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## State aid leaves NJSD budget uncertain

By Anya Kelley  
NEENAH NEWS

The Neenah Joint School District (NJSD) is facing budgetary uncertainty going into the 2025-2026 school year after the bi-annual Wisconsin State Budget approved last month didn't increase any state aid to school districts.

The costs of running a school district have continued to increase due to inflation

over the past few years and school officials said state aid is not keeping up with those costs. Jon Joch, the chief financial officer for NJSD, said they are seeing increases to their utilities, the price of their employee packages and increases to the price of supplies it takes to run the school district.

School districts are aided by the number of pupils they have enrolled, but the number of students isn't increasing fast

enough to keep up with inflation. Joch said they have to get creative with their solutions so they can figure out how to serve the same number of students and staff with less money.

"We're trying to do at least the same if not more for our children, but we're doing it with less resources," Joch said.

SEE **School budget** ON PAGE 10

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Photo by David Hall

## Cooling off in the park

Kids beat the heat with big smiles and bigger splashes at the Washington Park splash pad Sunday on a sweltering summer afternoon.

## Construction underway at St. Mary Catholic Schools

Neenah News

Construction projects are underway this summer in buildings throughout the St. Mary Catholic Schools system.

The projects include renovations at St. Gabriel Elementary, St. Mary Middle School and St. Mary Elementary, which are three of the system's five campuses.

"St. Mary Catholic Schools is experiencing a time of incredible growth and innovation, with enrollment increasing by 13% across our five campuses," said Kristin Robinson, communications and advancement specialist. "This summer's construction projects reflect our commitment to providing exceptional learning environments that meet the needs of our students today while preparing them for their future."

The city of Neenah approved a special use permit in June for the St. Gabriel Elementary project at 900 Geiger St. The school is part of St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church.

Robinson said enrollment at the school has grown significantly, from 160 students to 231 in the past two years.

"Additional classrooms will allow us to continue to offer small class sizes," she said.

The project includes construction of four new classrooms, which Robinson said is underway to accommodate the growth. The new classrooms will be designated for fourth and fifth grade students.

The middle school work includes creat-

SEE **New classrooms** ON PAGE 10



Photo from St. Mary Catholic Schools

Construction is underway at St. Gabriel Elementary to add four new classrooms as the number of students has increased in the past two years. The classrooms will be used for fourth and fifth grade classes.

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Advertising deadline is noon Friday for the following Friday. The classified line ads deadline is 4 p.m. Tuesday for Friday.

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### Corrections

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

### About the newspaper

Published weekly and mailed free of charge Thursdays for Friday delivery (may vary based on U.S. Postal Service and holidays) to more than 21,000 homes and businesses in the Neenah and Fox Crossing areas. An E-edition of the newspaper can be accessed at [www.neenahnews.com](http://www.neenahnews.com).

Neenah News is owned by Oshkosh Herald LLC, 36 Broad St. Suite 300, Oshkosh, WI, 54901. 920-385-4512.

# Shape the future of your community newspaper

It's hard to believe that for over 100 weeks the Neenah News has been mailed to every door in ZIP code 54956.

Since August 2023, when we increased the distribution of Neenah News to every door delivery, we added Winneconne News to our family of newspapers — all with the mission of remaining uber-local and focused on what is impacting each of our communities.

We are putting our entire company under a lens and strategically looking at the future of our newspapers and how we can sustainably support the markets we have dedicated ourselves to, and we are asking for your input. Your voice matters.

We are asking the community to take a brief survey sharing feedback on the Neenah News and what you expect of your community newspaper.

For us, the future is now. Back in 2023 we made assumptions based on community input when we increased our distribution to everyone in 54956. In retrospect, we were incorrect in our assumptions and looking forward, we need to figure out how and why.

For example, we forecast a percentage of our subscribers would convert to memberships to continue to support our mission even though they and their neighbors were receiving the newspaper in the mail for free. We overestimated this number, and I must wonder if it was a disconnect in our commu-



**Karen Schneider**

Neenah News  
Publisher

nication or the feeling of “why pay for something everyone else is receiving for free?”

Publishing a newspaper continues to be a steep investment not only in paper and people, but in postage. You may notice the price of your stamps go up more frequently than they used to. The most recent increase in postage in July was over 10%.

A 10% increase in a product would be difficult for any business, and this is one we can't pass on to our advertisers at the same frequency the post office passes these increases on to us.

As a local independent business, we can pivot quickly, and we will continue to work hard to earn your trust and investment in us. Community support has been and will be instrumental in sustaining our operations and allowing us to deliver timely, accurate and reliable stories.

Please share your thoughts by taking the survey. Please scan the QR code in the notice below or visit [bit.ly/CommunityReaderSurvey](http://bit.ly/CommunityReaderSurvey).

We look forward to sharing more with you soon.

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# Calendar of events

## Friday, Aug. 1

Jubricosa Academy presents Fiddler on the Roof, 7 p.m., St. Mary Catholic High School

## Saturday, Aug. 2

Kids Triathlon, 8 a.m., Neenah Pool  
Future Neenah Farmers Market, 8 a.m., Shattuck Park

Community Carnival and Art Show, 11 a.m., Beaming Ranch, 2692 County Road GG

Jubricosa Academy presents Fiddler on the Roof, 2 and 7 p.m., St. Mary Catholic High School

## Tuesday, Aug. 5

Fox Crossing Police Department National Night Out community event, 5 p.m., Palisades Park

Neenah National Night Out and Movie, 5:30 p.m., Memorial Park

Neenah Community Band presents Get Up and Dance, 7 p.m., Riverside Park

## Wednesday, Aug. 6

Future Neenah Summer Concert Series featuring Arilya, 6 p.m., Shattuck Park

Brigade Music Academy presents Natural Satellite, 5:30 p.m., auditorium, 109 W. Columbian Ave.

## Thursday, Aug. 7

Out to Lunch Concert featuring Kyle Megna Duo, 11:30 a.m., Shattuck Park

Community Block Party, 4 p.m., Neenah-Menasha YMCA

Rock Fox Valley with Rock Infused Orchestra, 7 p.m., Neenah High School



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Photo from Neenah Joint School District

## Summer art

Art students at Neenah High School are staying busy this summer creating murals for elementary schools. The students are currently creating murals that will be displayed at Spring Road and Tullar Elementary Schools.

# Musicians prepared to put on rock orchestra concert

Neenah News

The Rock Infused Orchestra is preparing for a concert Aug. 7 at Neenah High School.

The group has been practicing every Thursday since mid-June at the high school throughout the summer. Over 180 musicians of every age and every stage in their musical journey come together for the concert.

The group is described as a rock band colliding with the power of a string orchestra. Strings, percussion and electric guitars will share the stage, performing top tunes from yesterday and today.

Andrew Hutchinson, an Oshkosh native who studies music education at UW-Oshkosh and Lawrence University, founded the group in 1999.

“Rock music is fun and challenging, the student musicians connect with it and really learn a lot about rhythm and playing with a group” Hutchinson said. “RIO is a great outlet for school musicians to play and practice in the summer; it keeps their skills sharp.”

The concert will begin at 7 p.m. More information is available at the Rock Infused Orchestra LLC Facebook page.

## Award-winning duo to give free performance

Neenah News

The Wisconsin Area Music Industry (WAMI) award winning duo Natural Satellite is coming to Neenah for a free performance. The Brigade Music Academy is presenting the concert at 5:30 p.m. Aug. 6 in the Boys’ and Girls’ Brigade Auditorium at 109 W. Columbian Ave.

Karli and Jason Reisdorf have been enchanting audiences with their distinct sound for nearly a decade, which they said blends artistry, intimacy and innovation into every performance. They combine finger-style cello, saxophone improvisation and vocal harmonies to create music that is “as emotionally resonant as it is sonically unique.”

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## Business news roundup

**McMahon** employees Mark Rohloff and Russ Van Gompel recently received Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Wisconsin City/County Management Association (WCMA). The award honors individuals who have made significant personal and professional contributions to their communities and the advancement of local government management. Rohloff is the manager of McMahon's Public Safety and Municipal Management division. Van Gompel is a public management specialist at McMahon.

ric program at ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Neenah, in partnership with Surgical Associates of Neenah as a Bariatric Center of Excellence (COE).

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Submitted photo

A group of supporters joins Carl Schulze during a stop in Oshkosh on his three-week trip from Neenah to Madison in his wheelchair.

## Neenah man travels by wheelchair to Madison

### Goal is to improve home health care

Neenah News

A disabled Neenah man has spent the past three weeks riding in his wheelchair from Neenah to Madison.

Carl Schulze, 44, began his 90-mile journey July 15 in an attempt to draw attention to improving wages for home care workers.

The Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers and Wisconsin Survival Coalition was planning an event today at the state Capitol as Schulze was scheduled to arrive there. The groups said the mission of Schulze's trip was about raising aware-

ness regarding the lack of home health care access for Medicaid recipients and to advocate for higher wages for home health aides, who they say are the essential workers supporting people with disabilities in living independently.

"Every mile I travel in my wheelchair is a testament to the strength of people with disabilities and the caregivers who support us," Schulze said. "But low pay drives aides away, and Medicaid cuts leave us without care."

Schulze said in social media posts he had been sleeping in his wheelchair along the way, making parts of the journey especially tiring and difficult. Throughout his journey, he was hampered by the very thing he seeks to change and lost more than a week of trav-

el time due to inadequate care.

The loss of time highlights one of the key shortcomings of the home care situation, said Survival co-chair Jason Glozier.

"When people don't have access to care, their lives and their goals are interrupted," Glozier said. "When people don't have family or other necessary supports to provide care they are forced to go without."

Schulze said others can help by contacting lawmakers to support increased Medicaid funding and caregiver wages. Upon arriving in Madison, he planned to address the public, media and policymakers, calling for immediate action to strengthen Medicaid's home and community-based services (HCBS) and ensure fair pay for home health aides.

## Valley Transit launches new fare payment system

Neenah News

Valley Transit plans to officially launch its new payment system today.

The system, WisGo powered by Umo, allows riders to pay their fares using a mobile app or reloadable card. Additionally, Valley Transit is introducing fare capping, ensuring riders don't pay more

than a daily or monthly limit while using WisGo.

With WisGo, riders will have multiple ways to take advantage of fare capping and streamline their payments: the Umo Mobility app or a reloadable WisGo card, both of which can be loaded with money using credit and debit cards, Apple Pay

and Google Pay. Riders can scan their mobile app or tap their WisGo card when boarding and the bus fare will be automatically deducted.

Cash is still accepted across all routes, but riders will not receive the benefits of fare capping.

"We're excited to introduce WisGo to our community," said Ron McDonald, general manager of Valley Transit. "By offering more convenient payment options and fare capping, we're making transit more accessible, affordable and rider-friendly."

The WisGo system keeps track of each trip a rider makes and ensures that once the daily or monthly fare cap is reached, all additional rides and transfers for the rest of that day or month are free.

For regular fare riders, McDonald said the fare cap is \$4 per day — the cost of two rides. Monthly, the cap is \$60.

Valley Transit serves communities making up the Fox Cities including Neenah, Fox Crossing, Appleton, Buchanan, Grand Chute, Kaukauna, Kimberly, Little Chute and City of Menasha.

For more information, visit [myvalleytransit.com/fare-information/](http://myvalleytransit.com/fare-information/).

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Photo from Neenah Historical Society

### Historical reenactment

The show went on July 24 for the Neenah Historical Society's 40th Annual Cemetery Walk despite rain showers and balmy temperatures. The event held at the historic Oak Hill Chapel focused on preserving memories through storytelling about Neenah's early settlers, prominent citizens and notable figures. The characters included Rev. J.E. Chapin, Helen Le Tourneaux Roberts, Jennie Albee Jamison and S.F. Shattuck.

## Future Neenah launches new brand identity, website

Neenah News

Future Neenah announced this week the launch of a refreshed brand identity and a new website.

The rebrand, which the group said was created in partnership with design firm Quill Creative Studio and web development partner Webfitters, marks a new chapter in Future Neenah's commitment to a vibrant, connected and economically strong community.

Future Neenah is a community-driven nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the economic and cultural vitality of Neenah. The rebranding initiative was rooted in the organization's mission to build a thriving future for Neenah — where businesses flourish, residents feel connected and visitors are warmly welcomed.

The result is a brand that reflects the organization's four core pillars, including economic strength, social vibrancy, cultural engagement and deep-rooted community love.

"Together we grow. Tomorrow we shine. This isn't just a tagline — it's a promise," said Michelle Dunning, outreach and development coordinator of Future Neenah. "Our new identity is more than a visual update. It's about strengthening the emotional connection people have with this city."

Dunning said with bold, energetic colors, modular design elements and an inviting, modern logo, the new brand captures Neenah's unique balance of heritage and forward momentum. The rebrand also includes a redesigned website, created by Webfitters, that Dunning said offers an engaging and intuitive experience for resi-



dents, businesses and visitors alike.

The updated messaging reaffirms Future Neenah's role as an independent, forward-thinking nonprofit that drives economic vitality, preserves and promotes a storied historic downtown, fosters collaborative partnerships and produces memorable, inclusive events. The group is currently celebrating the 20th season of its Downtown Concert Series on Wednesday evenings along with organizing Out to Lunch concerts on Thursdays during the summer.

"For residents, businesses, and visitors who crave the feeling of being part of something real and rooted, we want Future Neenah to be the spark that makes that possible," Dunning added.

She said the refreshed identity retains Future Neenah's trusted brand equity while better positioning the organization to reach younger audiences and new stakeholders. With an emphasis on community-first storytelling and memory-making, Dunning said Future Neenah's new brand aims to inspire long-term pride and participation.

For more information about the new brand, visit the new website at [futureneenah.org](http://futureneenah.org).



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# Man charged with ninth OWI after motorcycle crash

Neenah News

A Neenah man is in custody at the Winnebago County Jail on \$10,000 bond after being arrested for his ninth OWI offense.

Scott A. Butterfield is facing one count of operating a motor vehicle while under the influence – ninth offense. Court documents allege he crashed his motorcycle in Fox Crossing in July.

Online court records show Butterfield, 59, was first arrested for OWI in March 1989. He was convicted of OWI in that case a month later. Butterfield accumulated eight other OWI convictions in Outagamie and Winnebago counties over 36 years.

State statute outlines the penalties - if convicted, Butterfield faces up to 7 and a

half years in prison, followed by up to 5 years of extended supervision. He could face a \$25,000 fine and the state could revoke Butterfield's operating privileges permanently.

Butterfield was in court earlier this week for his initial appearance. Court Commissioner Eric Heywood set his cash bond at \$10,000. Heywood ordered Butterfield to maintain absolute sobriety, not be allowed on premises of any bar or tavern and he must comply with the conditions of 24/7 drug-free and 24/7 alcohol programs.

According to the criminal complaint, around 2 p.m. July 21, a Fox Crossing police officer was dispatched to the scene of a motorcycle crash near the intersection

of North Green Bay Road and American Drive.

The reporting party told the officer a man crashed his motorcycle and attempted to leave on the motorcycle. The reporting party said the man appeared intoxicated and was currently hiding in the bushes near the intersection.

The police were able to quickly locate a man in the bushes who was identified as Butterfield. An officer noted Butterfield had road rash on both arms and a head injury.

Butterfield told police these injuries were from a fall. The Fox Crossing officer noted Butterfield had slurred speech and had difficulty maintaining balance while walking.

The reporting party told police he was behind Butterfield on the road. He noted the motorcycle was speeding and swerving before crashing.

Due to Butterfield's head injury the officer did not ask him to perform the field sobriety tests. Butterfield refused to take a breathalyzer test.

The complaint alleges Butterfield told police he doesn't know how he crashed his motorcycle. The police also learned through a check with the Department of Transportation that Butterfield does not have a class M license, the license required to operate a motorcycle in Wisconsin.

Butterfield is scheduled to be back in court next week for his preliminary hearing in front of Heywood.

## Police departments plan National Night Out

Neenah News

Area police departments are organizing National Night Out events Tuesday in Neenah and Fox Crossing.

A free event is set from 5 to 8 p.m. at Memorial Park in Neenah. The evening will feature a chance to interact with Neenah Police Department officers. The police department will be showing off their vehicles and gear, along with offering tours of the SWAT vehicle and a chance to watch Community Service Officer Joe Benoit get tased.

Other activities include the ThedaStar helicopter landing (based on its availability), Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue, Emma's Art Bus, blender bikes, dunk tank, face painting, Expert Towing with Light-

ening McQueen and a movie to follow. Food will be available for purchase.

The Fox Crossing Police Department will hold a family-friendly and free community event from 5 to 8 p.m. at Palisades Park.

Activities at Palisades Park include food trucks, inflatables, TV and movie cars, games, Star Wars and Disney princess characters, therapy dogs, exotic animals, balloon artists, face painting and more. The Fox Crossing Fire Department, Gold Cross Ambulance and SWAT Bearcat are scheduled to participate in the event.

National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes partnerships between police and the community.

## Clayton house fire results in one death

Neenah News

A man is dead following a house fire in the town of Clayton over the weekend.

The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office responded to a fire in the 2900 block of Oakridge Road.

The first deputy arrived on the scene after 9:30 a.m. last Saturday. The roof of the

home was on fire and the house was filled with smoke.

Crews worked to extinguish the fire and discovered a deceased male inside the home. No details or information about the man were released as of Wednesday.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Fire departments from Clayton, Neenah, Fox Crossing, Winchester, Vinland, Greenfield, Boom Bay and the town of Oshkosh along with Gold Cross Ambulance assisted with the response to the fire.



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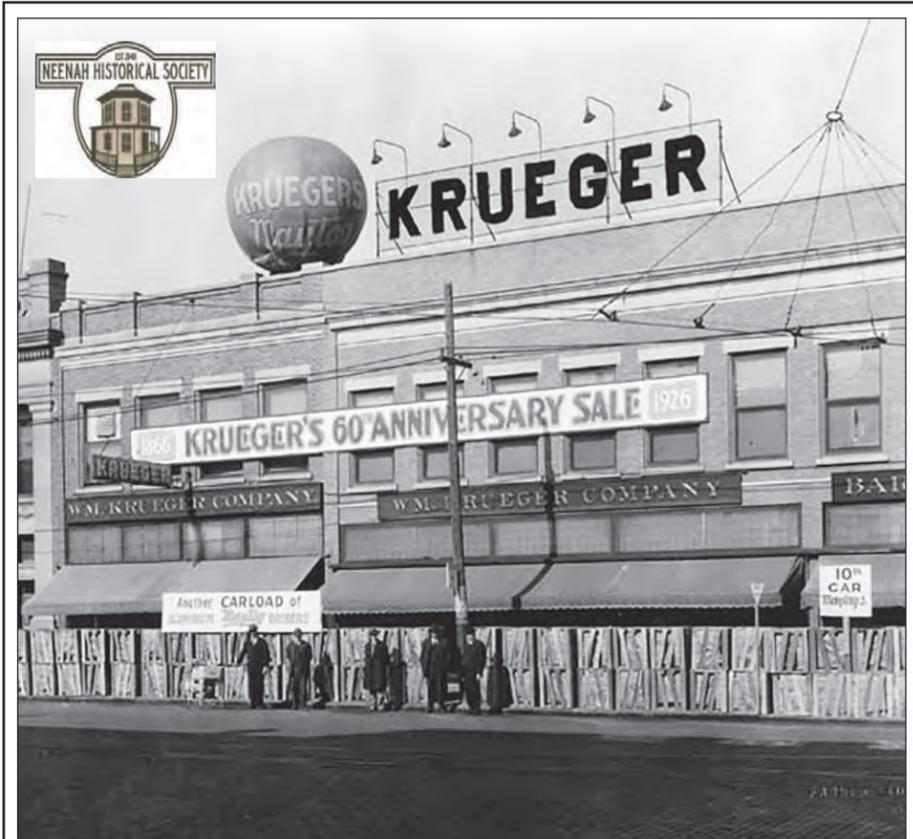
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Neenah Historical Society photo

### Historic location

Krueger's Hardware celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a sale in 1926 featuring Maytag washing machines. Krueger's operated out of their downtown location at 107 W. Wisconsin Ave. until 1972.



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[www.trinityneenah.net](http://www.trinityneenah.net) • [facebook.com/TLCNeenah](https://facebook.com/TLCNeenah)

#### The Church by the Lake

Sundays at 10:15  
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#### FOX VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

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 Adult Bible Study: Sundays @ 10:30am, Thursdays @ 9:30am  
 Sunday School: Sundays Sept. - May @ 10:30am  
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# UW-Madison graduates

A total of 9,424 students received degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison on May 9-10. There were two live Spring 2025 Commencement ceremonies, one for undergraduates at Camp Randall and one for all graduate degree candidates at the Kohl Center.

The following students from Neenah who graduated include:

Vebi Ademi, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of science, gender and women's studies and neurobiology

Valerie Aguilar, School of Med & Public Health, doctor of medicine

Jordyn Albrecht, School of Med & Public Health, master of genetic counselor studies

Parker Backes, School of Education, bachelor of science-health promotion and

health equity

Travis Beyer, School of Business, bachelor of business administration, business: finance, investment and banking and business: risk management and insurance, graduated with distinction

Natalie Chakar, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts-journalism

Afton Congdon, College of Agricultural & Life Science, bachelor of science, biology, graduated with distinction

Mariama Corr, School of Med & Public Health, master of public health

Emma Daniels, College of Agricultural & Life Science, bachelor of science, genetics and genomics

Emma De Bruin, School of Business, bachelor of business administration, business: management

Bradyn Gentile, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts with comprehensive honors, environmental studies, political science, and Spanish, graduated with distinction

Cailin Inman, College of Letters and Science, master of social work

Kaiya Johnson, College of Agricultural & Life Science, bachelor of science, animal sciences

Mandeep Kaleka, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts, legal studies and political science, graduated with distinction

Ben Kampe, School of Education, bachelor of science-kinesiology

Elliana King, College of Agricultural & Life Science, bachelor of science, nutritional sciences

Reid Koepfel, School of Education, bachelor of science-health promotion and health equity

Katie Kortbein, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of science, neurobiology

Henry Ladish, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of science with honors in the liberal arts, biology

Garrett Luepke, College of Engineering, bachelor of science-mechanical engineering

Grant Matheny, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts, communication arts

Mckennah Matulle, School of Pharmacy, doctor of pharmacy

Jasmine Mayo-Rodriguez, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts, psychology

Katie McKenzie, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts, communication sciences and disorders, graduated with distinction

Ciel Murie, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts, political science and psychology

Margaret Oldenburg, College of Agricultural & Life Science, bachelor of science, global health and life sciences com-

munication

Clara Padgham, School of Human Ecology, bachelor of science-textiles and fashion design

Colin Paustian, School of Education, master of science-educational psychology

Jetta Popp, School of Business, bachelor of business administration, business: international business and business: marketing, graduated with distinction

Meghan Rick, School of Nursing, bachelor of science-nursing

Maddy Roub, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts, history

Kai Sano-Giles, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts, conservation biology and zoology

Max Schneider, School of Education, master of science-athletic training

Ella Schroeder, College of Agricultural & Life Science, bachelor of science, biology, graduated with distinction

Zakary Sheikh, School of Business, bachelor of business administration, business: management and human resources and business: real estate and urban land economics, graduated with distinction

Samuel Steigenberger, School of Business, master of science-business, business: accounting and business analysis

Rachel Strandberg, College of Letters and Science, bachelor of arts, legal studies

Alicia Thone, School of Med & Public Health, doctor of physical therapy,

Emily Ugoretz, College of Agricultural & Life Science, bachelor of science, wildlife ecology, graduated with distinction

Nolan Welter, College of Engineering, bachelor of science-mechanical engineering

Michael Weninger, College of Engineering, bachelor of science-industrial engineering

Rene Zehr, School of Business, bachelor of business administration, business administration-human resources

Ellie Zitzelsberger, School of Human Ecology, bachelor of science-consumer behavior and marketplace studies

**NEENAH COMMUNITY BACK 2 SCHOOL FAIR CAMPAIGN 2025**

**We need your help to provide backpacks, school supplies and school appropriate clothing for the coming school year.**

NMES members collaborate with both the Neenah and Menasha school districts to reach out to children in need. Children are identified by schools, social service agencies and other sources.

The Fair is held in August of each year. Each child receives a backpack containing supplies for them to start the school year prepared to achieve academic success and a certificate for a pair of shoes redeemable at Rogan's.

Please donate by completing and mailing your donations by July 21, 2025 to:

Community Back to School Fair  
c/o Neenah News Kicks for Kids  
124 W. Wisconsin Ave.  
Suite 090B  
Neenah, WI 54956

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$40 shoes
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Please make checks payable to: NMES Subject: Back to School Fair

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Name as it should appear in the Donor Thank You in the Neenah News

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## Community Block Party coming up Thursday

Neenah News

The Neenah-Menasha YMCA is planning a Community Block Party on Aug. 9.

The YMCA invites community members to grab their family, friends and neighbors to join in on the festivities. Attendees

can enjoy outdoor games, face painting, a bubble party, inflatables and visits from local fire and police departments.

The free event is scheduled from 4 to 6:30 p.m. No registration is required. Food trucks will be on-site with food available for purchase.

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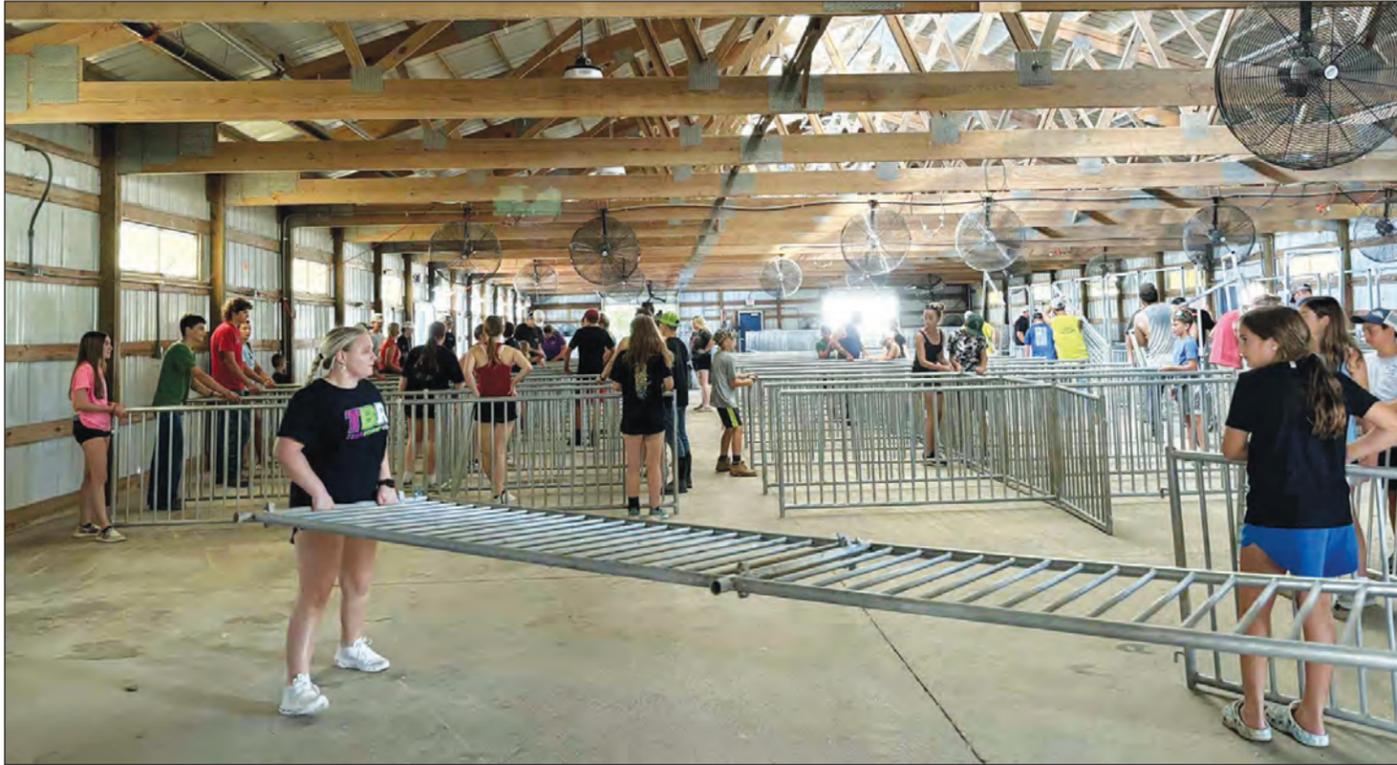


Photo from Winnebago County Fair

# Airport adds seasonal route to Florida

Neenah News

Appleton International Airport announced this week Allegiant Airlines will provide the airport's sixth nonstop route to Florida, this one flying to Fort Myers (RSW).

The seasonal flight will begin service Nov. 21.

With this route, Appleton expands warm-weather travel offerings to now include Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), which serves travelers to and from Fort Myers, Sanibel Island, Bonita Springs, Naples and Marco Island.

"This new route will make getting to Florida even easier for residents of Northeast Wisconsin," said Scott Volberding, assistant airport director. "Our focus has always been to make travel faster, easier, and more convenient and that perfectly matches Allegiant's investment to expand another route to Florida."

## Fair time

Barn setup for the Winnebago County Fair was in full swing earlier this week despite hot temperatures. Milder weather was in the forecast as the fair, which began Wednesday, is scheduled to continue through this weekend. Activities are held at the Sunnyview Expo Center in Oshkosh.

## Jobless rate decreases slightly throughout county

Neenah News

The Oshkosh-Neenah metropolitan area (MSA) and Winnebago County saw their unemployment rates decrease from 3.2% to 3.0% over the year, while remaining the same at 3.0% between May and June, according to preliminary data from the state Department of Workforce Development.

Preliminary June unemployment decreased in 10 metropolitan areas over the month and stayed the same in the three re-

maining metropolitan areas. Jobless rates decreased in 12 metropolitan areas over the year and stayed the same in one metropolitan area: Sheboygan.

Jobless rates decreased in 24 of Wisconsin's 35 largest cities over the month, increased in six cities and stayed the same in the remaining five cities. Rates decreased in 22 cities over the year, while increasing in seven cities and staying the same in the remaining six cities.

Preliminary June 2025 jobless rates decreased in 63 counties over the month, stayed the same in eight counties and increased in one county: Menominee. Unemployment rates decreased in 61 counties over the year, increased in four counties and stayed the same in the remaining seven counties.

Estimates of unemployment and employment statistics are from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Have a story idea?  
 Promotions or expansion at your business?  
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# School budget

FROM PAGE 1

Wisconsin schools have been pushed toward operational referendums as school districts struggle to find the money needed to run their schools. NJSD Superintendent Steve Harrison said the district is going to exhaust every possibility before moving to a referendum.

“In my first year as superintendent, that’s something that was really made clear to me at the listening sessions, is that’s not something our community would really like to pursue at this time,” Harrison said.

The bi-annual state budget increased the reimbursement rate for high-cost special education expenses for children whose care exceeds \$30,000. In 2025-26, the rate will increase from 26% to 50%, and in 2026-27, the rate will increase

to 90%. Currently, NJSD is transferring about \$9 million from the general fund to keep special education in the black. The reimbursement rate increase will save the district’s general fund about \$1 million, but district administration was hoping for more.

“That was clearly a very predominant theme from the Joint Finance Committee listening sessions and within special education, just being such a complex and broad area. One student alone could potentially require six figures worth of resources,” Harrison said. “And that’s just one student, so to speak of it generically really doesn’t accurately describe the challenges that districts face.”

Joch said that people don’t fully understand that public schools are required to educate everybody and they can’t turn anyone away for their needs. Private schools have more of an ability to do so.

“Approximately over four million of taxpayer dollars are going directly to our private schools and not to our public schools, and that’s not apparent on tax bills,” Harrison said.

As of this year, NJSD’s budget is stable, but Joch said that can change in a year. The biggest reason they have been able to stay out of operational referendum is their strict staffing models. Staffing is three-quarters of the total budget, so when one person leaves, that position doesn’t always get filled.

“That’s not always a popular answer,” Harrison said. “Certainly, among staff we understand there’s needs everywhere,



Harrison



Joch

# New classrooms

FROM PAGE 1

ing a new Innovation Lab, which Robinson said makes the middle school the final campus in the system to receive a dedicated STEAM learning space.

“This investment reflects SMCS’s commitment to hands-on learning experiences in science, technology, engineering and math,” Robinson said. “Every SMCS campus now has a space that integrates STEAM education into students’ every-

day learning.”

The historic 1952 wing of St. Mary Elementary School is undergoing a complete remodel to better serve pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students along with adding a new outdoor play area, Robinson said.

“These improvements demonstrate the strong demand for Catholic education in the Fox Valley and our dedication to serving more families with excellence,” Robinson said.

She said all of the projects are expected to be finished in early fall.

# School district to offer virtual learning

Neenah News

The Neenah Joint School District will offer a virtual learning opportunity for the 2025-26 school year. This online option is available to students entering 4K through 12th grade and is offered in partnership with Between the Lakes Virtual Academy and Kiel eSchool.

A mandatory meeting for families interested in enrolling in the virtual program will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. Wednesday

via Google Meet.

“Whether you’re looking for a more flexible learning environment or a personalized academic path, this session will provide the key details to help you make an informed decision,” the school district said.

Contact Jackie Muñoz-Ellmann at [jmunozellmann@neenah.k12.wi.us](mailto:jmunozellmann@neenah.k12.wi.us) with questions or for those who are interested in the program and unable to attend the meeting.

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# Neenah native participating in exchange program

Neenah News

Neenah native Maisie Teska is a participant in the 2025-2026 Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals program.

Teska graduated this year from Fox Valley Technical College. She is one of 65 Americans selected to study and work in Germany as part of the program, which is now in its 42<sup>nd</sup> year.

Teska departed last week for Germany and will return to the U.S. in June 2026. Participants in the program come from a wide variety of career fields and from all over the U.S.

The program is administered by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs through non-profit implementing partners such as Cultural Vistas.

While in Germany, Teska will attend a two-month intensive language course, study at a German university and complete an internship. Participants are usually placed with host families throughout Germany, where they act as citizen ambassadors of the United States, promoting a positive image of the U.S. abroad, creating lifelong friendships and professional connections to enhance German-American relations.

While Teska is in Germany, a group of 65 German CBYX participants will spend a year in the United States on a reciprocal exchange.

German participants study at U.S. colleges and work at local businesses while living with American host families.



Photo by David Hall

## Music in the park

The Neenah Community Band Summer Concert Series continued last Tuesday with A Colorful Portrait theme at Riverside Park. Special guests The Sensational Saxes performed mid-concert. The full band has one more performance this summer, starting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday with the theme Get Up and Dance.

## Neenah boys tennis team earns sportsmanship award

Neenah News

The Neenah Rockets boys tennis team was awarded the team sportsmanship award for the 2025 WIAA boys state team state tennis tournament.

The award is done in partnership with Rural Mutual Insurance Company and is handed out following each team-oriented tournament sanctioned by the WIAA.

Neenah advanced to the semifinals of this year's team-state tournament after beating Marquette, 4-3, in the quarterfinal round. The Rockets lost to eventual state champion Brookfield Central in the semi-

finals.

It was the fifth time Neenah has earned the award in boys tennis, previously being selected in 2002, 2006, 2016 and 2017. It is the most of any Rocket program. Neenah teams have won the award 12 times now overall, with girls tennis, girls soccer and boys basketball also garnering the honors in the past.

The award is presented to one school program and community – or communities in the case of cooperative programs – that demonstrates outstanding sportsmanship in WIAA team tournaments.

Award winners are determined by the conduct and sportsmanship displayed by athletes, coaches, cheer and support groups, mascots, bands and spectators.

Additional consideration is given for the effort of school administrators and chaperones to ensure support for their teams is positive and showcases the highest ideals of sportsmanship.

The selection process includes evaluations from contest officials, tournament management, as well as security personnel, crowd control and ushers, and WIAA staff members.

## Winners crowned in rec tennis tourneys

Neenah News

The Neenah Parks and Rec Department held a pair of tournaments last week with winners being crowned in the 12U Girls Doubles and 12U Boys Singles brackets.

Winning the title in the 12U Girls Doubles tournament was the pairing of Eleanor Huss and Catherine Champa, who defeated Sloane Desai and Vivian Tanager, 6-2, 6-1 for the title.

Finishing third was the duo of Lily Walsh and Ali Khunke who were 8-4 win-

ners over Margaret Champa and Lizzie Scott in the third-place match.

The 12U Boys Singles title went to Aemin Hartheim, who edged Nolan Curtis, 6-1, 1-6, 10-6 in the championship match. Wyatt Motto earned a third-place finish with an 8-4 win over Charlie Nimtz.

Also winning matches in the tournament were Max Motto, Ben Huss and Carter Strick, while the tournament field also included Liam Scott, Bo Swanson, Bridget Swanson, Aaron Dharmarante and Jaden Dharmarante.

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### Garage/Estate Sales

Moving Sale: August 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. 1406 Henry Street, Neenah. No early sales, cash only.

### Miscellaneous

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- measuring cup/spoon
- oil of clove

1. **First, make some newspaper pulp.** Fill a large bowl with little squares of newspaper. Make the pieces about 2 inches square.

2. **Cover with warm water.** Let soak overnight. Drain away excess water in the morning.

3. **To make the clay,** squeeze the pulp to remove excess water. Add 2 tablespoons of dry wallpaper paste to one cup of damp pulp. Add a couple drops of clove oil to make your clay smell good. Mix well with your hands until it is pliable.

4. Use the clay to make a **pulpture**. Once dry, your creation can be sanded, painted and sealed.

### Crayon Caddy

1. Make an oval-shaped ball.
2. Make eight rope tentacles. Make a pointy tip on the end of each tentacle.
3. Attach the blunt end of each tentacle to the oval. Add four round disks to form eyes.
4. Curve the end of each tentacle so it can hold a pencil or crayon.
5. After it is completely dry, paint the octopus whatever color you like.

### Door Name

1. Form the letters of your name out of thick clay ropes.
2. Let dry overnight. Once the letters are dry, glue the letters together.
3. Paint each letter a different color. Put your name on your bedroom door with an adult's help.

### Clay Racing

Set a timer for two minutes. With a friend or family member, race through the newspaper to circle words that rhyme with the word **CLAY**. Who found the most? Then, put the words you circled in alphabetical order.

Standards Link: Spelling: Arrange words in alphabetical order.

1. Roll a small piece of clay into a ball.
2. With your thumb, flatten into a disk.
3. Flatten a smaller clay ball into another disk.
4. Place the larger disk face down; press the top of a paper clip into the disk's back.
5. Press the other disk on top, sandwiching the paper clip in between.
6. Let dry and paint a design on the clay disk.

Standards Link: Visual Arts: Students use a variety of media, textures and colors.

### Kid Scoop Puzzler

Help paint this flower pot by following the maze.

### Double Double Word Search

PULPTURES  
 PASTE  
 ROPES  
 BATCH  
 SOAK  
 SANDED  
 BREAK  
 CREATION  
 CLAY  
 HARD  
 FORM  
 MOLD  
 HUNT  
 THICK

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

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

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

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### Write On!

## Clay Creature

I molded a silly creature out of clay one day, when suddenly it came to life ...  
 Finish this story.

# Neenah News Thank you for supporting local news!

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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.

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