-mile walk on a level trail.

Business news roundup

Reusable packaging manufacturer **Orbis Corp.** is moving its presses from the Menasha plant to its Texas plant and other North American locations, affecting its 109 employees. The Menasha plant molds reusable plastic pallets and bulk containers used in food, beverage and industrial applications and began operations in 1973. Company officials said that as one of its smallest plants it has minimal room for expansion or reconfiguration. The company said it is working with employees to offer positions at other locations while evaluating options for the manufacturing plant building and maintaining its Material Innovation Center on the property. Orbis and Menasha Packaging are owned by Menasha Corp.

Corene A. Gutierrez has joined Legacy Private Trust Co. as director of marketing and communications. Gutierrez joins Legacy with 15 years of marketing experience and expertise in strategy, branding and executing comprehensive marketing campaigns, most recently at a regional certified public accounting firm. Gutierrez

has a degree in communication with an emphasis in public relations from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Legacy Private Trust serves clients in Wisconsin and nationally from its offices in Neenah, Oconomowoc, Madison and Wausau.

Chris Handrick of Clifton Larson Allen LLP and **Kelly Hurt** of Froedtert ThedaCare Health have been named to the board of directors of New North Inc. In addition to joining the board, Handrick is a principal with CLA, will be the organization's treasurer as a member of the executive committee. He replaces Ken Zacharias, who retired from CLA and served in the role over the past six years. Hurt is senior vice president of human resources for the North Region of Froedtert ThedaCare.

Kitchen Comfort Neenah has opened its restaurant featuring Indian and American cuisine at 8510 State 76 at County II. Hours are from 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Fresh ingredients are sourced from local suppliers and a drive-thru service option is being planned.

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Ice arena

FROM PAGE 1

the county will transfer ownership to Appleton Ice in 2029.

County executive assistant Ethan Hollenberger, who gave a presentation on the agreement at a county board meeting earlier this month, said “it was a terrible deal for Appleton Ice, but they wanted to keep ice and hockey in the Fox Valley.”

With Appleton Ice agreeing to handle all major capital and operational needs of the 50-year-old building, the proposed renovations at the Fox Crossing facility are expected to cost about \$2.25 million and include replacing the ice surfaces of both rinks, improving insulation for energy efficiency and upgrading the boiler system. Similar improvements estimated at just under \$2 million are also planned for the Appleton facility, including a new roof and floor.

At a committee meeting last month, facilities director Mike Elder said Appleton Ice is running into difficulty with funding the renovations at Tri-County because the nonprofit doesn't own title to the property.

“They have been operating it as the owner for the last 10 years,” he said. “We have not put any money into that project. We have assisted them a little bit with some parking lot repairs and some snow plowing, but other than that they have been solely on their own and they have kept it operational for 10 years.”

Appleton Ice general manager Kevin Grater said that the early ownership transfer would allow Appleton Ice to offer long-term naming rights and other financial incentives.

“One side of having transfer of ownership today is the financing and being able to go to the bank to have some collateral if we do fall slightly short of our fundraising

goals,” he said. “The second is to be able to look at our donors and go, ‘We have control of this facility, we can guarantee what we’re selling, which is a 25-year naming right on the rink and the facility itself.’”

Grater said Appleton Ice has a significant donor lined up who is willing to buy naming rights to Tri-County for a six-figure contribution but has concerns over ownership.

“If we make the improvements we’re looking to make, we can guarantee our sponsors, our donors, (and) our members that we’ll have a 25-year facility at minimum,” he said.

Issues brought up by county supervisors at the meeting this month included complaints that Appleton Ice hasn't maintained the building and would turn around and sell it, with supervisor Steve Binder requesting a balance sheet and business plan from Appleton Ice.

“I think you need to go there, contract in hand, and make sure they’re living up to the contract that you signed,” he said. “The building, that it is maintained properly, and if it’s not maintained properly, they need to bring it up to the standard or we can take the building back.”

Elder said the county is aware of the issues at Tri-County and the ice floor has been heaving since before 2010. He said Appleton Ice has maintained the building in the same state that it was in when the county turned it over to them 10 years ago and it has not deteriorated much.

“We could hang on to this building and they will still get the building in 2029,” he said. “What they would like to do is improve the facility so that there is more ice in the valley for the high schools, the colleges, the leagues to be able to do it.”

While some supervisors criticized the plan, several others expressed support for transferring Tri-County to Appleton Ice including Tom Egan, who noted that if some-

thing happens to the building the county isn't going to take it back and spend \$2 million improving it.

Supervisor Doug Nelson said Tri-County was built so that there would be an ice arena in the area.

“This group is willing to take over what could be a huge headache for us and continue to have an ice arena there,” he said. “I guess a no-brainer is what comes to my mind and I appreciate the due diligence you’ve put in to make sure they have the funding to continue it forward.”

Supervisor John Hinz added, “It’s not like we’re turning over a mini gold mine for a dollar.”

Wroblewski told Neenah News that Appleton Ice has no intention of doing anything with Tri-County other than operate it as an ice sports arena for as long as possible.

“Significant investments are being made into the ice surface and into the buildings for hockey and hockey only,” he said. “We’re making commitments again to this. This money that’s been pledged, these people are expecting us to deliver on a long term, decades long capital campaign that’s going to put ice sports in a position to stay in that building for a long time.”

The Facilities & Property Management Committee voted in favor of turning over ownership of Tri-County to Appleton Ice ahead of schedule contingent on Appleton Ice securing the funds for rehabilitation. The County Board will take up a resolution authorizing execution of an agreement to transfer the property at its meeting in February or March.

Wroblewski said construction at the Appleton location will begin in April and wrap up by October, with work in Fox Crossing set to begin in the summer of 2026.

Appleton Ice set a target to meet its fundraising goal by this summer. Wroblewski encouraged the community to follow Appleton Ice Inc. on Facebook and visit appletonice.org to support the capital campaign.

O’Hauser playground design being discussed

O’Hauser Park in Fox Crossing is getting a new playground, and residents are encouraged to attend an open house Tuesday between 4 and 6 p.m. to share their thoughts on the different proposals received.

Guests will be able to vote for their favorite proposals and colors and children are also encouraged to attend the open house at the municipal complex assembly room, 2000 Municipal Drive.



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Ice boaters

FROM PAGE 1

smaller, less-costly boats emerged that helped the sport grow.

Local interest in ice boating began to wane in the late 1950s, with a 1956 News-Record headline proclaiming, "Three Neenah men trying to reverse story of 'decline and fall of ice boating popularity.'"

The article described the efforts of "Bunny" Loehning, Gus Larson and Tom Jape, who were searching for people to join them ice boating on Winnebago and looking for used ice boats and parts.

Jape, who was 25, was quoted in the article and stated, "We'd like to organize some sort of new ice-boating club for those interested in the sport."

The Neenah Ice Yacht Club was formed in 1896 and disbanded in the late 1940s. The club re-formed in 1975 and has been active since, according to the Neenah Historical Society.

As of last week, there were 12 ice boats in the Rec Park harbor. The average cost for a new ice boating setup ranges from \$12,500 to \$15,000, though used models will sell for about half of that.

Some of the ice boats in the Neenah harbor, including Staffeld's wooden boat, were hand built. The fiberglass models come from a factory, and some are hybrids with both factory and hand-made components.

"The sad part is, we spend a lot more time working on our boats than sailing them, because some years, you get one weekend in and then you get a foot of snow, and you're done," he said.

The ice conditions are the main predictor for the length of an ice boating season on Winnebago, which may last a few days



Neenah News

Above: Matt Thenell of Hortonville, who has been ice boating for more than 30 years, demonstrates how one of the boats work.



At right: A pair of ice boaters on Lake Winnebago took a break in Rec Park last Thursday during a lull in the wind.

or weeks. Early ice is best, with a thickness of only about 4 inches needed for the boaters. The thickness was about 10 inches last week after several days of frigid temperatures.

The more serious participants travel throughout the state to find the best ice boating spots, which include Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay, Green Lake, Lake Geneva and Lake Mendota.

On Winnebago, the ice boaters explained that each year there's typically a crack that runs from Davis Point, at the southernmost end of the bay, to the Neenah branch of the Fox River. The challenge is finding a way to cross.

"Sometimes there's an ice shove, and there's a mound of ice that kind of ramps up against each other, and then sometimes it folds under, and there's pools of water on top of the ice," Staffeld said. "Over the years, we kind of figure out what looks good and what looks bad, and sometimes we have to chip ice and go across there."

Staffeld described how the boats easily reach speeds of 40-50 miles per hour if the ice quality is good, with smooth, bare ice best.

"Depending on conditions and the tune of the boat, you can get some pretty fast speeds, five to seven times the wind speed," he said.

During a weekend trip earlier this month, Staffeld averaged a speed of 52 mph and traveled about 40 miles.

Tom Morley of Neenah, who was also out on Winnebago last week, has been ice boating for about three years and co-owns his boat with two others. Morley's ice boat has side-by-side seats for a passenger. While giving his daughter a ride on Winnebago recently, he said the boat got up to 35 mph.

Ice boats don't have brakes. To stop, "you use your sails and you head directly into the wind," Staffeld explained.

Traveling at high speeds on a frozen lake comes with its share of risks such as soft spots, spring holes, ice shoves and cracks.

Historical news articles indicate that ice boaters and bystanders have been injured and killed on Winnebago, with high

speeds and strong winds hindering the ability to quickly stop, and carry a risk of ejecting riders from the boat.

Staffeld said he isn't aware of recent accidents on Winnebago, though occasionally a boater becomes partially submerged and needs to be pulled out.

The boaters wear helmets for safety and cleats on their boots for traction. They usually go out in pairs or groups and scout the area before sailing.

"I never go out until I've at least walked around a good part of the area that I'm going to sail in, and I'm very familiar with the bay off of Neenah, Rec Park," he said, adding that the boaters stay away from places where they see ducks, "because that's usually an indicator of a soft spot."

Matt Thenell of Hortonville has been ice boating since the early 1990s.

"This sport is a combination of enough wind, but not too much; a little bit of snow is OK, but too much and you're done; thick enough ice, hard enough, and enough of it to uniformly sail across a big sheet," he said.

This year, because of weather conditions, Thenell said the ice on Winnebago is some of the best he's seen in 20 years.

"The smoothness, the quality and the size is unlike most years," he said.

Three men who took the day off last Thursday to go ice boating with some of the Ice Yacht Club members described the experience as "a blast," with Thenell adding that it's a great way to get outside during winter.

"Another aspect, as much as everything, is the camaraderie of other people who enjoy the activity," he said.

While winter weather has kept some residents inside this January, for the local ice boaters, braving the cold to skim across the frozen lake at breakneck speeds is an experience that's hard to match.



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Neenah girls continue to grind out victories

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

On Jan. 7, the Neenah girls basketball team ran into a wall against state-ranked Hortonville.

The Rockets entered that game having won three of their last four games and were coming off their highest scoring output of the season. But against the Polar Bears, Neenah was held to its lowest point total of the season and suffered a 41-point loss.

In the long run, though, that defeat may have been a good thing.

“Honestly, I think that was good for us – kind of a reality check,” said junior Rowan Klesmit. “Ever since then our team has responded really well.”

Neenah has rattled off four straight wins since that loss, including a 54-49 win over Appleton North last Friday night when the Rockets rallied in the second half to collect the win.

The Rockets led the entire first half and took a 26-18 advantage at intermission but went scoreless for nearly seven minutes to open the second half, allowing the Lightning to forge its way into the lead.

Head coach Andy Braunel said the team’s shot selection at the start of the second played into their scoring drought.



Above: Neenah’s Celia Gentile drives to the basket against Appleton North last week.

At right: Ava Kreger puts up a shot in the lane for two of her six points in the game.



“We have the ability to be a really good 3-point shooting team, but sometimes when those aren’t going in, we forget we can do other things besides that,” Braunel said. “Once we started to get some paint touches and attack the basket, better

things happened.”

Appleton North led by as many as five points in the second half and took a 45-40 lead with 3:42 remaining before Neenah took control.

Klesmit’s runner in the lane and a 3-pointer by Ellie Buss tied the score with just under three minutes to play before a jumper from Klesmit with 1:53 left put the Rockets ahead for good.

Neenah, which held Appleton North to just four points in the final four minutes, sealed the win at the free-throw line as Buss and Klesmit combined to go 7-of-8 in the final 48 seconds.

“Sometimes good teams have to find a

way to figure it out a way to get it done when they aren’t playing the best,” Braunel said. “We work a lot in the weight room and we work a lot conditioning-wise and I think you saw that down the stretch.”

Klesmit continued her torrid scoring for the Rockets, leading the team with 27 points. In 16 games this season, the junior has scored at least 20 points 14 times and is averaging nearly 25 points per this season – up nearly 10 points per game from last year as she has stepped into the lead

SEE **Neenah girls** ON PAGE 9



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Rockets ride fast start to lead but can't hold off Wildcats

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

The game plan Neenah wrestling coach Kyle Klueskens brought into Tuesday night's dual meet against Oshkosh West was working.

A slight change to the original lineup that bumped a few wrestlers up a weight class resulted in the Rockets winning the first five bouts of the match and neutralizing two of the Wildcats' top wrestlers in the process.

But Neenah was unable to maintain the momentum from the fast start as Oshkosh West came roaring back by winning six of the final seven bouts to sting the Rockets, 41-37 in a Fox Valley Association dual meet at Oshkosh West.

"Yeah, incredibly disappointed," Klueskens said. "In the end, it takes all 14 weights and we didn't have the intensity out of all 14 guys tonight. We are a young team so I hope they are motivated to learn

from this and get better."

Things started with a bang for Neenah in the 150-pound bout where Joaquin Quinonez pulled out a clutch pin for the Rockets.

Moving up from 144 pounds, Quinonez led West's Escander Koko 4-3 after the first period and was ahead 10-3 entering the third period. As time ticked down in the match, Quinonez was searching for a takedown to get the margin for a major decision win and ended up catching Koko and getting him to his back with about 10 seconds left in the match.

Just before the buzzer sounded to end the match, Quinonez was able to get the pin and give the Rockets a momentum boost.

"Joaquin just kept wrestling through the entire match and got the pin with a second to go," Klueskens said. "That was big because it gave us two extra team points."

Quinonez's win fed into the strength

of the Rocket lineup as Landen Sheppard followed with a 49-second pin of Cole McWane at 157 pounds.

Declan Koch followed with a 19-2 technical fall win over Jaiden Fronczak at 165 pounds followed by Jacob Herm's 16-4 domination of three-time state qualifier Ryland Schneider at 175 pounds. Fronczak and Schneider have combined for 61 wins this season for West.

Kaden Roth then pinned Zach Bartels in 1:20 at 190 pounds to stake the Rockets to a 27-0 lead.

West picked up its first win in the 215-pound match, but Neenah heavy-weight Brayden Milbrodt answered with a 9-0 victory over Brady Joel as the Rockets grabbed a 31-6 advantage.

"The first seven matches we wanted to

go 5-2 and we went 6-1 and so we were happy with that," Klueskens said. "But I told the guys that there is a lot of dual meet left and we didn't finish it."

The Rockets would collect only one more victory the rest of the night – an impressive win at 132 pounds from Steven Czechanski, who pinned Colden Searles in 1:47 – as the Wildcats rattled off five pins and a technical fall in the final seven matches.

West also picked up a forfeit win at 138 pounds when an injury in pre-match warmups left the Rockets with a hole in their lineup.

Neenah will jump back into action on Friday at the Homestead Invitational before returning home next Thursday to host Appleton West in the final dual meet of the regular season.

Neenah girls

FROM PAGE 8

role for the Rockets.

Braunel said Klesmit's emergence can be traced back to when the Rockets lost at the WIAA State Tournament last season.

"We were walking back from the media room and it was Allie (Ziebell), Rowan and myself, when Allie stopped, grabbed her by the shoulders and said 'It's your turn now,'" Braunel said. "That's what you want in a program and you try to build that. She's bought into that."

Klesmit said the biggest adjustment in her game isn't what she puts on the stat sheet, though.

"The main thing is being more of a leader," Klesmit said. "Just talking on the court more and then controlling the team when I need to whether that's defensively or offensively."

Buss, who has also stepped up her scoring this season, chipped in 12 points against the Lightning.

Ava Kreger added six points for the Rockets, who played without starter Rae Schoultz because of injury.

"It was just a whole team effort - everyone contributed. All of the girls stepping up has been a key for us," Klesmit said. "It's great to see girls who haven't had a lot of varsity experience step up. I think that's what will make us successful in the long run. It's amazing to see and it's only going to get better."



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Fields does it all for St. Mary Catholic squad

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

Preston Fields has led the St. Mary Catholic team in scoring during games this season, but he isn't necessarily considered a scorer.

The senior has also been the team's leading rebounder at times, despite standing only about 6-foot-1 and playing a perimeter position.

Just for good measure, he also has proven to be a capable facilitator, leading the team in assists this season and he just might be the Zephyrs' best defensive option in a one-on-one matchup.

"My freshman year, I really stepped it up and just had that drive (to get better)," Fields said after a recent practice. "I wanted to be able to score, pass, rebound ... just try to do a little bit of everything."

Fields do-it-all abilities led to four triple doubles last season as a junior, where he earned second team all-Big East North honors and he's certainly carried it over into this season.

Fields, a four-year varsity performer leads the team in rebounds, assists and steals and ranks second on the team in scoring.

"He's always passed the ball well and he's always handled the ball well and he's just built on that over the four years and over time, he's become a really good scorer," St. Mary Catholic head coach Paul Bradshaw said. "As a freshman, he was one of the best defenders we had and the reason he got here was because of how hard he worked as a freshman."

Fields said the game often dictates where his biggest numbers lie but his most important role is always making sure his teammates get involved.

"I'd say passing is my biggest strength because I always like to get my teammates open," said Fields, who is averaging 6.3 assists per game this season. "Usually to start my game off, I try to go for a bunch of rebounds to get my adrenaline going and



then my passing and scoring will go on. But if (my teammates) are hot, I'm going to hit them and I know they are going to make those shots."

With his four years on varsity, Fields is the most experienced player on the Zephyrs' roster and one of the key leaders for the group.

He was a starter on the St. Mary Catholic team that made it to the WIAA State Tournament when he was a sophomore and believes that is where the foundation for his leadership was formed.

"Looking back, I think about what those seniors helped me with and it shows how I can help these underclassmen to be better every day," Fields said. "I want to show them how to play at the next level and grow in every game."

Those teams also made a big impact on the way Fields performs on the court.

He highlighted the likes of Danny Griffith, Charlie Nackers and Cole Uhlenbrauck for giving him the confidence that he brings to the court now.

"I really looked up to them," Fields said. "They showed me how to have that confidence where if you miss a shot, just keep going and don't put your head down. Bad games are going to happen and it's all a part of basketball."

Another older player that Fields certainly looked up to – even if he didn't get the chance to share a high school court with him – was his older brother, Quincy.

Preston transferred to St. Mary Catholic in seventh grade and Quincy came the following year and played one season with the Zephyrs. However, the two – along with sisters Jasmine and Alexis – often locked



Neenah News

Preston Fields is a returning second-team all-conference player for the Zephyrs and currently leads the team in rebounds, assists and steals while ranking second in scoring.

horns in the driveway or when Preston would tag along to one of his sibling's practices.

"I always tried to beat them and I wouldn't be here without my siblings or my dad," said Fields, who added that he would

play on his brother's AAU team at times to finish off games. "My dad always showed us to be strong. He always wanted us to get the rebounds and drive. He was never much of

SEE **Senior Standout** ON PAGE 11

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Prep sports roundup

SWIMMING

Neenah dominates home sprint invite

The Rockets finished 1-2 in two individual events and posted first-place finishes in seven of the 11 events to dominate their home sprint invite Saturday.

Neenah accumulated 650 points in the eight-team meet with second place Oshkosh West finishing with 377 points.

The 100-yard medley was the Rockets best event of the meet as Burke Wendell finished first, followed by Joshua Youngwerth in second and Ryker Zarda in fourth. Neenah also grabbed the top two spots in the 50-yard breaststroke with Drew Gaerthofner taking first and Tanner Trustem finishing second, while Wendell came in fifth.

Gaerthofner won a pair of individual events on the day, also picking up a win in the 50-yard butterfly, while Julian Kuehn earned a pair of individual wins in the 25-yard freestyle and 50-yard freestyle.

Other top five individual finishes on the day for the Rockets were: Trustem, second in the 100-yard freestyle; Zarda, second in the 50-yard backstroke; Gideon Benner, third in the 100-yard freestyle and fifth in the 50-yard freestyle; and Ben Munson, fifth in the 25-yard freestyle.

Neenah also won three of the four relays on the day.

Gaerthofner, Trustem, Kuehn and Wendell won the 200-yard medley relay, while Trustem, Youngwerth, Benner and Wendell finished first in the 200-yard freestyle relay. Youngwerth, Gaerthofner, Kuehn and Rylan Mendoza also won the 100-yard medley relay.

Neenah also took second in the 100-yard freestyle relay.

BOYS HOCKEY

Rough third period stings Rockets

Ashwaubenon scored four goals in the third period to rally past Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha, 4-2, last Thursday.

The Rockets tallied a pair of power play goals in the second period to take the lead. Cartyr Simonson scored the first goal off assists from Cooper Zinda and Calvin Zinda, with Cooper Zinda getting the second goal off of assists from Calvin Zinda and Mark Sutton.

Ashwaubenon tied the game with two goals about 90 seconds apart midway through the third period before notching the go-ahead goal with about six minutes remaining. The Jaguars added an empty net goal with about 10 seconds left for the final margin.

Matthew Nelson finished with 10 saves in goal for the Rockets.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Klesmit, Buss lift Rockets to win over Ghosts

Rowan Klesmit and Ellie Buss each scored 25 points to lift Neenah to a 64-51 win over Kaukauna on Monday as the Rockets claimed its fourth straight win and fifth win in the last six games.

Klesmit went 10-of-10 from the free-throw line and had a team-high three assists.

Buss knocked down five 3-pointers in registering her season-high, while also picking up a team-best six rebounds.

Ava Kreger chipped in seven points for Neenah, which improved to 11-5 overall and 8-2 in the Fox Valley Association.

Anderson paces Zephyrs in win over Lancers

Nolie Anderson posted a double-double with 21 points and 13 rebounds as St. Mary Catholic avenged its only loss of the season with a 71-63 victory over Manitowoc Lutheran last Friday.

Anderson went 9-of-11 at the free-throw line as the Lancers finished 25-of-29 as a team in the victory.

Emily Vogel added 15 points and eight rebounds and Autumn Crowe finished with 14 points.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Rockets ground Lightning for third straight win

Three players reached double figures and Neenah topped Appleton North, 57-48, to register its third straight win and eighth victory in the last nine games.

The Rockets, one of four teams tied atop the Fox Valley Association standings at 7-2, built a 29-23 lead at halftime and then held on in the second half.

Luke Jung led Neenah with 19 points, while Joey Daun finished with 14 points and Nick Schultz added 12. Roan Koeper led Neenah with eight rebounds.

The Rockets won despite attempting just two free throws in the game, while Appleton North finished 9-of-12 from the foul line.

St. Mary Catholic drops back-to-back games

The Zephyrs were held to 19 points in the first half Monday night and were held under 50 points for just the third time this season in a 64-48 loss on the road at Howards Grove.

Tarver Trinkner scored 13 points to lead St. Mary Catholic but was the lone player in double figures for the Zephyrs. Mason

Uhlenbrauck added nine points.

Last Thursday, the Zephyrs took an 11-point halftime lead against Manitowoc Lutheran but the Lancers erupted for 57 points in the second half and stung St. Mary Catholic at home, 81-75.

Preston Fields and Uhlenbrauck each finished with 19 points to lead the Zephyrs, who hit 11 3-pointers in the game.

Luke Fairweather added 12 points, Trinkner had 10 and Mason Wagner chipped in nine points and 12 rebounds.

BOYS WRESTLING

Neenah breezes to two wins at double dual

The Rockets rolled to a couple of conference wins at a double dual in Kaukauna last Thursday, topping Fond du Lac 72-12, while beating Appleton East 69-12.

Against the Cardinals, the Rockets posted five pins and seven forfeits en route to the win. Earning pins for Neenah were Dane Granditzke (138), Joaquin Quinonez (144), Declan Epley (157), Declan Koch (165) and Kaden Roth (190).

Marcus Peterson (113), Alex Zuehlsdorf (120), Jaxon Ennis (126), Garrett Nedens (132), Landen Sheppard (150), Jacob Herm (175) and Brayden Milbrodt (285) won by forfeit.

The Rockets got 10 pins in the win over Appleton East with Peterson (113), Zuehlsdorf (120), Ennis (126), Granditzke (138), Quinonez (144), Sheppard (150), Ledger Lewis (175) and Connor Simons (215) all stopping their opponents in the first period. Koch (157) and Herm (165) also picked up pins, while Nedens (132) won by decision

and Milbrodt (285) won by forfeit.

On Saturday, the Rockets claimed the team title at the Ken Heine Blackshirt Invitational hosted by Waukesha South.

Neenah had four individual champions on the day. Sheppard won the 150-pound title, outscoring his four opponents by a combined 57-4, while Koch pinned all four of his opponents to win the 157-pound crown. Herm also went 4-0 with three pins and a technical fall to claim the crown at 165 pounds, while Roth had three first-period pins en route to winning the title at 190 pounds.

Ennis (126) added a second-place finish, while Quinonez was third at 144 pounds, while Epley (157) and Milbrodt (285) were each fourth and Simons (215) took fifth.

The Rockets finished with 235.5 points in the tournament to easily outdistance runner-up Milton, which finished with 171 points.

GIRLS WRESTLING

Kurszewski leads Rockets at Warrior Challenge

Kylee Kurszewski went 3-1 with a pair of pins to finish third in the 120-pound Gold Division bracket to lead Neenah at the Warrior Challenge in Wausau last Saturday.

Ava Armatti placed eighth in the 138-pound Gold Division bracket, while Ashlynn Scheidermayer won two matches in the 114-pound Gold Division bracket but did not place.

In the Silver Division, Rayleigh Pearson placed third at 126 pound, while Maya Ives (107) and Jenson Kurszewski (138) were each eighth.

Senior Standout

FROM PAGE 10

a shoot-the-3 type of guy. He's a little old-school."

All three of Fields' siblings went on to college at the University of Wisconsin and that is certainly an option that he is contemplating.

But he would also like to continue playing basketball – something he wouldn't do for the Badgers – and is keeping his options open right now for what lies ahead.

"I would like to play (in college) if there is an opportunity," Fields said. "I've been playing basketball my whole life and I want to keep doing it."

Before he crosses that bridge, though, Fields has roughly half of a season left with the Zephyrs and he wants to make the most of that time.

Although St. Mary Catholic has hovered

around the .500-mark most of the season, Fields said the team is playing better as the season has worn on and he is looking forward to what this group can do in the tournament.

"I think we have a great chance to surprise some people. We are a good team. We will have good games and bad games but as long as we keep the energy I feel like we're going to do well," Fields said. "In the beginning (of the season) we were still learning. We are just finding our rhythm. We've been playing together pretty well and the team chemistry is going up. I love playing with this team."

And the Zephyrs love to have Fields leading the way.

"He's just that kid," Bradshaw said. "He works real hard, he's very determined and he's just really, really skilled. He understands the game and where to find his teammates. He's been a pleasure to coach these last four years."





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Miscellaneous

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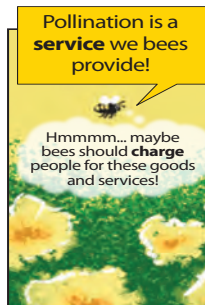
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Kid Scoop

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 Get puzzle answers, recipes and more at www.kidscoop.com
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Bee Money Smart

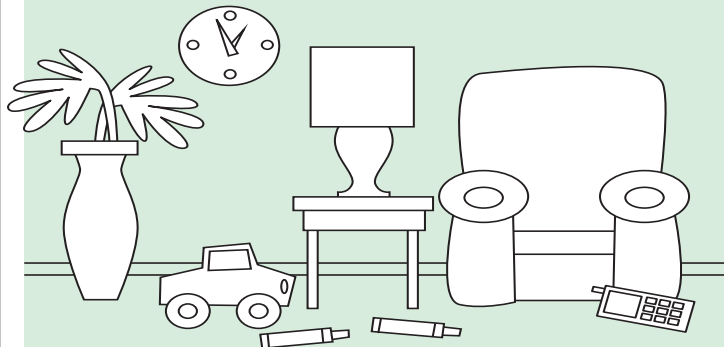
To be money smart, you need to understand **goods** and **services**.



Goods = Objects

Goods are things that are made or grown. Basically, things you can touch.

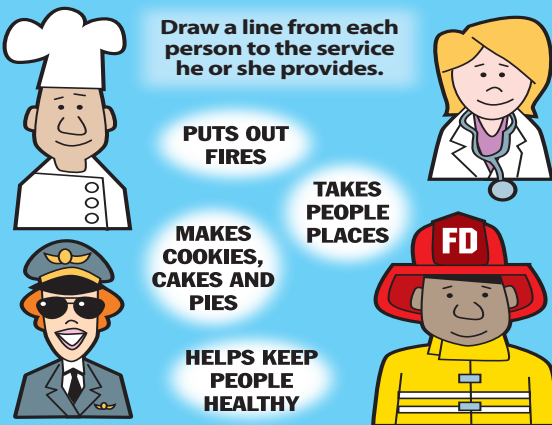
How many goods can you find in this room? Color them.



Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Use context clues to understand the meaning of words.

Services = Actions

A service is work that one person does for someone else.



DICTIONARY
 Is this dictionary **goods** or a **service**? _____
 Who could use it? _____
 Why would they want to use it? _____

Is this waiter **goods** or a **service**? _____
 Who could use it? _____
 Why would they want to use it? _____

Is this taxi **goods** or a **service**? _____
 Who could use it? _____
 Why would they want to use it? _____

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Use grade-appropriate words correctly.

Extra! Extra! Goods and Services Search

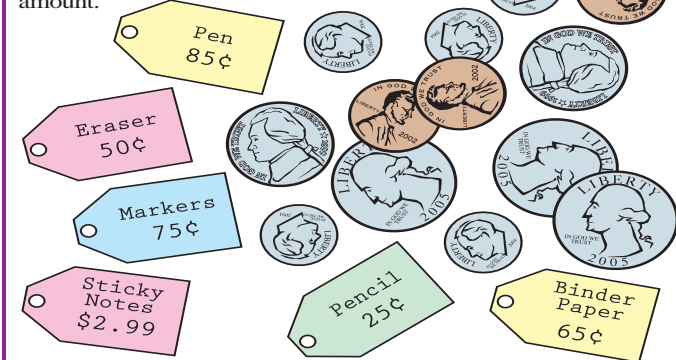
Look through the newspaper for five or more examples of goods and five or more examples of services. Write them in the spaces below.

GOODS	SERVICES

Standards Link: Research: Use the newspaper to locate information.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Add up the value of these coins. Then circle all the items you could purchase with this amount.



Standards Link: Math: Addition using money.

Double Double Word Search

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

SERVICES	P S E I R I X A T N
FLOWERS	R S N O I T C A M E
PROVIDES	O H E R O N S S O C
NECESSARY	V S C C O E D N B E
OBJECTS	I E W U I O E I J S
ACTIONS	D R O P O V M O E S
GOODS	E I R G Y T R C C A
TOUCH	S F K S E E B E T R
COINS	D S R E W O L F S Y
FIRES	
BEEES	
WORK	
PIES	
ROOM	
TAXI	

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

Kid Scoop Together: A Store You Know!

Some stores sell all or mostly goods. For example, a grocery store sells mostly goods. If it has a bakery that makes birthday cakes, then it offers goods and a service in one product!

Other stores sell mostly services, such as a car wash or a barber shop.

Complete the following to describe a store you go to:

Name of a store I go to:

Goods I can buy at that store:

Services I can buy at that store:

Design a newspaper advertisement for the store you described above. Be sure to include some of the goods or services they offer. Look at the ads in today's newspaper for ideas.

Write On! Real Math

Look for numbers in the newspaper. Use these numbers to make a math problem.

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- Top 5 reasons to support YOUR local community newspaper:**
- **Stay Connected to Local News and Events:** Local newspapers provide coverage of community-specific news, events, and issues that larger media outlets often overlook, keeping you informed about what's happening in your area.
 - **Support Local Journalism:** By supporting Neenah News with a membership you help sustain independent journalism that holds local governments, businesses, and organizations accountable.
 - **Promote Local Businesses:** Community newspapers often feature advertisements, profiles, and stories about local businesses, fostering a stronger local economy and encouraging residents to shop locally.
 - **Preserve Local Culture and Voices:** Local newspapers highlight community stories, achievements, traditions, and unique perspectives that contribute to the area's identity and cultural heritage.
 - **Build a Sense of Community:** Supporting your local newspaper strengthens community ties by providing a platform for discussion, celebrating shared successes, and addressing collective challenges.

Join online at www.neenahnewsnow.com/product/membership/, calling 920-486-1616 or stopping at or mailing a \$50 annual membership to Neenah News, 124 W. Wisconsin Ave. #090B, Neenah WI 54956