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County's revolving loan fund gains approval

By Jonathan Richie
NEENAH NEWS

The first step has been taken for Winnebago County's new housing program to get started in the new year. The revolving loan fund program is designed to spur more housing developments in the county.

At its Dec. 16 meeting, the Winnebago County Board of Supervisors approved a resolution that will allow the county to create a request for proposal to bring in a nonprofit organization to run the revolving loan fund program, which is designed to help developers and prospective homeowners.

The resolution passed 27-5 with one supervisor abstaining from the vote.

Other communities in Wisconsin have used the revolving loan fund model and now Winnebago County has taken the first step to helping build more housing.

"I'm very excited about this," said Lu Scheer, the housing grant specialist for Winnebago County. She has been presenting the program to committees and the county board over the last couple of months and noted that other communities across the state have used ARPA funds for similar projects.

Those communities include Jefferson and Sheboygan counties, which have both used ARPA dollars to create housing opportunities.

The Winnebago County Industrial Development Board committed \$1 million

to the program in June and the county board will move \$3.5 million from ARPA funds for the initial funding level of \$4.5 million.

The county funding can be used to help the developer with initial costs or help a family with a down payment on the house.

"We know people may be able to afford the payments for a house but don't have, let's say, \$50,000 for the down payment," Scheer said. "This program can help get them that down payment and get a family into a home."

As for the developers, Scheer said she believes there is a shift underway to build more housing units in the county to bol-

SEE **Loan fund** ON PAGE 8

INSIDE



Senior Standout

Schultz takes pride in being leader for Rockets

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Trial set

City attorney to be in court in January

Page 7



Photo by David Hall

Seasonal spirit

With snow on the ground and in the air, ice skating at The Plaza and Globe Coffee leading up to Christmas has a seasonal feel this year. Open skating hours and special events are scheduled to continue through the holiday break and into next month.

Clayton boosts safety with sheriff's office partnership

Deputy to patrol town 20 hours per month

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

The Town of Clayton is adding regular law enforcement patrols through a contracted agreement with the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, a move that will provide limited police coverage beginning in January.

Town Chair Russ Geise said the new arrangement aims to improve law enforcement presence, particularly on Clayton

Avenue, where residents have complained about speeding and safety.

"The board did just approve 20 hours we're going to buy per month of police protection from Winnebago County," he said. "We will be able to patrol Clayton Avenue better."

The move comes after residents called for stronger law enforcement presence on the one-mile stretch of Clayton Avenue be-



Geise

tween Larsen Road and County Highway II. Residents also submitted a petition to the towns of Neenah and Clayton asking for the 45 mile per hour speed limit to be reduced to 35.

"That's one of the things they wanted, more police presence," Geise said. The town also installed a flashing speed sign on Clayton Avenue.

Geise said he hopes the new arrangement with the sheriff's office will "help with situations like this on Clayton Avenue, where we can direct the sheriff's office to patrol Clayton Avenue more."

Clayton eliminated its police depart-

ment following a vacancy in 2022, after determining its police budget could not support the cost of contracting a senior patrol officer through the sheriff's office. At the time, town officials opted to temporarily suspend the department and rely on county law enforcement services until future development could expand the tax base enough to support a full time officer.

Under the contract with the sheriff's office, one state-certified deputy will be assigned to conduct patrols within Clayton, serving as the first responder for dispatched incidents

SEE **Clayton safety** ON PAGE 5



Neenah News

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Corrections

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

About the newspaper

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Ice skating rinks open in Neenah parks

Neenah News

With favorable weather conditions, the Neenah Parks & Recreation Department has open its three ice rinks for the season.

A warming shelter is available at Washington Park with regular hours 4 to 8 p.m. Friday, noon to 6 p.m. Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, weather permitting.

Special holiday hours this week are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. today, noon to 6 p.m. Sat-

urday, noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Wednesday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday.

Ice rink warming shelter hours are based on weather and ice rink conditions.

Green and Memorial parks do not have a warming shelter but benches are available. All rinks are open to skate outside of warming shelter times.

The duration the rinks will be open for the season depends on the weather.



Neenah Historical Society photo

Christmas Memories

The Payne siblings (Daniel, Laura, and David) opened Christmas gifts in 1965 at their family home on Chestnut Street.

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December 26th issue:

Space Deadline
Thursday 12/18 Noon

Classified Deadline:
Friday, 12/19 Noon

Obituary Deadline:
Monday, 12/22 Noon

Neenah News
Serving Neenah & Fox Crossing

January 2nd issue:

Space Deadline
Thursday, 12/23 Noon

Classified Deadline:
Friday, 12/29 3pm

Obituary Deadline:
Monday, 12/30 Noon

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Calendar of events

Friday, Dec. 26

Library After Dark Dance Party, 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Monday, Dec. 29

Retro Video Game Extravaganza, 1 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Tuesday, Dec. 30

Set Your Intentions for 2026, 3 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Open Chess (Special Date), 5:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Wednesday, Dec. 31

Happy New Year Skate Party, 11 a.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee, 229 W. Wisconsin Ave.

Jim 'n' Nancy Daytime New Year's Eve Party, 2 p.m., Cedar Bar and Grill, 1330 S. Commercial St.

New Year's Eve at Xe54, 4 p.m., Xe54: a Wine and Cocktail Lounge, 1350 W. American Drive

Friday, Jan. 2

Fitness Friday: Boot Camp, 9:15 a.m., Neenah Public Library

Chair Yoga, 10:30 a.m., Neenah Public Library

Saturday, Jan. 3

Art Activity Day – Snow Friends Sun-catcher, 10 a.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass, 165 N. Park Ave.

Monday, Jan. 5

Winter Wonderland Skate, 4 p.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee, 229 W. Wisconsin Ave.

Thursday, Jan. 8

Candyland Skate, 4 p.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee, 229 W. Wisconsin Ave.

Saturday, Jan. 10

Washington Park Winter Festival, 11 a.m., Washington Park

Hallmark Skate Night, 4 p.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee, 229 W. Wisconsin Ave.

Friday, Jan. 16

Friendly Puzzle Competition, 6 p.m., Fox Crossing Community Center, 1000 Valley Road

Saturday, Jan. 17

First Coffee Run of the season, 8 a.m., The Plaza and Globe Coffee, 229 W. Wisconsin Ave.

NHS Jazz Stompin' at the Savoy, 7 p.m., Neenah High School Performing Arts Center

Packers award grants to support local organizations

Neenah News

The Green Bay Packers Foundation announced last week it has distributed \$1.5 million in annual grants to 395 civic and charitable groups throughout Wisconsin in its annual distribution of grants. Wilson Jones, chairperson of the Foundation and former CEO of Oshkosh Corporation, made the announcement at the annual luncheon on Dec. 17 in the Lambeau Field Atrium.

Of the Foundation's contributions, 38 grants – aggregating \$149,450 – were awarded to Brown County organizations. Additional grants, totaling \$1,350,550, were made to 357 other groups around the state, including 17 in Winnebago County.

The Winnebago County groups receiving grants from the Packers include Beaming Inc., Boys and Girls Brigade Association, Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services, Community for Hope, Friendship Place, Girls on the Run of Northeast Wisconsin, Heckrodt Wetland Reserve, Hope Clinic and Care Center, Journey Together Service Dog, Neenah Animal Shelter, Nova Counseling Services, Omro Area Community

Center, Oshkosh Area Humane Society, Oshkosh Community YMCA, Solutions Recovery, Winneconne Area Community Foundation and Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development.

This year's grant cycle focused on organizations that will direct the funds toward the need areas of animal welfare, health and wellness, including drug, alcohol and domestic violence, civic and community initiatives and environmental causes. Grants were awarded to organizations located in 63 of Wisconsin's 72 counties, with 54 grants going to animal welfare, 226 to health and wellness, 68 to civic and community and 47 to environmental.

Including \$1.5 million in annual grants, \$1.75 million in impact grants and other miscellaneous grants, more than \$3.5 million has been awarded through Packers Foundation grants this year.

To learn about where each organization will be focusing the grant dollars and for more information on the grant cycles, visit packers.com/foundation and navigate to Project/Program Focus Area.



Neenah News

Horn for the holidays

Don Krause of Neenah received a standing ovation from both audience members and French horn players Saturday during the Horns A Plenty Christmas concert at Belfry Hall in Appleton. The event marked Krause's final concert as conductor of the annual holiday French horn concert that he started 25 years ago.

Presentation at library features ice fishing

Neenah News

Guests are invited to learn about ice fishing on the Bay of Green Bay with Captain JJ Malvitz during an upcoming program at the Neenah Public Library.

Captain JJ's presentation at 2 p.m. Jan. 5 will provide an opportunity to learn the tips and tricks of ice fishing on the bay.

Captain JJ is a fifth generation native of Door County Peninsula and has a rich

family history of commercial fishing. He has worked in the industry since the age of 14 and then became a licensed U.S. Coast Guard Charter Captain by the time he was 18. Captain JJ is now the man behind JJ's Guide Service out of Sturgeon Bay.

The program will last approximately one hour and will take place in the Shattuck Community Room.

Glass museum featured on PBS program

Neenah News

Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass announced the airing of "Wisconsin Life: Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass," a co-production of Wisconsin Public Radio and PBS Wisconsin.

The program celebrates what makes Wisconsin unique through the diverse stories of its people, places, history and culture.

The Wisconsin Life crew visited in early April to film the museum's monthly Art Activity Day, visit its galleries, and discuss the collection and the museum's impact in the community.

The episode was scheduled to air on PBS Wisconsin Thursday and will be available for viewing on the organization's Facebook page (facebook.com/wisconsinlife) and website (wisconsinlife.org).

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Guitarist to perform on New Year's Day

By George Halas
 NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

WAMI Award-nominated guitarist Scott Dercks will help bring in 2026 with a solo performance from noon to 4 p.m. on New Year's Day at a somewhat unconventional location: the Bill Paul LTD store on Wisconsin Avenue in downtown Neenah.

Continuing a tradition that began in 2019, Dercks will add his music to the store's Winter Sale Celebration that will include mimosas, Bloody Marys, hors d'oeuvres, appetizers and chocolate-covered strawberries.

"It's a unique venue and I try to play my best wherever I play," Dercks said. "There are people shopping right next to me, and, while it's always nice to get compliments, I'm not under the impression that they're there to hear me play."

"I like it when people interact with me," he added. "I'm happy to speak to people. I try to cater the music to what's happening around me. I can play something for their kids and I'm happy to play requests if I know them."

While his focus is on "playing something upbeat," he does not have a specific set list.

"I read the room," he said. "I look at the people who are there and play something I think they would like. People seem to like it and are often quite pleasantly surprised. They smile and seem to be having a good time."

"I like making people's lives a little better. Music is healing and it brings people together," he continued. "It's nice to get props for doing something I love."

Dercks acknowledged that "while it's



Submitted photo

Guitarist Scott Dercks has played at different venues throughout the Fox Cities and is planning a special New Year's Day performance.

rare to play a four-hour gig and even rarer to play solo guitar without singing, I do look forward to it. It's nice to have a gig on New Year's Day so that I don't have to go out on New Year's Eve."

Playing in the midst of the clothing racks creates a unique acoustical environment.

"I can play at a volume that fills the room and not be too loud to interfere with shopping," he said. "It sounds pretty good. It's not too loud but people can hear it. More people ask me to turn it up than tum it down."

Bill Paul has indicated to Dercks that his playing is good for business.

"He's a musician himself and he appreciates my music," Dercks said. "He treats me well and has me back every year. He

has made it clear to me that I've got the job as long as I want it."

Dercks does add some star power to the occasion. He is currently nominated for WAMI (Wisconsin Area Music Industry) Awards for Best Guitarist and for Best Jazz Group as a member of the jazz quartet, Daddio. He has previously been nominated for Best Guitarist and for Best Jazz Group as part of Daddio as well as a member of KWT Featuring Tom Washatka.

An Appleton native and graduate of Appleton West High School, Dercks started playing paid gigs in 1972 when he played for the George McGovern Presidential Campaign. After stints with local jazz fusion bands Nearvana and August, he moved to Minneapolis for 20 years where, among other things, he was a member of Best Kept Secret that won a Twin Cities Award for Best R & B Band. Prince and George Benson were among those who came out to hear him play.

In addition to Daddio and his solo work, Dercks often performs in a duo with saxophonist Tom Washatka, featuring tracks from their album, "When Friends Speak." He recently played a Washatka big band arrangement of a Dercks original composition, "Call Me Al D," as part of the Guitar Extravaganza with the Water City Jazz Orchestra in Oshkosh.

Fox Cities music fans may also know Dercks from the presence of his "sidekick," Charlie, an Airedale Terrier who often accompanies him to his performances.

"He's a crazy knucklehead but people really like him," Dercks beamed.



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County director of human services planning to retire

By Jonathan Richie
NEENAH NEWS

After 18 years of serving as Winnebago County director of human services, Bill Topel is set to retire in January.



Topel

Winnebago County Executive Gordon Hintz announced the impending retirement of Topel at the Dec. 16 county board meeting.

Before starting work in Winnebago County, Topel worked as a therapist and clinical psychologist before switching to management. Topel served as director of health and human services in Marinette County and quickly had to pick up on how to manage programs and people.

In 2007, former County Executive

Mark Harris hired Topel, who said Harris "took a chance" when hiring him because he came from a smaller county.

"When I got here, we were delivering the services the federal government said we needed to deliver," Topel said. "Over time the community was able to identify gaps and the department worked on filling those gaps."

These programs include the Homeless, Eviction, and Loss Prevention (HELP) program and the Connect program. HELP is a preventive program that assists people facing eviction and immediate housing concerns.

Connect is a diversion program for people facing drug or alcohol charges in Winnebago County. Individuals can choose treatment through the program to avoid prosecution.

These programs line up with Topel's goal for human services to have more lo-

cal services available for residents, so they don't have to travel to another county for help.

"We're keeping children and families in their homes instead of sending them away for treatment or services," Topel said.

The department has also gotten bigger under Topel's leadership in the last 18 years. When Topel joined the department there were 265 employees. Today there are around 400 full and part-time employ-

ees working for the department.

Hintz said deputy director Renee Soroko will serve as interim director starting in January. The county will post the position, and Hintz hopes to have the position filled in early 2026.

"I'm very honored to have been chosen and to have served in this role," Topel said. "There's a great team here offering an array of local services. Winnebago County is set for years to come."

Business news roundup

Kunes Auto & RV Group announced the acquisition of Quietwoods RV and Scenic RV, including a store location at 9042 Campers Way in Neenah. The acquisition includes other stores in Sturgeon Bay, Slinger, Wisconsin Dells and Janesville. As part of the acquisition, Quietwoods RV locations will become known as Kunes Quietwoods RV, and Scenic RV locations will transition to Kunes Scenic RV, with some locations merging with existing Kunes RV sites.

WNAM 1280 AM is preparing to sign off after 78 years of broadcasting. The station first took the airwaves on May 23, 1947, and has since provided timeless music, unforgettable personalities, vital storm coverage and community connection. The station will cease broadcasting at midnight Wednesday, a decision management said comes in response to evolving listener habits and economic realities that have reshaped the media landscape. Wisconsin Timber Rattlers coverage will continue on WOSH 1490 AM.

Clayton safety

FROM PAGE 1

during scheduled patrol hours. The town will be allowed to request specific coverage times of up to five hours per week, though the sheriff will retain supervisory authority over how patrol services are delivered.

The contract calls for Clayton to reimburse the county for deputy salaries based on the top deputy hourly rate under the current collective bargaining agreement, listed as \$43.34 per hour. The town will also pay an additional \$100 per month to cover vehicle maintenance, licensing and fuel costs for the patrol squad. Overtime directly tied to patrol duties or court ap-

pearances related to municipal ordinance enforcement would be billed separately to the town, according to the agreement.

The deputy will enforce town ordinances and issue citations using town-supplied forms, with prosecutions handled by the town attorney. Fines collected from ordinance violations would go to the town, while fines from state charges would be retained by the county.

Geise said the deputy will begin patrols at the town hall and check in about any concerns before proceeding. He said Clayton is committed to safety as the town continues to grow.

"It's a good start for us to come back to maybe having a formal police department of our own," he said.



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Former Neenah police officer sentenced to prison

Neenah News

Former Neenah police officer Owen Halls was sentenced Dec. 19 to three years in prison and five years of extended supervision after being found guilty of possession of child pornography.

Halls, 23, had previously entered a no contest plea under a plea agreement that dismissed one of the charges. Three years in prison is the statutory minimum for a Class D felony under Wisconsin law.



Halls

Halls was arrested March 26 and fired from the Neenah Police Department, where he had worked for about a year and was still in his probationary period. Police Chief Aaron Olson said the department learned of the investigation involving Halls two days earlier and worked with Kaukauna Police to develop a plan to detain him. Olson said Halls was fired the day of his arrest and the department is following the process to have him decertified as a Wisconsin law enforcement officer.

“Owen Halls left a black eye on our or-

ganization and our city,” Olson said earlier this week. “We are all disgusted with his actions and are pleased that he has been convicted. This will be the last time I mention his name, and I will be leading this organization forward.”

The arrest followed a six-month investigation by the Kaukauna Police Department, triggered by an Internet Crimes Against Children CyberTip from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. The CyberTip indicated two files of suspected child pornography had been uploaded from an address in Kaukauna, where Halls was one of four residents.

According to court records, during an interview with investigators Halls admitted that he used messaging apps to access and trade pornographic content and acknowledged that some material involved minors.

As part of his sentence, Halls is required to undergo a sex offender evaluation and comply with Wisconsin’s sex offender registry.

He is also prohibited from accessing the internet, possessing devices capable of internet access, or using social media without agent approval.



Photo from Fox Crossing Police Department

Happy retirement

One of the Fox Crossing Police Department’s employees is retiring after eight years with the agency. K9 Hans will be retiring, with his handler, Lt. Corey Haag, planning to purchase him from the village. The department said Hans will soon start the “good life,” no longer working the 12-hour night shift. As with any retirement, the department said the process to fill the K9 vacancy with a new dog is underway. As it plans for the next stage, the department will be providing opportunities for the community to show support through fundraising projects.

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City attorney jury trial now scheduled for January

Neenah News

A Green Lake County judge declined to pare down the state's witness list at a hearing Dec. 19 in the ongoing criminal case against Neenah City Attorney David Rashid, who faces multiple counts of sexual assault involving his former wife.

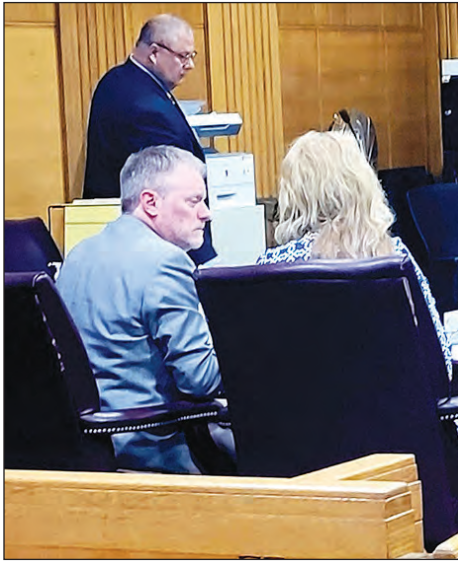
Green Lake County Judge Mark Slate is presiding over the Winnebago County case after Rashid's attorneys requested a substitution last year. Rashid was a Winnebago County assistant district attorney before being hired as Neenah's city attorney in 2022. Portage County District Attorney Cass Cousins is prosecuting the case as the appointed special prosecutor.

Last week's hearing covered several procedural issues ahead of Rashid's jury trial, set to begin in January. The defense requested that the state refine its witness list, arguing that not all 17 of those named on the list were relevant.

The list includes Neenah Police Chief Aaron Olson, Neenah Police Investigator Craig Hoffer, who conducted the city's separate personnel investigation, and Alderman Cari Lendrum. It also includes former city attorney Adam Westbrook and Jacob Boudreau, who previously worked as Rashid and his ex-wife's dog groomer. Westbrook and Boudreau were both convicted in an unrelated 2024 case involving sexual offenses.

The court denied the motion, allowing the state to maintain its list of potential witnesses. The court also denied a separate defense request to bar the lead investigator from being present for the duration of the trial.

Slate also discussed whether the alleged victim would be present for the entire tri-



Neenah News

City attorney David Rashid is shown (left) with attorney Rebecca Castonia in court at a hearing in August.

al, explaining that under Marsy's Law the victim has the right to attend the proceedings. The defense had requested that the term "victim" not be used when referring to the complainant during the trial. Slate

ordered all parties to use the individual's name instead but stated he would not sanction anyone for unintentional slips.

The court did not conduct a hearing to evaluate one of the state's expert witnesses as requested by Rashid's defense, as the prosecution had not yet made the witness available.

Rashid, who pleaded not guilty to all charges, was charged in April 2024 with two counts of third-degree sexual assault and one count of fourth-degree sexual assault, all with domestic abuse enhancers. According to court documents, the alleged non-consensual acts spanned from 2017 to 2022 during his marriage. The alleged victim filed for divorce from Rashid in July 2023.

The allegations first surfaced in August

2023 through an anonymous email sent to city officials, which was later traced to Rashid's predecessor, former Neenah city attorney Adam Westbrook.

Following a criminal investigation by the Appleton Police Department, Rashid was criminally charged and placed on paid administrative leave by the city in April 2024. He was reinstated four months later after a city personnel investigation found no workplace violations. Records show that review duplicated the criminal probe and did not independently examine his workplace conduct.

The case is scheduled for a three-day jury trial beginning Jan. 21, though Slate noted it may not be possible to complete the trial in three days given the number of witnesses expected to testify.

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Loan fund

FROM PAGE 1

ster the local economy.

“They have a social obligation to the county to build here and we’re seeing that,” Scheer said.

The county plans to use part of the \$4.5 million to put out a bid for nonprofits to apply to run the program. The county will review those applications and look at three areas: the group’s knowledge of revolving loan funds, knowledge of the loan process, and lastly – fundraising.

Scheer explained that \$4.5 million seems like a lot of money, but not necessarily in terms of construction. The nonprofit selected will be asked to go out and raise additional funds from employers and other groups in the area that want to donate to the cause of building more houses.

A portion of the \$4.5 million – \$250,000 – will be set aside for administrative costs that Scheer says the county will recuperate over time.

During the meeting, Hintz and supervisors discussed the possibility of community donations matching the funds to make

the pot of money as large as \$9 million.

Hintz and Scheer mentioned the reluctance people often have when giving money to the government and they noted the potential tax advantages available to the donors if they give money to the nonprofit chosen to be in charge of the program.

“If you have a company that is unlikely to give money to a government entity, they can get it as a write-off by giving it to a nonprofit,” Hintz said.

If a nonprofit is selected from the RFP process an advisory board will be set up that some supervisors will sit on. The county board will still have the authority to review the applications for loans.

Former county executive Jon Doemel spoke in favor of the program at last week’s meeting. He said he trusts the IDB with the funds and the county board should, too.

“Let them weigh it out,” he said. “They will figure out things just fine.”

He compared the lack of detail in the resolution to not knowing who built the Van Dyke break wall in Winneconne.

“I trust that they did the job,” Doemel said.

However, this would be an ongoing pro-

gram handling \$4.5 million compared to the break wall project, which was a one-time expense of \$861,000. Doemel was executive when a Spirit Fund was created with ARPA funds.

Scheer’s office started looking into the topic under Doemel and has been able to move forward with Hintz in office.

Some supervisors were concerned that the resolution did not have enough specifics for them to support, such as no definition of affordable housing or specifics of the application process.

Scheer said that was not included on purpose as the housing landscape continues to shift. She said the RFP will help define those parameters.

County officials are continuing to use a 2023 housing study done by Forward Analytics for estimating housing needs in the area. The county, under Doemel, extrapolated Winnebago County numbers from the study that stated Wisconsin was in need of 200,000 new housing units by 2030.

County officials used a formula that shows 3% of the state’s population lives in Winnebago County and estimated in 10 years that number would be closer to 3.5%. That is where the figure came from that the county used in the resolution of needing 10,000 new housing units in the next 10 years.

Before the resolution passed, the board discussed and voted down a number of amendments. The failed amendments included whether to add language about tax incremental financing districts to the resolution.

Scheer said that if the program doesn’t work, the county will not spend all of the \$4.5 million and will still be able to use that funding for other ARPA/Spirit Fund related purposes.



Photo from Neenah Joint School District

Angel tree

Neenah High School junior Henry Coulman organized an “Angel Tree” project at Neenah High School to assist students at Washington School of Early Learning and their siblings. Coulman worked with school administration to put a tree in the high school library and hung angel ornaments where students could adopt a child and make sure they had a wonderful Christmas. NHS students last week delivered bags full of gifts for Neenah children to the library. Coulman and other students were busy wrapping all the gifts.

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Balanced offense continues to provide spark for Zephyrs

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

With its bevy of shooting threats, St. Mary Catholic has flourished hoisting shots from behind the arc so far this season.

Eight games into the season, the Zephyrs are shooting nearly 34 percent from 3-point range as a team and are averaging more than seven made 3s per game.

Yet, when St. Mary Catholic took the court Monday night against Lourdes Academy in the first game of the Holy Buckets Tournament, the Zephyrs didn't come out of the gates chucking shots from all over. That wasn't by mistake either.

"When we can get to the rim, I think that's when the 3 starts to open up the most," junior Luke Fairweather said. "Then the defense starts to collapse and the kickout 3 is the easier to hit than (off the dribble)."

The Zephyrs' first five baskets all came at the rim as they built an early lead before unleashing a barrage of 3-pointers - finishing with 11 for the game - to break the game open in collecting an 80-56 win over the Knights.

St. Mary Catholic was slated to face Roncalli in the championship game of the tournament on Tuesday night. Roncalli knocked off St. Mary's Springs 72-58 in the other game on Monday. The championship game was played after deadline for this edition.



Fairweather

Zephyrs' head coach Paul Bradshaw said he liked the way his team came out against the Knights.

"We have really been working on ball movement and off-ball movement so we can get those kind of attacks (at the rim). If we can get to the basket, it does open up the 3," Bradshaw said. "The guys are moving the ball well and playing really unselfish which is really important."

Getting the inside looks and following up with the 3s helped St. Mary Catholic lead nearly the entire game.

The Knights scored the first basket of the game and then took a 4-2 lead, but once the Zephyrs got in front, they never gave up the lead.

"The biggest thing for us is to create energy in the first couple of minutes. That really helps," Bradshaw said. "You get a couple of buckets and suddenly, you play better on defense, get a couple of more rebounds, you can get some easy baskets because we're running the floor. It's all because of the energy."

Fairweather said that was the team's mindset entering the game.

"Coach had been preaching about coming out with energy all week and I think we showed that," Fairweather said. "Once you start with the lead, it's easier to keep it so it's one of the most important things."

The Zephyrs had built an 11-7 lead on the Knights when Tarver Trinkner knocked down the first 3-pointer of the game. Fairweather added another 3-pointer a few minutes later to extend the advantage to double digits at 18-7.

After a tradition three-point play by Dylan Brenn off a layup, Alex Klinkham-

er and Fairweather knocked down back-to-back 3s in a 30-second span to up the Zephyrs' lead to 15.

Fairweather, who led the team with 24 points overall, scored 14 in the first half and knocked down a pair of treys.

"(Seeing one go in) boosts the confidence. It makes the whole night easier," Fairweather said. "I just try to focus on my matchup and if my shot is feeling good, then it's feeling good. How I feel in warm-ups is not going to stop me from shooting during the game."

Fairweather added a basket and two free throws in a 6-2 run to keep the lead at 15 but it was an 11-4 surge to close out the first half that left the Zephyrs with a 44-27 halftime lead.

The Knights scored the first two baskets of the second half and got as close as 47-33 but St. Mary Catholic rattled off eight straight points to push the lead to 22 points and the Zephyrs were able to

coast from there.

Trinkner added 14 and Mason Uhlenbrauck chipped in 10 for the Zephyrs. Brenn also finished with eight, while Gavin Beck and Max Vosters each had six.

"The balance is very nice because it takes the workload off of just one person," Fairweather said. "When we can share the ball so well and move it around everyone can score, it makes everything easier."

Fairweather became the fifth different player to lead the Zephyrs in scoring through the first eight games of the season.


"The ability for us to have different guys scoring, I think that's what makes us dangerous," Bradshaw said. "We're the kind of team where you can't focus on one guy. We have a lot of guys who can score and having those options is only going to help free other guys."



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Schultz happy to fill leadership role with Rockets

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

Nick Schultz is going to score for the Neenah High School boys basketball team.

The senior guard is currently leading the Rockets' balanced scoring attack at 10.7 points per game and has reached double figures in the three games leading into this week.

Schultz is also going to facilitate Neenah's offense where he leads the team at 2.7 assists per game and is certainly – and gladly – going to play defense for the Rockets. He might even grab a stray rebound or two along the way.

But as much as Schultz contributes to the Rockets in ways that can be measured on the stat sheet, his most important role with this year's squad isn't anything that can be tangibly measured.

"Obviously being a leader is the biggest thing," Schultz said before a practice earlier this week. "Last year, I had a little bit of a leader's role, but this year it's evolved even more. Just taking guys under my wing and making sure they are doing the right things."

Schultz is by far the most experienced player on the Rockets' roster. This is his third year playing at the varsity level and has taken the floor nearly 60 times in a Neenah uniform.

He also spent his sophomore season playing with the likes of Brady Corso, Charlie Wunderlich and Justin Janssen, who he credits with teaching him the ropes at the varsity level and showing him how to be a leader.

"They taught me a lot of stuff that year that was good to know and that I use today," Schultz said. "I'm just taking what I learned from them and giving it to the younger guys to feed on."

That sophomore season ended with a trip to the Kohl Center and a hard-fought 99-95 loss to Arrowhead in a WIAA Division I state semifinal.



Nick Schultz is in his third season playing at the varsity level for Neenah and his experience helps him fill a key leadership role for the Rockets.

For someone who had made trips to Madison to watch previous state qualifi-

ers from Neenah, getting the chance to take the floor was something special. "It was surreal," Schultz said. "I remem-

Senior Standout



ber going to the 2014-15 games with Matt Heldt so to be able to play at the Kohl Center was a dream come true."

He wouldn't mind capping his prep career with another chance to take the Kohl Center floor.

"It would fit pretty well. Starting my career and ending it there," Schultz said. "It definitely crosses our mind every day. It's something we can reach for but we have to take it day by day. We're focused on the next game but it's definitely something we want to get back to."

Schultz said he started playing basketball at the YMCA and then started to play in the Neenah junior program in second grade with some of the guys he's teammates with today.

"Over the years, we have built a lot of memories," Schultz said. "Now we are all playing together in our senior year, which is pretty cool. Looking back, it's crazy to see how fast time has gone."

Schultz averaged a little more than three points per game as a sophomore, but that number climbed to just over 10 points per game last season.

He's upped it slightly so far this season – which included a career-high 18-point night in a win over Green Bay Notre Dame – but scoring is not necessarily his focus when he takes the court.

"Just be the facilitator on the floor. Creating shots for guys and getting guys open, whether that's off the dribble or screening for guys," Schultz said. "I just let the game flow. I'm not rushing to try and get my shots. If I'm penetrating and it's not there, I'm kicking it out and if it's

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Prep sports roundup

BOYS WRESTLING

Rockets roll past Wildcats in dual meet

Neenah scored points in 12 of the 14 weight classes and collected a 69-10 win over Oshkosh West in a Fox Valley Association dual meet last week.

Neenah opened the dual meet with six straight pins, starting with Landen Sheppard at 165 pounds. Declan Koch (175), Connor Simons (190), Kaden Roth (215), Brayden Milbrodt (285) and Carson Finch (106) also won by pin in that stretch.

Chase Thomson won by forfeit at 113 pounds and Broden Butzke added a decision win at 120 pounds to stake the Rockets to a 45-0 lead.

Garrett Nedens (132), Dane Granditzke (144), Declan Epley (150) and Joaquin Quinonez (157) also won by pin in the match for the Rockets.

On Saturday, Neenah traveled to the prestigious Rex Whitlach Invitational in Naperville, Ill., and placed sixth among 25 teams with nine wrestlers earning top-eight finishes.

Leading the way was Koch, who claimed the 165-pound title in dominant fashion. The senior earned a first-round bye and then pinned his next two opponents. He earned a 13-1 major decision in the semifinals and then won the title with an 8-0 major decision. In his four matches at the tournament, he allowed only two points and outscored his opponents 40-2.

Roth added a third-place finish at 190 pounds, posting a 3-1 mark on the day with three pins.

Butzke (113) and Sheppard (157) were each fourth, while Jaxon Ennis took sixth at 138 pounds. Adding seventh-place fin-

ishes were Connor Simons at 175 pounds and Milbrodt at 285 pounds, while Nedens (126) and Willy Brucks (215) were each eighth.

Neenah also competed at the Williard Schmidt Tournament on Saturday with Jack Czechanski leading the way with a second-place finish at 106 pounds.

Thomson added a third-place finish at 113 pounds, with Ledger Lewis taking fourth at 165 pounds and Quinonez at 157 pounds and Cylas Parker at 215 pounds each taking fifth.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Klesmit, Rockets dispatch Wildcats

Rowan Klesmit continued her hot shooting and poured in 31 points as Neenah rolled past Oshkosh West, 64-41, last week.

Klesmit knocked down seven 3-pointers in posting her second straight 30-point game. Over the past two games, the senior guard is 13-of-19 from 3-point range. She has also yet to miss a free throw this season.

Ellie Buss and Farrah Danforth each chipped in seven points and Alissa Ebel added six points off the bench in the win. Danforth also tallied a team-high seven rebounds.

Zephyrs cruise past Vikings

Three players finished in double figures and St. Mary Catholic rolled to a 69-48 nonconference win over Valders on Monday night.

Autumn Crowe led the way for the Zephyrs with 27 points, including 14 in the first half as St. Mary Catholic built a 35-22 lead.

Gabby Guerrero finished with 17 points and Luci Nackers added 16 points in the win.

The Zephyrs finished 11-of-11 from the free-throw line in the game.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Strong first half carries Neenah to win

The Rockets held Oshkosh West to just 13 points in the first half and collected a 55-37 victory at home last Friday night.

Nick Schultz was the lone Rocket to finish in double figures with 15 points. Kolton Fleege and Jackson Rindt each added nine points, while Roan Koeper finished with eight.

The Rockets have won five straight games after falling in the season-opener.

Zephyrs collect triumph over Omro

Dylan Brenn notched 24 points and led four Zephyrs in double figures as St. Mary Catholic rolled to an 88-78 win over Omro last week.

Tarver Trinkner added 17 points and Max Vosters finished with 16 points for the Zephyrs. Mason Uhlenbrauck also reached double figures with 14 points.

St. Mary Catholic used a strong night at the free-throw line to help earn the win, finishing 21-of-24 from the charity stripe.

GIRLS WRESTLING

Pair of Rockets place at Badger State invite

Kylee Kurszewski and Amari Richard each earned finishes in the top six at the Badger State Invitational in Madison on Saturday.

Kurszewski took second at 126 pounds,

finishing 4-1 on the day before falling to Ramsey Brandenburg of Janesville Parker in the title match. Kurszewski reached the finals by pinning all four of her opponents, with three coming in the first period.

Richard took sixth at 132 pounds posting a 4-2 record on the day. Three of four of Richard's wins were by pin.

Every Neenah wrestler that participated posted at least one win at the prestigious tournament.

HOCKEY

Rockets rally in third period to claim win

Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha erupted for three goals in the third period to break a tie game and collected a 4-1 win over the Muskego Co-op last week.

Gus Weinholzer scored an unassisted goal less than three minutes into the period to break the tie, while Vinny Scholl scored less than three minutes later to give the Rockets a two-goal lead.

Mark Sutton picked up his second goal of the night with less than a minute to go for the final margin. Sutton, who assisted on Scholl's goal, scored the first goal of the game in the opening period with Scholl and Cartyr Simonson picking up assists.

Matthew Nelson finished with 26 saves in goal to earn the win.

The Rockets suffered their first loss of the season last Saturday, dropping a 3-2 contest to Arrowhead.

Neenah/Hortonville/Menasha outshot the Warhawks 44-17 in the game and took a 2-1 lead into the third period but couldn't hold off Arrowhead.

Sutton and Preston Liedke scored in the game for the Rockets, with Simonson, Zach Verhagen and Liam Kelley registering assists.

Senior Standout

FROM PAGE 10

there, I'm looking to score the ball."

Offensively, Schultz has certainly been a staple for the Rockets the past two seasons, but also anchors the team on the defensive end.

Schultz said that one of the ways he contributed the most as a sophomore was on defense and it's at that end of the court that he truly enjoys playing.

"Once I got to high school with Coach (Lee) Rabas, it's defense, defense, defense here. Sophomore year, that was probably one of my main roles on the team that year is getting stops on defense and guarding the better players. It just became something I enjoyed," Schultz said. "I love getting after people and getting defensive stops."

Even with the bulk of his senior season to play, Schultz has already committed to play college basketball at Bethel University in Minnesota next year.

He said getting the decision made be-

fore the season started was important and he's looking forward to playing for the Royals.

"It took a lot of weight off my shoulders. The summer and the fall it was stressful with choosing a school and making sure I get out to schools to visit them. Now that I have it, I can just play," said Schultz, who made the decision after visiting the school in October. "I think my physicality needs to step up a bit but that is something I worked on last summer. Just getting into the weight room as much as I can."

Schultz, who played baseball until eighth grade and enjoys golfing in the summer with his friends, has learned plenty of things on the basketball court that will help him the rest of the season and at Bethel next season.

But he also can take the lessons from the sport and carry them into his everyday life.

"Sports has taught me about accountability," Schultz said. "If you make a mistake, you have to be accountable and that's something that's going to help me."

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Classifieds

Call 920.486.1616 to place your ad

Private party ads deadline is 4 p.m.

Tuesday. \$15 for first 20 words

For Sale

AKC Golden Retriever Pups, Standard Golden Color, Ready 12-29-25, \$595 Greenwood, 715-267-3271

Eliminate gutter cleaning forever! Leaf Filter, the most advanced debris-blocking gutter protection. Schedule a FREE Leaf Filter estimate today. 20% off Entire Purchase. Plus 10% Senior & Military Discounts. Call 1-877-920-3533

Jacuzzi Bath Remodel can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as one day. For a limited time, waiving ALL installation costs! (Additional terms apply. Subject to change and vary by dealer. Offer ends 12/31/25.) Call 1-877-403-3670

Replace your roof with the best looking and longest lasting material - steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer - up to 50% off installation + Additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders.) Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-877-845-6606

Miscellaneous

Consumer Cellular - the same reliable, nationwide coverage as the largest carriers. No long-term contract, no hidden fees and activation is free. All plans feature unlimited talk and text, starting at just \$20/month. For more information, call 1-855-748-6332

Prepare for power outages today with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 5-Year warranty with qualifying purchase. Call 1-855-294-2679 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move

Legal Notices

STATE OF WISCONSIN, CIRCUIT COURT, WINNEBAGO COUNTY

PUBLICATION SUMMONS Case No. 2025CV001057 Code No. 30404 (Foreclosure of Mortgage) The Amount claimed exceeds \$10,000.00

Freedom Mortgage Corporation 11988 Exit 5 Pkwy Bldg 4 Fishers, IN 46037-7939 Plaintiff,

vs. Richard J. Rodriguez 917 Jefferson Street Menasha, WI 54952 Amber Faye Rodriguez 917 Jefferson Street Menasha, WI 54952 Defendants.

THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

To each person named above as a defendant:

You are hereby notified that the Plaintiff named above has filed a lawsuit or other legal action against you.

Within 40 days after December 19, 2025 you must respond with a written demand for a copy of the Complaint. The demand must be sent or delivered to the Court, whose address is: 415 Jackson St, Oshkosh, WI 54903, and to the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is: Halliday, Watkins & Mann, P.C., 376 East 400 South, Suite 300, Salt Lake City, UT 84111. You

may have an attorney help or represent you.

If you do not demand a copy of the Complaint within 40 days the Court may grant judgment against you for the award of money or other legal action requested in the Complaint, and you may lose your right to object to anything that is or may be incorrect in the Complaint. A judgment may be enforced by law.

A judgment awarding money may become a lien against any real estate you own now or in the future and may also be enforced by garnishment or seizure of property.

Dated this 10th day of December, 2025. Halliday, Watkins & Mann, P.C. Attorneys for Plaintiff Electronically signed by: /s/ William N. Foshag State Bar No. 1020417 376 East 400 South, Suite 300 Salt Lake City, UT 84111 Ph: 801-355-2886

Halliday, Watkins & Mann, P.C. is attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. If you have previously received a discharge in a chapter 7 bankruptcy case, this communication should not be construed as an attempt to hold you personally liable for the debt.

Runs: December 19, 2025, December 26, 2025 and January 2, 2026

Kid Scoop

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE
 Get puzzle answers, recipes and more at www.kidscoop.com
 © 2025 by Vicki Whiting, Editor Jeff Schinkel, Graphics Vol. 42, No. 4

Kid Scoop Together: Funny Filler

Have a friend give you each type of word to fill in the blanks. Then read the story aloud!

KID SCOOP EXCLUSIVE: ELF ENTERTAINMENT

The elves up at Santa's Workshop work hard all year making toys for children all around the world. When the work is done, they play! We visited the North Pole to get what for years has been a top-secret selection of Elf puzzles and games!

Symbol Search

The grid below is filled with pictures of symbols of Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Match each group of symbols on the right with the same four symbols, in the exact same position, on the large grid below.

Standards Link: Visual Arts: Know how symbols are used to communicate meaning.

Find the differences between these ice-skating elves.
 Now find the differences between each elf and his own reflection!

Standards Link: Investigation: Find similarities and differences in common objects.

Festive Flower

A flower from Mexico has become a traditional holiday decoration in the United States. In Mexico it is called the "Flower of the Holy Night." Write the letter that comes BEFORE each of the letters below to find out what it is called north of the Mexican border.

Q P J O T F U U J B

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

Oh, Deer!

Can you find the reindeer drawing Ellen Elf created? Her drawing has all of these features:

- round nose
- 7 bells
- full moon
- curvy horns
- big smile
- short tail

ITEM	QTY.
Teddy Bears:	2,329
Candy Canes:	7,498
Toy Trains:	486
Skateboards:	1,325
Fashion Dolls:	6,327

Standards Link: Number Sense: Know place value to the 1,000th place.

How many snowflakes can you find on this page in 60 seconds? Have a friend try. Who found the most?

Extra! Extra!

Front Page Dot-to-Dot

Look at the front page of today's newspaper. Find and circle each letter of the alphabet. Can you find all 26? Connect the letters with lines and color your design.

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

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Which ornament would you get by putting the broken pieces together?

Standards Link: Mathematical Reasoning: Use a variety of strategies to solve problems.

Double Double Word Search

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

FESTIVE
BAGGAGE
FULL
ELF
MEXICO
DIGITS
NOSE
SANTA
NIGHT
SYMBOL
CURVY
KWANZAA
GRID
MOON
MANY

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

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

My family celebrates the holidays in a rather unusual way.

We always decorate a _____ with lots of _____.

Then we go from door to door, singing songs about _____.

Sometimes, the neighbors will _____ along with us.

My mom will wrap several _____ and place them under a _____.

My sister and I bake some tasty _____ and sprinkle _____ on them.

The day ends with everyone opening their _____.

Then we _____ upstairs to bed, thinking back on what a _____ day we had and looking forward to New Year's Eve, when our celebration gets *really* _____!

Standards Link: Grammar: Understand and use nouns, adjectives and verbs correctly.

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