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# Voters select new county executive

## Hintz defeats Doemel for leadership position

Neenah News

Winnebago County voters chose former Assembly representative Gordon Hintz over incumbent Jon Doemel for the county executive position in Tuesday’s election that also elected Judge Susan Crawford to the Wisconsin Supreme

Court and Jill Underly to continue as state superintendent of schools.

Hintz had 30,832 votes compared with 27,374 for Doemel in unofficial results to win the four-year term as the county’s top administrator, a position Doemel has held since 2021.

Hintz thanked county voters for their support and said he was ready to get to work.


“We ran a strong campaign and worked

hard to engage voters throughout the county and I hope to take that same approach when in office,” he stated on social media. “I want to thank Jon Doemel for his service and look forward to working with him on the transition.”

Doemel, whose last day in the office will be next Monday, said in an online video post that serving county residents for the

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Bergstrom-Mahler Museum photo

## Young artists at work

Children take part in Spring Break Art Camp last Friday at the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass where they created art projects that included fusing and painting on glass. Summer art camps are available for ages 5-7, 8-11 and 12-15 at the museum. For more information go to [bmmglass.com/product-category/classes/art-camps](http://bmmglass.com/product-category/classes/art-camps).

# County explores central facilities plan for services

## Early proposals seek better public access

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

Winnebago County is considering a space needs study and facility master plan that could centralize county services on a single campus, potentially saving millions in long-term maintenance costs while improving efficiency.

The county has about 1,000 employees who work out of more than 138 buildings. Money from the county’s Spirit Fund to evaluate the buildings was approved

by the County Board of Supervisors in 2023 and 2024, including \$300,000 for a countywide building condition assessment study and another \$300,000 for a comprehensive space needs assessment and facility master plan.

County executive assistant Ethan Hollenberger said that over the past several years the county has been embarking on building maintenance best practice planning, starting with the facilities condition assessment.

“That report and long-term capital planning tool assessed the conditions of our buildings and key mechanicals in each facility,” he said. “This did not take

into account whether or not the buildings were configured to provide the highest use for our county clients.”

With the information from the facilities condition assessment, Hollenberger said the county started the space use and master planning process. Venture Architects was selected to complete the assessment and plan, which kicked off in December.

In January, all county department heads met with the architects to talk about needs, which revealed varying space requirements, with some departments experiencing significant growth projections. Human Services, for example, anticipates a potential 25% staffing increase over the

next decade.

A discussion on the options for county buildings at a committee meeting last week was part of the planning process to work toward a draft study and master plan for presentation to the full board.

Currently, county services are spread across multiple aging buildings in Oshkosh and Neenah with significant infrastructure challenges.

“Conceptually, the architects provided addition needs if the county were to remodel current facilities,” Hollenberger said. “They also looked at what the space

SEE **County facilities** ON PAGE 7



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Photo by Tim Sweet  
Sandhill cranes are one of the species volunteers will be on the lookout for during the annual Midwest Crane Count on April 12.

# Crane-counting volunteers urged to sign up

Neenah News

New volunteers interested in taking part in the 49th Annual Midwest Crane Count from 5:30 to 7:30 a.m. April 12 should contact Winnebago County coordinator Evelyn Meuret of Winnebago Audubon for instructions at 920-573-7828 or evelynmeuret57@att.net.

The International Crane Foundation sponsors the annual survey with more than 2,000 volunteer participants from Wisconsin and throughout portions of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio and Minnesota. Information is gathered on the abundance and distribution of cranes in the upper Midwest.

The International Crane Foundation

sponsors the annual count to conserve the world’s 15 species of cranes and the natural communities on which they depend. Sandhill cranes once nearly disappeared from Wisconsin, but the species has successfully recovered and is slowly expanding into neighboring states.

Observations of sandhill cranes can lend insight into threatened crane species, including the whooping crane. There are now about 75 whooping cranes in the reintroduced population in central Wisconsin.

All counters are invited to meet for breakfast immediately after the count to share their experiences at the Delta Restaurant in Oshkosh. Additional information on the count is at [cranecount.org](http://cranecount.org).

# Growing Up Neenah exhibit opening

Neenah News

The Neenah Historical Society is launching its Growing Up Neenah: An All-American Childhood exhibit on Monday that will run through November 2026, celebrating the rich history and experiences of childhood in Neenah.

Curated by executive director Erica Suchyta and museum coordinator and archivist Miranda Ridener, the exhibit explores the evolving concept of childhood while highlighting the enduring traditions and landmarks that make Neenah special.

Growing Up Neenah will feature stories collected through the History Harvest outreach program, an initiative that has gathered more than 30 accounts from Neenah residents through online submissions, handwritten memories and oral history interviews.

The exhibit will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and



Friday at the Neenah Historical Society, the former home of Helen Kimberly Stuart at 406 E Wisconsin Ave.

For more information, to make a gift to support the exhibit, become a member or schedule a private tour, contact 920-729-0244 or [info@neenahhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@neenahhistoricalsociety.com).

# Badger Talk to be filmed here featuring cheese

Neenah News

PBS Wisconsin will be filming in Oshkosh this month for a Badger Talk on “How Wisconsin Became the Cheese State.”

Dean Sommer, a cheese technologist originally from Neenah, will lead the talk from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. April 10 at Winnebago County’s James. P. Coughlin Center as part of weeklong events hosted by Extension Winnebago County during Wisconsin Idea Week.

He will describe early cheesemaking, differences among cheese types and the machinery involved in the process, bringing along an old cheesemaker’s uniform and some small equipment and tools.

Sommer has worked at the Center for

Dairy Research for the last 22 years, serving as a technical resource to Wisconsin cheese manufacturers and customers. He has a master’s degree in food science from UW-Madison.

Extension health and well-being educator Katie Jaegly said they also will be hosting a Program and Partner Fair in Room A with 18 organizations represented at 5:30 p.m. before the talk in Room B.

“This event is a great example of the Wisconsin Idea in action,” Jaegly said. “We look forward to bringing people together to learn, engage and have some fun.”

The events are open to the public, and after the talk attendees will be able to sample some award-winning cheeses from across the state. More information can be found at [winnebago.extension.wisc.edu](http://winnebago.extension.wisc.edu).

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# Former police officer released on bond

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

A Neenah police officer who was terminated last week and charged with two counts of possession of child pornography was released from jail on a \$20,000 cash bond last Friday.

Owen Halls, 22, was booked into the Outagamie County Jail on March 26 and appeared in court the next day for an initial appearance. He made bond on Friday and was released to an address in Kaukauna with conditions that include no unsupervised contact with anyone under age 18 and no use or possession of any internet capable devices. He is due back in court May 5.

According to the criminal complaint, the Kaukauna Police Department received an Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) CyberTip in September from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. The tip was investigated by Kaukauna school resource officer Lucas Meyer, who has had training in how to investigate ICAC cases.

The CyberTip indicated that two files were uploaded of suspected child pornography, with one of the videos described as depicting an early pubescent female believed to be about 13. Meyer submitted subpoenas and warrants to learn who had been involved in the video.

Court records show warrants were returned in October and November that con-

tained the records and subscriber information for the account involved in uploading the videos. The information led to an address in Kaukauna where four people were living. One of the residents was Halls, who had been employed with the Neenah Police Department for about a year.

Investigators later made contact with Halls, though the complaint does not state whether he was interviewed last year after the initial search warrants were returned or if he was interviewed last week.

Documents say that during the interview Halls recognized the ICAC insignia on a special agent's belongings and commented on it, stating he assumed the investigators were speaking with him about something ICAC related. He confirmed he has a Telegram account he uses for "probably stuff I shouldn't."

Halls told officers that he had concerns about seeing children on a website that has links to pornographic videos and pictures. He stated that when he searches a link and sees someone underage he closes out of it and doesn't report it.

Documents say Halls may have been exchanging pornographic materials with others through an instant messenger app. When notified that investigators viewed material from his account of early teenagers under the age of 18, he nodded his head affirmatively and said "mmhm."

Neenah Police Chief Aaron Olson said he first learned of the investigation involving Halls on March 24 and met with Kaukauna police the next day where he reviewed the evidence and came up with a plan to detain him. Olson said Halls was arrested and fired March 26 and police are following the process to have him decertified as a Wisconsin law enforcement officer.

"As your police chief, I am sorry," he wrote. "We conduct very thorough backgrounds, but somehow, Mr. Halls was able to deceive all of us. I understand this will and should cause concern. In my seven years as your police chief, nothing has disappointed me more than the reported actions of this for-

mer officer."

Olson said he can't comment on any other aspects of the case as the investigation is ongoing.

Kaukauna Police Chief Jamie Graff emailed a press release stating the same, noting Olson was contacted by his department due to Halls being a Neenah police employee and was arrested after multiple search warrants that were conducted.

Kaukauna police declined to release the investigation report that was referred to the Outagamie District Attorney for charges, stating "release of the report at this time would interfere with, and likely undermine, prosecution."

Such records are typically available in response to an open records request after criminal charges have been filed.

The Outagamie County District Attorney's Office did not respond to a request seeking insight into why there was a delay after the initial search warrant results were returned and the filing of criminal charges.

## Library names its volunteer of year

Neenah News

Local resident George Schneider has been named 2024 Volunteer of the Year by Friends of the Neenah Public Library.

Schneider joined the volunteer group in November 2023 and has been working at the library consistently in the mornings Monday through Thursday, last year volunteering for 347 hours. The library's regular volunteers puts in between 41 to 48 hours a year.

Schneider is in charge of the Book Club to Go and the graphic novel sections on the library's second floor. He also assists with special projects.

"I feel like I'm doing something, and everyone is really nice," Schneider said about his efforts.

He grew up in Oshkosh and lived there until he moved to Neenah nine years ago with his wife. Schneider worked in the printing industry for 43 years, 37 at Service-Litho and six at Westgate Products.



Schneider

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# ThedaCare hospital project progressing in Oshkosh

Neenah News

Construction work is progressing at the new ThedaCare Medical Center-Oshkosh at 250 W. 6th Ave. on the Fox River with hospital officials noting construction milestones reached.

Since last March's groundbreaking, roof work is completed along with most exterior masonry. Window frames are installed with exterior glass expected to be complete by early summer as work continues on interior walls.

The health campus is expected to be complete in late 2025 with about 60 new jobs created for caregivers and staff at the campus. Those interested in learning more about job opportunities are asked to visit [ThedaCare.org/Careers](https://ThedaCare.org/Careers).

ThedaCare Medical Center-Oshkosh is

projected to be about 114,000 square feet with an estimated \$84 million investment, which includes an updated plan that added a 28,000-square-foot third floor to the original design.

The hospital will have emergency care, inpatient beds and 24/7 coverage with a retail pharmacy, ambulatory surgery center with operating rooms and a medical office building for primary care and specialties.

Construction partners include Hplex Solutions as the owner representative; HGA as architect and engineer; Miron Construction Co. as construction manager and the Sigma Group as civil engineer and landscape architect.

Work also continues at ThedaCare Medical Center-Fond du Lac with completion expected this spring.



Submitted photo

## Feeding America gains hunger relief grant

Neenah News

Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin has received a Fox Cares Foundation grant for \$25,000 in support of the hunger relief organization's FarmLink program. This investment will expand the program, providing more than 30,000 pounds of locally grown produce to food pantries, meal programs and shelters in northeast Wisconsin.

Through FarmLink, fresh produce is delivered from local farm fields to pantry partners, reducing transportation time and ensuring freshness.

"This generous grant from the Fox Cares Foundation strengthens our commitment to providing fresh, healthy food to families

experiencing hunger in northeast Wisconsin," said Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin president Patti Habeck. "With the Foundation's support of FarmLink, we're not just increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables – we're building a stronger, more resilient food system that supports local farmers and our vitally important food pantry partners."

Fox Cares executive director Cathy Harvath added, "Fighting hunger, providing access to the arts, and ending homelessness are the pillars that we have supported since we began in 2016. Our Foundation continues to grow due to the generosity of our communities enabling us to make a bigger impact in the areas we serve."

## Recycling initiative

Congregational United Church of Christ in Neenah partnered with Lakeside Packaging Plus to recycle plastic for the NexTrex Recycling Program by removing labels and waste while sorting the plastic. The plastic used was donated by church members and friends or left over from LPP's cater wrap operation, where they package plastic silverware with a napkin for use by food service businesses. After amassing 1,000 pounds of materials, Trex Co. donates a wood alternative composite bench back to the church.

## Badger State Girl Choir singers recognized

Area singers from the Badger State Girl Choir competed March 9 at the Anselmo Academy Music Competition in New York City against violinists, pianists and other musically accomplished youth, with Alayna Garrity of Neenah High School earning a second-place award.

She was among four Badger State Girl Choir award winners notified of their suc-

cess and invited to perform at a concert in New York City's Steinway Hall on March 30.

The Badger State Girl Choir, a premiere community music education program for young singers with some 160 girls in five choirs, represents dozens of schools and homeschool programs in northeastern Wisconsin.

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# Police celebrate their first citizen academy graduates

By Bethanie Gengler  
NEENAH NEWS

A graduation will take place at the Neenah Police Department next week, though it's a graduation of a different kind as 12 adult students of the Citizens Police Academy celebrate completion of hands-on training in law enforcement.

The event marks the conclusion of the inaugural academy class, designed to foster police and community partnerships and provide a deeper understanding of law enforcement practices and the challenges officers face daily.

Assistant police chief Jeff Bernice, coordinator of the program, said this is the first official long-term citizen police academy that the city has had in its history, adding that he and Chief Aaron Olson participated in citizen academies at previous departments and saw the benefits of the initiative.

Participants applied to attend the free academy. Those who met program requirements and were selected attended a two-and-a-half hour class on Tuesday evenings for eight weeks with different officer instructors.

"Our instructors did an exceptional job with the various classes," Bernice said. "Each one was a subject matter expert and a true law enforcement professional."

Topics included active threats, crime scenes, firearms, officer safety, search and seizure, specialty units, team building and traffic stops, giving participants a behind-the-scenes look at policing through presentations and practical exercises.

"We tried to provide a snapshot of various topics for the students, from use of force procedures, to officer safety, to mental health, to equipment; a wide spectrum

of material was provided," Bernice said. Other activities included handcuffing drills, reality-based and virtual reality scenarios, and fingerprinting.

"One of the major components of any law enforcement agency is teamwork and we wanted to share that with the class," Bernice said. "Each session, the students participated in team building exercises to build the relationships with their fellow students. These drills ranged from constructing towers and bridges with limited materials, to challenges and competitions involving teams."

During the final class, the students were trained on civilian response to active shooter events and active threats, followed by a presentation on traffic stops, OWI investigations and standard field sobriety testing.

The students built relationships with each other and officers as they engaged in discussions about the role of police officers and community involvement in public safety.

"One of the primary purposes of the academy is to explain the 'whys' on what law enforcement does," Bernice said. "Police work is not like the movies or television where actors can solve a crime by the second commercial break, but complex situations with many factors involved in deterring crime. The academy educates the students on policies, procedures and laws, so they have a better understanding on why police officers perform a certain way. It can also educate the officers on how a citizen may perceive our practices and gives us the opportunity to explain this in the future."

Attendees were also given the chance to accompany police officers on a ride along



Photo from Neenah Police

Neenah police Lt. Jason Fosler led Mark Mayer of Neenah through field sobriety tests during the final class of the Citizens Police Academy last week.

to experience law enforcement activities firsthand.

For Mark Mayer of Neenah, attending the Citizen Police Academy was a shocking experience. That's because Mayer was one of five participants who volunteered to get tased by officers.

"I was the last one to do it after watching everybody for five seconds of hell, for lack of a better word," he said. "But I did it. It was crazy. And if you offered me ten grand right now to do it again, I would not do it."

Mayer shared that his personal upbringing wasn't ideal, which influenced his beliefs about police.

"My first kind of memories of police were like, 'Hey, you're taking my dad away,' or 'why are the cops always at my house,' and I just thought this was a very eye-opening moment to understand the real human side of policing and understand that they're not always the good guys or the bad guys," he said. "They're just humans, they make mistakes, they mean well. It was just a very cool, eye-opening experience. So I'm so glad I did it."

Attending the academy has changed his view of police officers.

"It was so refreshing to be like, wow, I could have these guys over for a barbecue and feel comfortable about it, and I don't have this weird idea of what I thought it was," he said. "So for me, I just want to educate my neighbors, my community, and tell them, like, 'hey, everything and most things you've heard is wrong.'"

Other graduates of the program said they have newfound respect for officers and a greater appreciation for the complexities of law enforcement.

"I feel very honored to have been part of the first class and am looking forward to future opportunities to volunteer and support the department," said participant

Amber Drephal.

"The academy not only deepened my understanding of law enforcement but also gave me a whole new level of respect for the work you do every day," Abigail Miles said in a message to police. "I also want to extend my gratitude to all of the officers who took the time to instruct and share their expertise. I know this was extra time on top of already demanding jobs, and it means a lot that so many were willing to share their experiences and insights."

Bernice said that moving forward, the Citizens Police Academy will take place annually, with applications opening in the fall and students selected in December for classes that start in January and wrap up in early April.

Tuesday's graduation at the police department is not open to the public. It will include opening statements followed by dinner and a formal ceremony in the police training classroom.

Batley's Grill & Bar and 4Imprint sponsored the academy, with Batley's providing snacks for each session and dinner for graduation, and 4Imprint donating polo shirts for the students.

"This group of students has been amazing, they were interactive, motivated, and came to each session with a positive attitude and seeking knowledge," Bernice said.

Mayer, who is a realtor, encouraged residents to challenge their preconceived notions of police.

"There's bad doctors, there's bad realtors, there's bad garbage men, there's bad everything, but 99% of that (law enforcement) profession is really good people who care, sometimes more about the community and the citizens than they almost do themselves, because they put themselves in harm's way," he said.



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As the snow melts and new life begins, we take time to remember those we've loved and lost. This spring, honor their memory with warmth and grace.

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County facilities

FROM PAGE 1

and site needs would be for new construction. If the committee chooses to pursue new construction, the architects did review currently owned county property for potential locations of new facilities.”

One of the proposals involves creating a 10-acre centralized campus in Oshkosh on County Y near the county jail and Highway Department building, or north of the James P. Coughlin Center.

The campus would move departments including Administration, Human Services, Public Health and Information Technology to one location, with Hollenberger noting consolidation of facilities would allow the county to decommission for other use about 250,000 square feet of space.

Preliminary estimates suggest maintenance costs for existing buildings will top \$167 million over the next 10 to 15 years, which could reach \$300 million over 20 years with inflation. In comparison, constructing new, efficient buildings could potentially cost \$100-\$200 million.

County Executive Jon Doemel said the county is exploring all potential possibilities for county spaces.

“We want to look at all options,” he said. “We want to consider all options. We want to evaluate what the overall cost is on 20 years and what the best way is.”

The proposed consolidated site offers several advantages, including existing infrastructure, the potential for future expansion and proximity to emergency services.

Concerns were raised about accessibility, with facilities director Mike Elder noting the location of some of the buildings

may be a barrier for public use.

“We have people that may be living out into the rural areas that are not partaking of the services because it’s too hard to get here,” he said. “... when my dad died, there was no way for my mom to get to the ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Center) ... it’s basically a two-hour commute.”

Shuttle services and exploring new public transit routes to improve access were among topics discussed at the meeting.

Hollenberger highlighted potential improvements in employee wellness and career development with a centralized campus that would allow easier interdepartmental interactions and shared amenities.

“That has been the benefit of, we can do things in recruitment and retention that we could not do in old and other buildings because, you know, and I was there in COVID and out of campus in a different county, and we had a food truck rally, and we had CNAs crying because they got to see their fellow co-workers,” he said.

Supervisor John Hinz said the project could spur commercial development in the surrounding area near Interstate 41, creating additional economic opportunities for the region.

“You would have so many people out there,” he said. “I mean, you might end up with ... a restaurant or two, probably another Kwik Trip ... so (it) will be good for the city, which is good for the county.”

Hollenberger said a more refined committee presentation with additional financial data and cost estimates will take place later this month, followed by a County Board presentation and tour in May. Adoption of the study and plan could occur this summer.

Spring election

FROM PAGE 1

past four years has been an honor and congratulated Hintz and his campaign.

“I am getting out of government with my soul intact, never compromising on my principles, never compromising on my integrity and never compromising on doing what I believe is right,” Doemel said.

Seats on the Neenah Common Council, Neenah Joint School District Board of Education, Town of Neenah, Village of Fox Crossing and Town of Clayton also were chosen by local voters.

In Neenah, Jeffrey Linski edged Frank Cuthbert by 12 votes – 1,197 to 1,185 – for the District 3 alderman seat vacated by Lee Hillstrom. In last year’s election, Linski lost to William Pollnow Jr. by 19 votes. District 2 Alderman Dan Steiner ran unchallenged for another term while Flo Bruno ran unopposed to win the District 1 seat vacated by Kathie Boyette.

On the Neenah Joint School District Board of Education three seats were filled from among five candidates. Board treasurer Tara Brzezinski, incumbent member-at-large Lauri Asbury and new candidate Eric Fredrickson were victorious ahead of Tom Hanby and Kenneth McNeil. Board vice president Sarah Moore-Nokes did not seek another term.

Town of Neenah chairman Robert Schmeichel ran unopposed while board members Brooke Cardoza and Tom Wilde also were unchallenged. Matt Schmeichel defeated Edmund King, 612 to 432, for



Hintz

Neenah Sanitary District 2 commissioner to replace Steve Coburn, who did not seek re-election.

Three Fox Crossing trustee positions, the village president and municipal judge were on the ballot without any challengers as president Dale Youngquist, Judge Timothy Hogan, Trustee 2 Kris Koepp, Trustee 4 Kate McQuillan and Trustee 6 Barbara Hanson gained new terms.

In the Town of Clayton, incumbent Russell Geise was re-elected as Town Board chairperson unopposed. Incumbent Kay Lettau narrowly defeated challenger Terry Haase for Town Board Supervisor 1, while incumbent Linda Grundman retained her Town Board Supervisor 2 seat unchallenged.

Spring election voters chose Crawford for the Supreme Court over former state attorney general Brad Schimel in the high-profile race for the court’s open seat that drew national attention and record campaign spending.

Crawford’s 9-point victory – a 54% to 45% margin – is being viewed nationally as an early public referendum on Trump administration policies after it endorsed and helped finance Schimel’s campaign. County voters also favored Crawford by a 34,605 to 30,047 margin.

Superintendent of Schools Underly gained another four-year term after defeating challenger Brittany Kinser in a nonpartisan statewide race that drew Democratic support for Underly and GOP backing for Kinser.

A statewide referendum question to make Wisconsin’s voter ID law part of the state constitution was approved by voters. The referendum had public support from the GOP, including Winnebago County Republicans, while Democrats opposed the addition to the constitution.

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# Prep sports roundup

## TRACK AND FIELD

### Olkowski, Severson lead Rockets at Showcase Meet

Mazie Olkowski and Emma Severson each won individual events to lead the Neenah Rockets to the team title in the girls large school division at the Ripon College Showcase Meet held Saturday at the Willmore Center.

Olkowski won the 3,200 meters, while Severson finished first in the shot put for the Rockets, who finished second in the final overall standings – the combination of large school and small school divisions.

Neenah also picked up a win in the 3,200-meter relay with a team of Natalie Willes, Callie McElroy, Izzy Malloy and

Brooke Veith. Malloy, McElroy, Julia Rangel and Molly Snider added a second place in the 1,600-meter relay.

Rangel in the 400 meters, Payton Schaefer in the 800 meters and Willes in the 3,200 meters were each fourth, with Brynn Fox taking fifth in the 60 meters and Aubrey Murwar tying for fifth place in the high jump. Neenah’s 800-meter relay team of Janae Rodgriquez, Snider, Mi-rella Taeschner and Kobi Meyers added a fourth-place finish.

Other top 10 individual finishes were Rodriguez, sixth in the triple jump; Veith, seventh in the 1,600 meters; Aubrey Strosahl, 10<sup>th</sup> in the 60-meter hurdles; and Kristin Manteufel, 10<sup>th</sup> in the long jump.

The Neenah boys, who finished eight in the large school standings and 12<sup>th</sup>

overall, were led by Ashton Van Beek’s fourth place in the 400 meters and fifth places by Rylan Mendoza in the 200 meters and Nate Kramp in the shot put.

The Rockets’ 1,600-meter relay team of Van Beek, Mendoza, Matt Machacek and Nyok Ryak also placed fifth.

Other top 10 finishes for the Rockets were: Zach Verhagen, eighth in the 3,200 meters; Khalid Williams, ninth in the high jump; and Oliver Steiner, 10<sup>th</sup> in the 1,600 meters.

The Neenah boys also competed at the Willmore Center in an invite Tuesday, with Aidan Apa scoring a fourth place in the 1,600 meters and Ben Donaldson taking fifth in the 60-meter hurdles.

The Rockets’ 800-meter relay team placed seventh, while Van Beek added an eighth place in the 200 meters, Ledger Lewis was ninth in the pole vault.

place in the shot put, while Ellie Davel in the 60-meter hurdles and Madeline Weininger in the pole vault were each fourth. Earning fifth places were Claire Higgins in the 400 meters, Audrey Wan-less in the 200 meters and Claire Mislin-ski in the 3,200 meters.

Cora Eppling in the long jump and Ma-rissa Hahn in the shot put were each 10<sup>th</sup>.

Higgins, Maria Marti, Moorea Steck-ling and Daphne Dwyer combined to take fourth in the 1,600-meter relay, while Marti, Ripley, Higgins and Made-leine Breen combined to take fourth in the 3,200-meter relay. The Zephyrs were also fifth in the 800-meter relay.

## SOFTBALL

### Zephyrs open season with loss to Manawa

A rough sixth inning was too much to overcome for St. Mary Catholic’s softball team on a chilly Tuesday afternoon as the Zephyrs fell to Manawa, 16-3, in their sea-son opener.

Manawa scored three runs in the top of the first inning but St. Mary Catholic answered two runs in the bottom of the inning. The Wolves came back with two runs in the top of the second and extended the lead to 7-2 in the fourth.

Samantha Weiss had a triple to pace the Zephyr offense, which had five players fin-ish with one hit in the game. Weiss, Em-ily Vogel and Ainslie Liddy each drove in runs for St. Mary Catholic.

The Zephyrs committed eight errors which led to 10 unearned runs in the game.

### Ripley paces Zephyrs at indoor meet

Lauren Ripley finished in the top four in three individual events, including posting one victory, to lead St. Mary Catholic to a second-place finish at the Girls Small Schools meet at UW-Osh-kosh on Tuesday.

The Zephyrs finished just two points behind Freedom in the final team stand-ings but led all Division 3 teams at the meet. Individual events were split be-tween Division 2 and Division 3 compet-itors.

Ripley won the 800 meters to pace the Zephyrs, while adding a third place in the 1,600 meters and picking up a fourth place in the long jump.

Nolie Anderson picked up a third



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# Retooled Rocket roster ready to challenge in FVA

Neenah News

The Neenah High School baseball team is coming off a season in which the Rockets finished second in the talent-rich Fox Valley Association, won a WIAA Division 1 regional title and came within a whisker for

# Baseball

## PREVIEW

replacing 10 seniors – many of whom were key players for the Rockets – which means head coach Aaron Nelson will be turning to some new faces when Neenah takes the field this spring.

“We will need our younger players to step in and hit the ground running,” Nelson commented. “We will need to do the little things right, taking extra bases using our team speed, making routine plays routinely and throwing strikes. Keeping pressure on other teams and making them earn everything will be important to our success this year.”

Despite the overhaul of the roster, Nelson believes the Rockets will be right back in hunt in the FVA.

“We anticipate competing with everyone in the conference, no matter where they

rank,” Nelson commented. “The strength of our team will be our competitive nature, willingness to go after it for the guy next to us.”

Even with the roster losses, Neenah does return some pretty solid blocks to build around.

Four-year varsity starter Andrew Carlson, a second-team all-FVA selection last season, returns at third base and will anchor the lineup this season. Carlson batted .316 last season and finished second on the team in RBIs, while striking out just 10 times in 93 plate appearances.

Also returning after a strong season last year will be junior Mack Krause, who earned honorable mention all-conference honors. Krause emerged as one of the top pitchers for the Rockets last season, while also playing shortstop.

Junior Gus Weinholzer and sophomore Levi Bolvin both played partial seasons on the varsity level and will play bigger roles for the Rockets this season. Weinholzer struck out 22 batters in 23 innings while posting a 2.74 earned run average in six appearances on the mound, while Bolvin batted .316 with three RBIs in just seven games.

Nelson will also look to varsity newcomers Cal Juckem and James Weiland, both juniors, and sophomore Ethan Hellengreen. All three players will likely get some innings this season for the Rockets, while Juckem also plays first base, Weiland is an outfielder and Hellengreen plays on the infield.

Neenah won nine straight games and 10 of 11 contests before falling in sectionals and with the new faces could be a team that's stronger in the second half of the season again. The Rockets play their first five games on the road – including matchups against perennial FVA powers Kimberly and Hortonville – and won't play their first home game until Tuesday, April 22, against Appleton West.

## St. Mary Catholic

The Zephyrs are returning six of the nine starters from a team last season that finished tied for second in the Big East North and reached a WIAA Division 3 sectional final.

Head coach Jeff Hogenson will have a trio of key returning players to build around in senior Joe Pirillo, junior Mason Wagner and sophomore Luke Fairweather. Wagner,

a catcher, headlines the group after earning second-team all-conference honors last season, while Fairweather will anchor the defense in center field, with the duo giving the Zephyrs some strong play in the middle of the field.

Pirillo emerged as one of the top hitters in the conference over the second half of the season and finished the season batting .392 with five home runs and a team-high 34 RBIs – 11 more than anyone else on the team.

Senior Grant Brazzale and junior Ethan Plutz will both be key members of the lineup and will see time on the mound along with Pirillo, junior Carter Nicholson and sophomore Jacob Ernsting. Brazzale and Plutz had the most appearances among returning players with eight and six, respectively.

Hogenson is also looking for sophomore second baseman Tarver Trinkner and freshman shortstop Owen Dewitt to bolster the Zephyrs lineup in their first varsity seasons.

“We are counting on our pitching and defense to set the tone for our team in 2025,” commented Hogenson. “We are planning to compete for a conference title this season.”

# Veteran battery will anchor Neenah's efforts in competitive FVA

Neenah News

Neenah's softball team will be battery-powered this season.

The junior tandem of pitcher Kyleigh Mathe and catcher Carson Harwood both earned all-conference honors last season and return this year to lead the Rockets under first-year head coach Adam Hablewitz.

Mathe fanned 101 batters in 88 innings

## Softball PREVIEW

while compiling a 1.43 earned run average to be one of four pitchers named to the all-Fox Valley Association first team a year ago. Harwood batted a robust .419 to lead the team, while belting five doubles and finishing with 12 RBIs and garnered second-team all-FVA honors.

Senior infielder Olivia McNulty also re-

turns after earning honorable mention all-FVA honors and will help lead the Rockets' defense on the diamond this season.

Top newcomers for the Rockets this season include juniors Megan Coffey, Ella Pingel, sophomores Norah Paider, Carli Baltus and Adrianna Oitzinger and sophomore Natalie Coffey.

"We are looking forward to competing in a tough FVA conference and have built

an equally difficult nonconference schedule,” Hablewitz commented. “I’m confident we’ll see consistent improvement in performance throughout the season in hopes to peak as we enter the postseason.”

The Rockets finished in a three-way tie for third place in the conference last season, which will once again be led by perennial state powerhouse Kaukauna.

SEE **Softball preview** ON PAGE 11

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# Boys Varsity 2025 Baseball Schedule

## ST. MARY CATHOLIC

April 3	at Ripon	4:45pm
April 7	Oshkosh West	4:30pm
April 12	Ozaukee	10:00am
April 12	Waupaca	3:00pm
April 15	Reedsville	4:30pm
April 24	@Reedsville	5:00pm
April 28	@Michicot	5:00pm
May 1	Michicot	5:00pm
May 5	@Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah	5:00pm
May 6	Howards Grove	4:30pm
May 8	Elkhart Lake-Glendbeulah	5:00pm
May 9	Luxemburg-Casco	6:30pm
May 12	Manitowoc Lutheran	4:30pm
May 15	@Manitowoc Lutheran	4:30pm
May 16	Southern Door	7:00pm
May 19	@Hilbert	5:00pm
May 20	@Algoma	4:30pm
May 22	Hilbert	5:00pm
May 27	@Winneconne	4:30pm

Home games in bold. Home games played at St. Mary Catholic High School Baseball Field unless otherwise noted.

## NEENAH

April 8	@Oshkosh West	4:30pm
April 10	@Kimberly	4:30pm
April 15	@Oshkosh North	5:00pm
April 17	@Hortonville	5:00pm
April 19	@Menasha	3:30pm
April 22	<b>Appleton West</b>	<b>4:30pm</b>
April 24	<b>Kaukauna</b>	<b>4:30pm</b>
April 29	@Appleton East	4:30pm
May 1	<b>Appleton North</b>	<b>4:30pm</b>
May 3	<b>De Pere</b>	<b>10:00am</b>
May 6	@Fond du Lac	4:30pm
May 8	<b>Oshkosh West</b>	<b>4:30pm</b>
May 9	<b>Kimberly</b>	<b>4:30pm</b>
May 13	<b>Oshkosh North</b>	<b>4:30pm</b>
May 15	<b>Hortonville</b>	<b>4:30pm</b>
May 16	@Appleton Wet	5:00pm
May 17	<b>Ashwaubenon *</b>	<b>10:00am</b>
May 17	<b>Slinger *</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>
May 20	@Kaukauna	4:30pm
May 22	<b>Appleton East</b>	<b>4:30pm</b>
May 24	<b>DC Everest H.S. *</b>	<b>11:00am</b>
May 27	@Appleton North	4:30pm
May 29	<b>Fond du Lac</b>	<b>4:30pm</b>
May 30	@Bay Port	4:30pm

Home games in bold. Home games played at Neenah Middle School unless otherwise noted.  
\*Weekend games played at Neenah High School.

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Senior Standout is brought to you by: 

# Zephyrs’ Anderson among state’s elite throwers

By Steve Clark  
NEENAH NEWS

Nolie Anderson is an elite high school performer in track and field. The senior at St. Mary Catholic already has one state title to her credit – she captured the Division 3 discus title in 2023 – has thrown at the state meet in each of her high school seasons and finished in the top 10 in both the shot put and discus at last year’s state meet.

But if Anderson could magically transfer her eliteness into any other track and field event she had no trouble coming up with one.

“I think one that is hard just in general is pole vault. That just seems fun,” Anderson said with a laugh. “I never tried it but if (St. Mary Catholic track coach Chad McCartney) needed me to I would do it. Hopefully that day never comes.”

Anderson plans to stick to her strengths and hopes to make it back to La Crosse in June to cap her season at the state meet once again.

Last year, she finished third in the discus and took 10<sup>th</sup> in the shot put – the first time she competed at state in the shot put – and is eager to get back and boost her results in both events.

“I think last year didn’t really go the way I wanted it to so I’m excited to come back out and be able to keep competing,” Anderson said. “I was happy about my distances and how I improved my distances (last year), but I think as far as placing I’m

Senior Standout



hoping to go further this year.” Anderson will likely be one of the favorites in the discus competition if she makes it to La Crosse, being the only finisher in the top four returning and would be the only competitor with a state discus title to their credit. She won the title in 2023 with a heave of 128 feet, 11 inches on a day that she will always remember. Anderson still recalls entering the competition knowing that a state title was possible. “I just remember waking up that morning and just feeling really good, feeling like I was prepared and confident in myself and as soon as I was warming up and hit that first throw, I knew it was going to be a good day,” Anderson said. “To finish first, to have that under my belt especially going back last year and hopefully this year it’s really helpful.” Some athletes might feel a burden carrying around the knowledge of having stood atop a state podium with the expectations to do it again. Anderson used that experience in a different way.



St. Mary Catholic’s Nolie Anderson won the 2023 Division 3 state title in the discus and placed in the top 10 in both throwing events at last year’s state meet.

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Senior Standout

FROM PAGE 10

“I think being a defending state champion can be hard sometimes because you can have that pressure, but the pressure makes me work harder and gives me something else to push for,” Anderson said. “Getting it one time was fun but I would like to do it again.”

Anderson enters the 2025 season knowing that this won’t be her final year of competing in throwing events.

She recently committed to UW-Milwaukee on a track and field scholarship and will continue to throw for the Panthers.

“I’m really excited to be coached by (Panthers’ throws coach Terrance Howard) and I met my teammates and they are a bunch of great girls,” Anderson said. “I just like the facilities there and the atmosphere of the athletics program is really great.”

Although track and field is her best sport, Anderson certainly has enjoyed success in other athletic areas.

She was a four-year varsity player for the Zephyr basketball team and a key figure in St. Mary Catholic’s runner-up state finish this season. She averaged more than 13 points and about nine rebounds per game as a post presence for the Zephyrs, despite being outsized by most of the opponents she went against.

“For my position I am short, which sometimes is hard. You just have to out-work them and then everything will be fine,” said Anderson, who is listed at 5-10. “I think positioning is most of it. I have been in that position my four years here, so I think just learning where I need to be and the movement of that and learning my teammates and how they feed me the ball is part of it. Really just working hard at getting open and finishing my shots as well as I can.”

Anderson said that the basketball season was a memorable one even if the Zephyrs came up short of winning a gold basketball.

“Obviously the outcome wasn’t what we wanted but we should look back on our season and be proud of everything that we did,” Anderson said. “The group I

did it with, I wouldn’t want to do it with anyone else. We worked so hard for each other and for our coaches and our team, so to get to that point of playing for a state championship, it meant so much.”

Anderson also played tennis the past two seasons at St. Mary Catholic and finished 27-0 with partner Lorelai Miller at No. 3 doubles last fall.

“My junior year, basketball was getting intense and track was getting intense for me and I kind of want to hone in on those two. So tennis was just something I was going to pick up and be fun,” Anderson said. “I played for two years so I definitely got better over that time. But mostly I was doing the things that a tennis player

wouldn’t expect a person to do.”

Being a three-sport athlete can be grueling at times but Anderson believes that being involved in sports has taught her how to effectively use her time as well as being able to work with others to achieve a goal.

“It has made me devote my time to things I need to do and also it’s made me a great teammate and that will carry me in my life pretty far,” Anderson said. “Knowing how to give up my time for other people and vice versa and people helping me has been a blessing. The coaches I have had and the teammates I have had just pushing me to be better is something I will always take with me.”

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Softball preview

FROM PAGE 9

Conference runner-up Oshkosh West also returns the bulk of its roster from last season, while Neenah will also compete with Hortonville, Kimberly and Oshkosh North at the top of the FVA.

The Rockets open the FVA season at home against Oshkosh West on Tuesday.

St. Mary Catholic

The Zephyrs might make things a little uncomfortable for opposing pitchers this season with a veteran-laden lineup.

St. Mary Catholic returns two of its top three hitters from last year in senior Emily Vogel and junior Samantha Weiss, who each hit over .400 last season and earned all-conference recognition.

Vogel led the team with a .455 batting average and finished with 17 RBIs while earning honorable mention all-conference honors, while Weiss as a second-team all-

league selection after batting .419 a season ago.

Seniors Jaklyn Akey and Addison Moder, junior Audrey Weber and sophomores Ainslie Liddy and Cadance Kohel also return after gaining varsity experience a year ago.

Head coach Jennifer Rodman will also look to freshmen Gabby Guerrero, Emmi Weiss, Scarlett Reichenbacher and Paxtyn Trinkner to contribute this season. Guer-rer and Trinkner will be an integral part of the roster this season and the duo will make up the varsity pitching staff as the Zephyrs graduated pair of hurlers from last year who accounted for all but three innings pitched last season.

“The returning players, along with our incoming freshman will provide a balanced attack at the plate,” Rodman commented. “A main goal of ours every year is to win conference, and that goal is still the same this year. We also want to continue to compete in regionals and sectionals, with the ultimate goal of getting to state.”

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## Puzzling Camels

Discover some surprising facts about camels by solving the puzzles on today's Kid Scoop® page!

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Standards Link: Science: Animals have features that aid in survival.

### Fast or Slow?

Camels usually take their time walking in the hot desert. How fast can a camel run? Add up the numbers on the correct path through this maze to discover the answer.

25 10 5 20 5 10 5 15 5 10 5

miles per hour in short bursts.

### What's in the Hump?

A camel's hump is **not** filled with water. Hold this page up to a mirror to see what's inside a camel's hump.

erlt qeez hump is filled with fat. The fat helps keep the camel cool. Look for the camel's hump to be full of fat.

### One Hump, Two Humps

Do the math. The camel with an even-numbered answer is a BACTRIAN camel. The one with an odd-numbered answer is a DROMEDARY.

2 + 3 = 5 (Dromedary)  
4 + 4 = 8 (Bactrian)

Standards Link: Science: Variations exist within a species.

### Togetherhness

Camels are **social** animals that like to be in groups called **herds**. Can you find each camel's exact twin?

### Designed for the Desert

Oops! The hot desert sun melted some of the words in this paragraph. Can you replace them?

Camels have \_\_\_\_\_, tough feet that help them \_\_\_\_\_ on hot, sandy deserts. These wide feet keep them from sinking in the \_\_\_\_\_ and, surprisingly, make them excellent swimmers!

When it's windy in the desert, camels can pinch their nostrils \_\_\_\_\_ to keep out sand and dust.

CLOSED THICK SAND WALK

### Desert Description

Look through today's newspaper to find 10 adjectives that describe a desert.

Standards Link: Language Arts: Identify adjectives.

### Kid Scoop Puzzler

For centuries, humans have used camels as transportation and to carry goods across the desert. For this reason, they have earned a famous nickname. Use the code to reveal it.

S S S

SECRET CODE

● = D ● = O  
★ = E ● = P  
▼ = F ☺ = R  
● = H ● = S  
|| = I ● = T

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.


### Double Double Word Search

CAMEL  
COOL  
DESERT  
DUST  
ENERGY  
EYES  
FOOD  
HOT  
HUMPS  
RUN  
SAND  
SOCIAL  
SUN  
SWIMMERS  
WATER

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

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

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



## Kid Scoop Together

### Funny Fill-In

Ask a family member for nouns, adjectives and verbs to fill in the blanks. Then read your silly story aloud!

### The Camel Race

It was a \_\_\_\_\_ day in the desert. Clive Camel

\_\_\_\_\_ to a \_\_\_\_\_ oasis a mile away.

Carla got an early lead, running as fast as a \_\_\_\_\_.

But she tripped over a \_\_\_\_\_ and Clive pulled

into the lead.

Clive struggled running up a \_\_\_\_\_ dune, and he

began to \_\_\_\_\_ down the other side. Carla caught up!

The two camels were neck-and-\_\_\_\_\_ as they

approached the oasis. As he galloped over the

\_\_\_\_\_, Clive shouted, "I'm going to win!"

Just then, the oasis disappeared! "Oh, no! The oasis was

just a \_\_\_\_\_ mirage!" cried Carla as clouds of dust

and \_\_\_\_\_ swirled all around the two camels.

Standards Link: Language: Recognize and use parts of speech correctly.

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### Write On!

### Camel Fact and Opinion

Describe a camel with three facts and one opinion. Label each one.

Standards Link: Language Arts: Write descriptively using supporting details.



# Neenah News

Serving Neenah & Fox Crossing

## Thank you for supporting local news!

### 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.

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