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April 6 - 10, 2026
A Constellation of Community

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Living Well and Planning AHEAD
for a Healthy Life
4/6 - 6:00pm | Neenah Public Library

Emergency Preparedness For All
4/7 - 4:30pm | Winnebago Public Library

Sustainability, Healthy Living
& Pressure Canner Testing
4/8 - 5:00pm | Omro Community Center

Community Fair with BadgerTalks &
Barlow Planetarium shows
4/9 - 5:00pm | Sunnyview Expo Center

Climate Smart Gardening,
Air Quality, & Your Health
4/10 - 4:30pm | Oshkosh Public Library

Residents seek relief from dirt roads

By Dave Gill
NEENAH NEWS

Residents in a subdivision near Woodenshoe Road and County Highway G have been pushing hard in recent weeks for the City of Neenah to help convert their neighborhood from havens of dirty and muddy roads into finished streets.

The residents would at least like to see improved and reasonably passable roads using binder coat or recycled asphalt.

"There's been plenty of finger pointing," said Neenah resident Lynsey Gonzales

late last week, referring to the subdivision's developer Van Sistine Homes and the City of Neenah Public Works Department.

At the public forum portion of the March 18 Neenah Common Council meeting, residents made clear their dissatisfaction with how long it is taking for Van Sistine Homes and the city to improve the roads, so they don't have to navigate muddy or dusty roads.

As the result of Freedom Meadows residents' efforts, city officials have taken the feedback from them as well as city ad-

ministrators from the Public Works and Community Development departments to schedule a special session of the Public Services and Safety Commission for April 14 in part to talk through potential solutions to their concerns.

According to the Public Works Department office, the meeting is scheduled to start at 5 p.m. April 14 with the Freedom Meadows portion expected to begin around 6 p.m.

SEE **Muddy roads** ON PAGE 10

INSIDE



Pitcher perfect
Mathe is standout in circle for Rockets
Page 11

Helping out
Church supporting Habitat for Humanity
Page 4



Photo by David Hall

Hopping into spring

With Easter approaching, the Easter Bunny made a special stop Sunday at the Plaza to share some holiday magic with local families. Children gathered to trade high-fives and hugs with the seasonal celebrity, marking the unofficial kickoff to spring in the Fox Cities.

Neenah high fishing team looks ahead as coach retires

By Matthew Hoyman
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Chris Jones, founder and head coach of Neenah's fishing team, is set to retire after 31 years as a middle school science teacher and 12 years as the team's head coach.

In Jones' final season, the Neenah High School fishing team won the Wisconsin Interscholastic Fishing Association (WIFA) Team of the Year award for 2025, the first since 2018, becoming the only team in the state to win it more than once.

The team has also found competitive success in recent years, placing ninth out of 92 schools at the Wisconsin state meet in central Wisconsin and consistently fin-

ishing in the top 10 each season.

Jones grew up loving to fish. His dad was often busy as a coach, so other teachers would take him fishing, leading to the motto Jones often shares with students: "Be the person I needed when I was that age."

Bradley Gumtow, a former Neenah student who is now the head coach of the fishing team at Ashland High School, helped encourage Jones to start the Neenah fishing team when he was in middle school, and he took that motto to heart. Bradley has the phrase on a Post-it note in



Submitted photo

The Neenah High School fishing team meets throughout the school year as members prepare for competition and discussions about topics ranging from environmental stewardship to fishing techniques.

SEE **Fishing team** ON PAGE 8



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Christine Milheiser | Client Service Coordinator

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1220 S. Commercial St.
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General information/customer service:

Jennifer Grunwald
admin@winnebagomediagroup.com
Phone: 920-486-1616
Website: www.neenahnews.com

News tips and story ideas

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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.

Publisher

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

Editor

Chris Lusvardi, 920-508-0027
editor@winnebagomediagroup.com

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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Voters prepare to head to polls Tuesday

Neenah News

Voters will cast their ballots Tuesday in the spring election, with mayoral, common council, county supervisor and statewide races to be decided.

Scott Becher and Brian Borchardt are competing for a four-year seat as Neenah mayor after Jane Lang did not seek reelection.

Incumbent Alder Cari Lendrum is running against challenger Brian Defferding in District 1 of the Neenah Common Council. District 2 Alder Tami Erickson and District 3 Alder Scott Weber are running unopposed. Each of the common council seats are for a three-year term.

Voters will elect three new members to the Neenah Joint School District Board of Education to three-year terms. Candidates Christian Blanton, Tom Hanby, Becky

Heidke Kwiatkowski and Samuel Roth will be on the ballot.

Other local municipal races are uncontested.

All 36 seats on the Winnebago County Board of Supervisors are up for election, with Neenah News reporting on the candidates that represent Neenah and Fox Crossing in districts 5-10 and 27-30.

In District 5, Richard Bodenhagen and Shiloh Ramos are vying for the seat.

District 6 incumbent Lucas Reinke is facing challenger Brandon Ramus.

In District 10, Timothy Jacobson is running for the seat against Chris Rosenow.

District 27 incumbent Morris Cox is seeking reelection in a race against Carl Schulze.

District 29 incumbent George Bureau is seeking reelection and is facing Benjamin

Frank.

Candidates in districts 7, 8, 9, 28 and 30 are unopposed.

Statewide, voters will be electing a new judge to the Wisconsin Supreme Court after Justice Rebecca Bradley decided not to run for a second 10-year term.

Wisconsin Court of Appeals Judge Chris Taylor is running for the seat against Wisconsin Court of Appeals Judge Maria Lazar.

On election day polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and voters in line by 8 p.m. have the right to vote. More information about what's on the ballot and where to find polling places can be found at myvote.wi.gov.

New bidder rule in place for public works projects

By MaryBeth Matzek

NEENAH NEWS

Winnebago County has a new rule that puts in place new guidelines for contractors who put in bids for public works projects where the estimated cost exceeds \$25,000.

Called the Responsible Bidder Ordinance, the rule is designed to mitigate risk, provide quality assurance, maintain workforce standards and establish a more transparent, accountable process for public works contracts. According to state law, local governments are required to accept the lowest responsible bidder for public works contracts, leaving it up to local governments to define what "responsible" means. If the county does not define "responsible," then the lowest bid wins.

The new rule contains 19 provisions, such as disclosure of judgments, project experience and history and written safety programs, to ensure contractors have the expertise to complete the work.

County Executive Gordon Hintz said the county experienced challenges with contractors accurately completing projects to the bid's specs, resulting in additional time and costs. The county board approved the ordinance at the March 17 meeting.

Hintz added the ordinance was "about protecting taxpayer investments. It's about getting projects done right the first time."

Brown, Douglas and Outagamie counties already have ordinances with identical or similar language in place to Winnebago County's new rule.

Credit union launches youth-focused partnerships

Neenah News

Fox Communities Credit Union is celebrating Financial Literacy Month with two new partnerships designed to bring financial education directly to children across Northeastern Wisconsin, meeting them where they learn, grow and imagine.

Fox is partnering with the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers to bring financial literacy lessons to more than 20 elementary schools through "Fang's Reading Club" program. Fox team members will read books focused on saving, spending and sharing, each paired with a simple, hands-on activity to help kids connect the concepts to their everyday lives.

In local libraries and schools through-

out the region, Fox is launching "The Power of One Penny," a brand-new program created in collaboration with Mischieff & Magic. Using magic, storytelling and interactive demonstrations, they'll bring financial concepts to life, showing young learners how small habits, like starting with a few pennies, can grow into something powerful.

During Money Smart Wisconsin Week, which runs through from April 6-12, Fox Communities Credit Union will support free, communitywide events that offer financial tips and tools for families, individuals and young learners. See foxcu.org/about-us/community-involvement/community-events for details.



Photo from Neenah Historical Society

Old Post Office

During the construction of the Post Office at 307 S. Commercial St., crates, planks and radiators are piled throughout the lobby.

Calendar of events

Friday, April 3

First Friday Concert: Christo Rupenthal, 2 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Saturday, April 4

Art Activity Day – Hop Into Spring Suncatcher, 10 a.m., Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

Youth Egg Hunt, 10:30 a.m., O'Hausser Park, Fox Crossing

Monday, April 6

Adult Afternoon Program: Hooked on History! Early Wisconsin Fishing Lures, 2 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Class Fiddles Concert, 7 p.m., NHS Performing Arts Center

Thursday, April 9

Finish the Lyrics Trivia, 6 p.m., Greene's Pour House

Saturday, April 11

Brews with the Bunny, 5 p.m., Fritsch Park, Fox Crossing

Adults-Only Egg Hunt, 7:45 p.m., Fritsch Park, Fox Crossing

Sunday, April 12

Lawrence University Student Jazz Quartet: Spring Sessions, 2 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Tuesday, April 14

Volunteer Fest, 3 p.m., Kimberly-Clark, 2300 County Road II

Thursday, April 16

Neenah Sports: Big Wins and Big Losses presented by Kara Rothkegel, 6:30 p.m., Neenah Public Library

Saturday, April 18

Fox Crossing Electronics Recycling Event, 8 a.m., 2000 Municipal Drive

Volunteer Tree Planting, 8 a.m., Carpenter Preserve

Sunday, April 19

Larsen-Winchester Lions Pancake Breakfast, 8 a.m., Winchester Elementary School

Correction

MARCH 27, Page 3: In "Health officials seek to counter falling vaccination rates," the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program provides free vaccines for eligible children age 18 and under who are uninsured, underinsured (insurance does not cover vaccines) or American Indian/Alaska Native while the Vaccines for Adults (VFA) Program provides free vaccines only to adults who are uninsured

County website compliant with new ADA rules

By MaryBeth Matzek
NEENAH NEWS

Winnebago County's website is compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) ahead of a national deadline for municipalities with more than 50,000 residents.

The county budgeted for a new website vendor that not only ensured the site was ADA compliant but also had greater functionality as part of its 2025 budget, said Jennifer Ruetten, director of information technology with Winnebago County.

As part of ADA functionality, Ruetten said everything on the screen is readable by the screen reader, photos have an alt-tag so it can be read by a screen reader,

contrast color is easily readable and text size and font size can be adjusted to make it more readable.



Ruetten

"We scan our pages every week to make sure they are compliant since our content always changes," she said. "We're not a place that sets the content and then forgets it."

In April 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice updated Title II of the ADA that makes digital accessibility a specific legal requirement for municipalities of more than 50,000 by April 24, 2026. Smaller

governments have until April 26, 2027, to meet the ADA requirement.

Under the ADA, governments must ensure people with disabilities have equal access to programs and services and many services are delivered via websites.

"This was something we knew was coming so we had time to plan ahead and get it done," Ruetten said. "I get calls every day from providers asking if we need help, but we were prepared and got it done."

Ruetten said county employees who work with the website, such as adding new or updating content, received a lot of training and education about why they need to do some things such as adding alt

tags to photos that explain what is in the image.

"We have to do some reminders about the training and what to do because some people may only update the site once every few months," she said.

Besides the ADA changes, the website updates include being able to pay bills or apply for jobs online.

Officials said the City of Oshkosh — the county's only other municipality with a population of more than 50,000 — is also working to have its website be in compliance with the ADA rules.

The county's other, smaller municipalities, including Neenah, have another year to make their websites compliant under the 2024 DOJ guidelines.

Retired educators meeting features superintendents

Neenah News

The Winnebago County Retired Educators' Association invites all retired school employees who live or worked in Winnebago County to its next meeting on April 16 at Wedgewood Golf Course & Grill, 1200 E. Huron St. in Omro.

Check-in and social hour begins at 11 a.m. Following a short business meeting at 11:30 a.m., attendees will be served a chicken dinner. Starting at approximately 1 p.m., the program will feature Winnebago County's five area school superintendents, including Steve Harrison from Neenah, along with school leaders from Oshkosh, Omro, Menasha and Winneconne.



Harrison

Potential new members or visitors are always welcome.

Anyone interested may email Lisa at rolson3430@aol.com no later than April 10 for more information.

Library's First Friday concert features jazz musician

Neenah News

Christo Ruppenthal will perform at 2 p.m. today during a First Friday concert at the Neenah Public Library.

Ruppenthal is an award-winning multi-instrumentalist and music entrepreneur who presents a mixture of Jazz/Vaudeville era novelty infused hot Hawaiian steel guitar and ukulele from the 1910s-30s as well as the swinging sounds of Django Reinhardt's 1930s and 40s guitar-driven Hot Club jazz.

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Church continues supporting Habitat for Humanity

By Pamela Hart
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

Congregational United Church of Christ is raising funds to support Habitat for Humanity.

Members have already raised a third of the \$100,000 needed to build a home in Neenah for a family in need. The church is ready for the challenge to raise the funds to construct the 401st house built by the Greater Fox Cities Habitat for Humanity.

This local affiliate of the global nonprofit housing organization started in the early 1990s by the congregational church. Since then, members of the congregation have served in various ways as board members, builders and other roles to provide affordable homes locally and globally.

Habitat for Humanity was started by Millard and Linda Fuller in 1976 in Georgia. The organization builds affordable nonprofit housing using volunteer labor and revolving funding.

The new homeowner's house payments are combined with no-interest loans from supporters and money earned through fundraising to create The Fund for Humanity, which is used to build more homes. The organization expanded rapidly after Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter became involved in the 1980s.

Sirena Thompson, the daughter of a Habitat for Humanity homeowner, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to grow up in their home, built in 1999.

"I have been so grateful for the stability this offered my family," Thompson said. "My mom took me in at a young age when my biological family was unable to care for me. My mom deserved the world for the opportunities she gave to me, my sister and others. This house felt like her

giving and loving nature was being repaid in some ways. Our home provided our family a safe and comfortable place, close to schools, the park and city pool, and a neighborhood that grew our caring community."

Thompson's family had a significant relationship with their Congregational United Church of Christ community. Their connection to Habitat for Humanity stemmed from the church's involvement with the organization.

In appreciation for their home, family members paid it forward through their church and volunteer opportunities with Habitat for Humanity. They also hosted foreign exchange students in high school and were introduced to their biological sister through their church program.

Since moving out on her own in 2010 to attend UW-Oshkosh, Thompson has become a homeowner with her husband in southeast Minnesota. She works for First Alliance Credit Union where their focus is on first starts and fresh starts, which align significantly with her values. She volunteers in her community and encourages a stronger relationship with her employer and their local Habitat for Humanity.

The handmade quilt she received when her family moved into the home in 1999 is a housewarming gift she continues to cherish and a reminder of how blessed she was by the support of the Greater Fox Cities Habitat for Humanity.

Congregational United Church of Christ invites Fox Valley residents to become a part of their effort. They continue to raise funds with the hope of starting construction in 2027. The church can be contacted at 920-725-4873.



Submitted photo

Congregational United Church of Christ members meet earlier this year to discuss plans to support Habitat for Humanity.

Volunteer Fest shows ways to give back

Neenah News

Community members are invited to discover ways to give back at Volunteer Fest.

The event co-hosted by Kimberly-Clark and Volunteer Fox Cities provides a chance to meet local nonprofits, explore ways to give back and get inspired.

Activities include a volunteer fair with an engaging, interactive feel; opportunities to connect directly with up to 50 local nonprofits and conversations with organizations making a difference across the Fox

Valley in an open house style format.

The event is scheduled from 3 to 6 p.m. April 14 at the Kimberly-Clark Neenah Conference Center, 2300 County Road II.

City changes common council meeting dates

Neenah News

The City of Neenah Common Council has made changes to its upcoming meeting schedule.

The council cancelled its regularly scheduled meeting on April 15. The council is scheduled to meet at 6 p.m. April 21.

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Photo by David Hall

County celebrating Wisconsin Idea Week

By MaryBeth Matzek
NEENAH NEWS

Two Winnebago County departments are coming together to celebrate A Constellation of Community, a series of educational and fun events for area residents.

Next week, the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Winnebago County is celebrating Wisconsin Idea Week 2026 and the Winnebago County Health Department is celebrating National Public Health Week.

“We wanted to host different events out in the community to demonstrate the different resources the county has available to its residents,” said Wanda Tracy, multimedia and public relations coordinator for Winnebago County Public Health. “The Wisconsin Idea is a guiding principle that the work of UW-Madison, including the Extension, should benefit people beyond the classroom — across the entire state. So, we’ve taken that idea and combined it with some different activities.”

All events are free and open to the public with registration required for all programs. Visit winnebago.extension.wisc.edu/wisconsin-idea-week-2026 or call 920-232-1970 to register.

A Community Engagement Fair from 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday at the Sunnyview Expo Center is the week’s highlight. The event will feature BadgerTalk: Eyes on the Skies and portable planetarium shows from the Barlow Planetarium. From 6 to 7 p.m., James Lattis, director of UW Space Place, will talk about the current night sky. He’ll discuss how to spot constellations and

planets, view meteor showers and eclipses and how to use telescopes and binoculars to make the most of night-sky viewing.

Barlow Planetarium will also run shows every 30 minutes in its portable planetarium from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The show allows attendees to explore constellations, planets and cosmic wonders without leaving town. Admission is free on a first-come, first-serve basis.

At the Neenah Public Library at 6 p.m. Monday, Living Well and Planning AHEAD for a Healthy Life will be held. The gathering will combine exploring ways to support overall well-being as you age like staying active, eating nutritious food and caring for mental health along with a UW Extension program called Planning AHEAD.

The program guides participants on their health care wishes, financial changes and responsibilities as they age, legal requirements and the documentation they need for financial and health decisions, planning for distribution of personal property and end-of-life health care decisions.

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Welcome changes

Anglers take advantage of the calm morning waters and the improved accessibility of the Loop the Lake trail at Arrowhead Park last week. The park’s recently completed parking area and carriage road have made it easier than ever for local residents to reach the shoreline of Little Lake Butte des Morts just as the spring walleye and white bass runs begin to heat up. Part of a multi-phase master plan to transform the former industrial site into a premier recreational destination, these new amenities provide a seamless connection between downtown Neenah and the scenic 3.5-mile loop.

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Man convicted of killing grandparents requests new trial

Neenah News

An inmate at Waupun Correctional Institution is appealing a conviction for killing his grandparents in 2019.

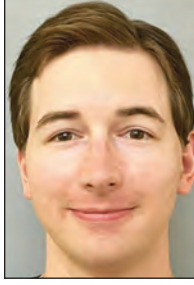
His attorney is arguing that there was a miscarriage of justice and that a new trial is needed.

Alexander Kraus, 24, is currently serving back-to-back life sentences after being convicted in 2022 for killing his grandparents, Dennis Kraus, 74, and Letha Kraus, 73, in their Grand Chute home on April 14, 2019.

Kraus was a student at Neenah High School at the time and court documents from 2019 lay out how Kraus intended to take guns from his grandparents' house and use them in a school shooting the day after killing his grandparents.

An appeal in the case outlines an argu-

ment for Kraus receiving a new trial as his attorney highlights his mental health status at the time.



Kraus

An Outagamie County Judge denied a post-conviction motion for a new trial in the case last summer and now Kraus's lawyers have appealed the case with the Wisconsin Court of Appeals.

In a recent filing, Kraus's appeals attorney, Erica Bauer, argued that Kraus suffers from mental health issues stemming from anxiety, depression and autism.

Bauer argued Kraus was suffering from a mental defect or disease when he killed his grandparents. Experts testified at the

trial that anxiety and depression led to Kraus' social isolation and that led him to a state of delusional thought.

One doctor testified that Kraus "experienced a break from his delusion that would explain why he stopped his plan and why he admitted wrongdoing after calling 911."

Court documents state Kraus called 911 after killing his grandparents and ad-

mitted his actions to the dispatcher.

"The Court should exercise its authority to grant Kraus a new trial in the interest of justice because it is probable that justice was miscarried and there is a substantial probability of a different result if a new trial is ordered," Bauer stated.

The state has yet to respond to the appeal. If the appeal moves forward, it will be decided by a three-judge panel.

Three people injured after vehicle hits house

Neenah News

A vehicle left the roadway and struck a residence Saturday in Neenah, leaving three people injured.

According to the Neenah Police Department, the crash occurred at about 3:40 p.m. on Henry Street near West Winnebago Avenue. Neenah Police along with Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue and Gold Cross Ambulance responded to the crash.

Upon arrival, police said the vehicle involved was on its side, having crashed

through the corner of the residence.

The driver of the vehicle was unconscious and two residents in the house were injured.

Emergency personnel were able to extract the driver from the vehicle. The driver and the injured residents were subsequently transported to an area hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Upon investigation, police said the driver appears to have suffered a medical episode and lost control of the vehicle.

Sheriff not seeking another term

By Jonathan Richie
NEENAH NEWS

After 36 years with the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, including the last 16 at the helm of the department, Sheriff John Matz has announced he will not seek a fifth term as sheriff.



Matz

Matz said Friday in a letter addressed to the citizens of Winnebago County he will be stepping down from the position.

"Serving as your Sheriff for the past four terms and 36 years with the agency has been one of the greatest honors of my life," Matz said. "I am immensely proud of the dedication shown by the men and women of the Sheriff's Office and grateful for the support this

community has consistently shown."

He continued, "This decision comes after thoughtful reflection on both the needs of the office and the next chapter of my personal and professional life. I remain fully committed to fulfilling my duties throughout the remainder of my term and ensuring a smooth transition for the next elected Sheriff."

"Thank you for the privilege of serving you," Matz said. "Your support and confidence have meant more than I can express."

Voters will go to the polls in November to elect a new sheriff. Also on the ballot across the state will be races for governor and attorney general and all eight seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The deadline for submitting candidacy paperwork for the fall partisan election is at 5 p.m. June 1. If a primary is needed, that will be held on Aug. 11 and the general election will be Nov. 3.

Police seek information about dog attack

Neenah News

The Fox Crossing Police Department is looking for the owner of two dogs that allegedly fatally attacked a cat on Sunday.

Police said at approximately 9:45 p.m. an officer was dispatched to an in-progress animal attack where two dogs were attacking a cat in the 1300 block of Sunset Lane. The dogs were described as a pit-bull mix with one of the dogs having a tan coat and the other having a grey/reddish/tan coat with a white stomach.

According to police, the two dogs attacked the cat in the ditch and caused fatal injuries. An early 2000's white sedan (similar to a Chevy Impala) drove to the scene where it retrieved both dogs and fled the

area.

The homeowner struck the vehicle on the left rear bumper with a metal shovel, which police said may have caused minor damage to the paint. Police do not know where the dog owner lives but presumably has ties to either Fox Crossing or Menasha.

FCPD is looking to see if anyone might recognize these dogs or have security/doorbell camera footage in the area which recorded the car.

Anyone that can provide any assistance is asked to contact Fox Crossing police at 920-720-7109 or use the Winnebago CountyWide Crime Stoppers P3 app to report anonymously.

Fundraiser benefits memory care work

Neenah News

The Fox Valley Memory Project's Living Life 2026 Fundraiser and Celebration will bring the community together in support of individuals living with dementia and their care partners.

Guests can enjoy dinner, raffles, silent and live auctions, and an Art Walk featuring artwork created by program participants.

New this year were several silent and live auction vacation packages provided by the American Fundraising Foundation – AmFund will be offered. These exclusive trips are only available for in-person bidding.

The fundraiser will be from 5 to 8 p.m. April 21 at the Bridgewood Resort Hotel and Conference Center. Tickets are available at livinglife26.cbo.io or by calling 920-225-1711.



Photo from Fox Crossing Police Department

Playing games

Fox Crossing Police Department Detectives Jeremiah Gustafson and Meredith Birmingham were invited to St. Mary Catholic High School's morning assembly Monday for a little fun and games, including Hungry Hungry Hippos, with the students. The police department said it enjoys these opportunities to be positive role models and create strong relationships with the students.

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

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Appleton Ice shifts focus to Tri-County reconstruction

Updates to be split over two years

By Eric Endres
NEENAH NEWS

After completing ice surface reconstruction at the Appleton Family Ice Center (AFIC), nonprofit Appleton Ice is shifting its "Funding the Future" campaign focus to making improvements at Tri-County Ice Arena in Fox Crossing.

Appleton Ice, which is also the operator of AFIC and Tri-County Ice Arena, finished the \$1.35 million overhaul of the ice surface inside the Appleton ice rink, located on East Witzke Boulevard, last fall as part of its campaign to extend both rinks' lifespans.

The facility just wrapped its first season with the new surface, and campaign chair Tommy Wroblewski said the reception has been "awesome."

"Our new ice surfaces at Appleton Family Ice Center addressed the critical needs of today while providing a foundation (to) benefit many generations to come," Wroblewski said.

Now, the attention turns to Tri-County Ice Arena with a two-part plan for upgrades.

The first phase, scheduled for summer 2026, is a \$400,000 investment to install new insulation in both the large and small rinks. This project is expected to create significant energy savings and provide an aesthetic update in clear, white ceilings to complement the new lighting installed last



Submitted photo

The first season recently wrapped up after an ice-surface reconstruction was completed at Appleton Family Ice Center. More renovations are to begin this summer as part of plans to refresh the facility.

summer.

The second phase is planned for summer 2027, with a \$1.7 million investment into the reconstruction of the large and small rink surfaces to reinforce the legacy of the facility for another several decades, much like the expectation for AFIC.

Funding benchmarks weren't reached to complete the ice reconstruction this year, so the project was split this way and allows for project fundraising to continue into the 2026-2027 season. Appleton Ice recently received a \$250,000 pledge from the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the campaign currently stands at \$2,225,000 in funds that have been raised

toward their \$4.1 million goal.

Other major contributors to the fundraiser include Mary Ellyn Wroblewski at \$500,000-plus for Tri-County naming rights; Menasha Corporation, which provided \$200,000-plus in sponsorship for small rink naming rights at Tri-County; and \$100,000-plus contributions from the Appleton Area Hockey Association, the We Energies/WPS Foundation, the JEK Foundation and several individual family donors.

Appleton Ice assumed early ownership of Tri-County from Winnebago County last year after originally being scheduled to take over ownership in 2029.

The organization applied for a \$1 mil-

lion grant last fall from Wisconsin's Grants for Local Projects (Non-State Grant Program). Grant recipients are expected to be decided this spring.

"Throughout our decades of operation, our non-profit organization has kept ice rates as low as possible to make hockey accessible to all families in our community," Wroblewski said. "With that business model, however, we don't generate piles of cash to fund major investments. So, in the spirit of the founders who built Tri-County, it's our turn as community leaders to step up, reinvest in this legacy community asset and set it up for another 50-plus years of successful operation."

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Fishing team

FROM PAGE 1

his car and on his door.

“For me, it takes me back to high school or middle school and seeing how Chris stepped up and decided to start the team for a bunch of young kids,” Bradley said. “We thought we knew how to fish, but in reality, we had no idea. He was patient and let us figure the fishing world out on our own, but when we needed guidance, he was there for us.”

Bradley is dedicated to living by Jones’ motto in his own life.

“I try to do the same,” Bradley said. “The biggest part of ‘Be the person I needed when I was that age’ is that you have to realize that not every student or person is in the same place in life or fishing career as

the person next to them. It is up to me to treat them and coach them as if I were in their shoes.”

Two years ago, Jones went to visit his former student to go fishing. It was early in the morning, and after driving two hours, he pulled into the driveway and saw the note on the door.

“It just hit me, OK, it’s working,” Jones said. “It has had an impact on him. So it’s not just me now — it’s having an impact on other people.”

The fishing team has grown immensely since 2012. The first meeting had about 20 students, and the first official team had eight. Currently, the high school team has 40 students, and the middle school program has about 200 students who rotate in and out.

The program has had a profound effect on the students, Bradley said.

“The Neenah fishing team has had a lasting impact on my life, especially as an adult,” Bradley said. “I can legitimately say that the Neenah High School Fishing Team and Coach Jones have impacted every aspect of my day-to-day life as an adult. Growing up in the Neenah program and around coaches that are so invested in the team and students has made me want to do everything I can to provide the same level of commitment to the Ashland community and the students on the Ashland team.”

The team meets from 6:30 to 8 p.m. every Thursday from the second week of school until a week before graduation. It’s not just about learning fishing techniques. Students learn environmental stewardship, healthy fisheries, invasive species and the human impact on lakes and rivers.

Toward the beginning of the year, guest speakers such as professional anglers, game wardens and fishery biologists share their knowledge with students. The team’s goal is to plan 12–15 events per season.

“Number one priority is safety,” Jones said. “We don’t do any events if we feel the ice isn’t safe or traveling to the events isn’t safe.”

Jones’ fishing team provides a shared community, Neenah graduate Joey Porto said.

“His main focus was to help us become the best young men and women we could be,” Porto said. “He taught us how to be accountable and responsible with schoolwork, even lending a helping hand after meetings if things weren’t making sense.”

The fishing team differs from other sports in that freshmen and seniors work together to achieve the goals they set for themselves. Upperclassmen help keep younger students focused and often give presentations on knot tying, fishing techniques, and tournament preparation at the beginning of the year.

A new tradition for the fishing team is a senior-only trip to South Dakota, where they partner with middle school students to provide education about the outdoors. This allows seniors to fish somewhere they haven’t been before while helping the next generation learn something new. The seniors and coaches taught two 30-minute sessions to 147 sixth- and seventh-grade students on invasive species, ice fishing safety, and fish handling.

“I could see that being a great match for a number of years to come,” Jones said. “It’s good for us to share our passion for the outdoors with other people and different communities.”

This is also the seventh time the team has set up an event at the Neenah Public Library with adults with Alzheimer’s to spend time fishing together.

“It’s been really powerful for our students to see people who have had careers,

jobs and families that later in life are affected by Alzheimer’s, and to go fishing with them and see them rekindle memories of fishing with our students,” Jones said.

Jon Gumtow, Bradley’s father, is a professional wetland scientist and soil scientist with more than 25 years of experience and has dedicated his time to the team long after his son graduated from high school.

“He’s been a volunteer in our program every weekend since 2012,” Jones said. “That’s unheard of. He just gives his time to so much that we do. There’s no way we could be where we are now if it wasn’t for him.”

Fishers don’t get the credit other sports do, even when they are on the ice for 12 straight hours, Jon said.

“They’re some of the toughest kids in school,” Jon said. “You think of linemen on football teams, but these kids are getting up early and spending all day outside. It could be raining, snowing, or 25 below, and they’re not complaining. That’s a life skill.”

Jones said he is looking forward to getting back on the ice when he retires because, as a coach, he often watched others fish during tournaments. It will also allow him to reconnect with former students and spend more time with his wife, children, and grandchildren.

“It’s been a really awesome experience, and as much as you hear stories of how much we’ve impacted them, it has impacted me equally as much and profoundly changed my life,” Jones said.

Parker Sonnabend, a physical education teacher at Neenah Middle School, is set to become the next fishing team head coach after spending the year as the assistant coach. It was important, Jones said, to find someone he felt was the right person to take on the coaching responsibility, and he felt comfortable with Sonnabend doing that.

“All this time and effort that John and others have put into this fishing program is getting handed over to someone who is not just going to maintain it, but take it to the next level, and Parker is going to do that,” Jones said. “There’s no doubt in my mind.”

Sonnabend said he hopes to bring a fresh perspective while maintaining the past.

“I want to instill some youthfulness and try anything we find that kids might like,” Sonnabend said. “We’ve obviously always had a handshake that we do, all coaches get one after the kids leave, and we’re trying to keep those traditions going.”

The Neenah fishing team will hold a banquet at 5:30 p.m. April 16 at the Bridgewood Resort and Conference Center.



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SMC students find voices in broadcasting basketball

By Evan Olson
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

On game night at St. Mary Catholic High School, the action no longer stops at the final buzzer.

Students at St. Mary Catholic High School (SMCS) are bringing basketball beyond the court by launching a new sports broadcasting program. SMCS juniors Max Kubicki and Gibson Rause co-founded the program through a shared love of sports and a desire to be more involved with SMCS's basketball teams. With support from school administrators, the program has brought more attention to SMCS's boys and girls varsity basketball teams.

For Kubicki and Rause, the broadcasting program is much bigger than an after-school program; it allows them to dive deeper into their passion for basketball. Kubicki provides color commentary while Rause handles the play-by-play action.

Rause explains that he has used the program to expand his knowledge of the statistical side of basketball, taking time to research players, coaches and schemes before upcoming games. He notes that while this preparation helps him improve his commentary, it also deepens his enjoyment of the game.

The impact of the program extends far beyond the recording booth. Kubicki notes that the program has spurred an interest in pursuing sports broadcasting as a career. Kubicki and Rause agree that the program has helped them improve their vocabulary and public speaking abilities while also serving as an outlet to develop skills in broadcasting and audio-video technology.

The broadcasting program provides a way for fans of the SMCS Zephyrs to fol-

low games beyond the gym. SMCS Athletics Director Matt Schoultz highlights that online viewership of recorded games published to YouTube has greatly increased since the broadcasting program began.

That community outreach has fueled Kubicki and Rause as they strive for professionalism and to create the best possible experience for their listeners.

"Whenever I hear someone say, 'I listened to the broadcast last night and you guys were better than I thought,' it always makes me proud, knowing that what we are doing isn't falling on deaf ears," Rause said.

Community members are not the only ones noticing the program's impact. SMCS administrators have also worked to support its growth. Schoultz was prepared to back the students' vision, helping to get the broadcasting program off the ground by providing the setup for YouTube broadcasts.

SMCS Dean of Students Jordan Klein shares how the impacts of the program are being seen around the school. He points out the growing buzz of excitement from students and staff alike that the program generates and the school spirit it ignites.

Klein highlights the "palpable" sense of pride the program is bringing to the school and emphasizes the commitment that Kubicki and Rause have demonstrated. He recalls the duo showing up to the first broadcast game in dress shirts and ties, despite not appearing on camera themselves.

"That's when I realized just how serious they were about this," Klein remarked.

Kubicki and Rause exemplify how students can turn passion into impact as they consider what's next now that the basketball season is over. What began as a way to get more involved with the school bas-



Submitted photo

Max Kubicki and Gibson Rause launched a sports broadcasting program to live stream St. Mary Catholic School boys and girls varsity basketball games this season. As they build on their experience, they are hoping to expand the program to other sports.

ketball teams has evolved into an outlet for learning, expression and experience. The program bolsters school spirit and brings the court to the fans wherever they may be.

"The lesson that goes beyond high school is loud and clear: If you want something, go get it. If it hasn't been started yet, then cre-

ate it," Klein said. "It would have been super easy, at many points, to stop pursuing the endeavor, but they didn't give up."

SMCS's broadcast games featuring Kubicki and Rause's commentary are available at youtube.com/@SMCSZephyrs/ featured.

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Muddy roads

FROM PAGE 1

The committee's chair, Alderman Cari Lendrum, confirmed Wednesday that the meeting was scheduled for April 14 but that she had no comment other than "it's a very complicated situation" and referred all inquiries to the Public Works Department.

Phone calls and emails to Van Sistine Homes and Neenah Public Works Director Gerry Kaiser have gone unanswered.

However, Tom McHugh from Tom McHugh Construction - which built all but one of the approximately 150 homes in Freedom Meadows - said that, in Neenah, the developer is responsible for sanitary and storm sewer installation, sidewalk construction and upkeep of the roads until the city installs the final roadway solution.

Tom McHugh Construction purchased

all but one of the lots in Freedom Meadows as the "master builder," McHugh said, and built approximately 150 homes in about two years in five phases. McHugh is also a selling agent in the subdivision and sold the last house in Freedom Meadows about a month ago, he said.

One reason McHugh said could be the cause of the situation is that his company works with an efficiency of speed and quality that may have caught the city off guard.

The longer (the city) waits to let the roads settle (before installing the final street solution), McHugh said, the better the maintenance issues will be as the years go by.

It is Gonzales' understanding that Van Sistine Homes was to escrow a certain portion of the revenues of the lot sales to at least temporarily improve the roads beyond their existing dirt conditions, but from her understanding that escrow fund is short of giving relief to area homeown-



Neenah News

Residents in the Freedom Meadows subdivision are asking the City of Neenah to find a way to improve unpaved roads in the neighborhood.



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ers.

"We knew there could be fees involved and a timeline," Gonzales said of a final road solution. "But when we closed (on our house) we had no idea it was going to take this long or cost this much."

Heather Jelinski, another area resident, agreed.

"That is why we're frustrated and feel cheated," she said.

At the March 18 Common Council public forum, some residents talked of being unable to walk their dogs because

of the mud, having to purchase long-term car wash packages, and one said that they have to put their family bikes on trailers to be able to take them to paved streets to ride them with their children without getting covered with splatters of mud.

Jelinski said that Neenah aldermen William Pollnow, Scott Weber and Brian Borchardt toured the subdivisions on March 21 with various residents to get an understanding of the situation and to report back their findings to the administration.



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Mathe shines in pitching circle for Rockets

By Steve Clark
NEENAH NEWS

Kyleigh Mathe has her own special cheering section.

They may not be there when the stand-out Neenah hurler is in the circle for a game but they are always there when she comes home to meow, bark and ... whatever sound a lizard makes.

"I have three cats, a dog, my lizard and two fish. The lizard (who was named Blizzard by her grandma) is from seventh grade so she's old and really tiny," Mathe said before a recent Rocket practice. "They definitely lower my stress."

The hitters that Mathe will be facing this season may want to stop by for some quality time with the animals because they may be the ones stressed after staring down the Rockets' right-hander.

Mathe has received all-Fox Valley Association recognition all three seasons at Neenah, including the last two where she garnered first-team honors. She helped lead the Rockets to a runner-up finish in the talent-laden FVA and to a sectional final berth last season.

This year, she's hoping the Rockets take things a step further.

"Very important," Mathe said about making it to the WIAA State Tournament. "It's been my goal since freshman year and all of the girls are working for it. Every year, I just think we are getting better. Last year, I thought that was the team that was going to go to state and now this year, I think this team is the one that can go to state. We have a lot of really solid infielders and outfielders and our hitting has developed since I was a freshman. I definitely think we have a chance."

The drive behind Mathe's success in the pitching circle came from her earliest days playing softball, but it wasn't because she found instant success.

Instead, she was put on the bench and forced to watch others fire pitches to the plate.

"I was not a starting pitcher and my coaches didn't give me much playing time," Mathe said. "I definitely thought I deserved more playing time which is kind of what got me into pitching more and really wanting to earn my spot."

Mathe didn't sulk about not seeing much time on the diamond, instead she went to work.

She credits pitching coaches Jill Vondrak and John Kloehn for teaching her the art of pitching and helping her reach her potential.

Yet, she still feels that chip on her shoulder from when she was 8-years-old whenever she steps into that circle.

"I think (not pitching when I was young) is why I am the way I am right now," Mathe said. "It (motivated) me to



Neenah News

Kyleigh Mathe has been a dominant force in the pitching circle for Neenah the past three seasons and has lofty goals for the Rockets entering the 2026 season.

get into it when I was little. I just really wanted to work on it and become that starting pitcher for my team."

Her efforts as a youth were aided by her physique as a youngster. Mathe – who now stands at 5-foot-6 – said she was tall as a kid with lengthy limbs and long fingers which helped her perform on the mound.

By the time she was playing at the 12U level, her talent was emerging.

"That's when I was getting pretty good and started feeling good about myself," Mathe said. "That's when I was the starting pitcher and didn't have to sit the bench as much, which was really what motivated me to become a better starting pitcher."

As she reached high school, Mathe did

experience being back on the bench a little bit.

The Rockets had a standout hurler who was a senior in Morgan Harwood and so Mathe only played when called upon. But she also used the season to bolster what she had already learned and continued to work and compete to see the pitching circle.

"If I wanted to share the time with her, I

Senior Standout



knew I had to be as good as her if not better. I really had to work for it," Mathe said. "I learned that not everything was about speed from Morgan, which was important to me because I was more of a spin pitcher. She inspired me to become better at my spins."

Mathe admits that her hardest pitches – even when she is feeling her strongest – will only hit as high as 60 to 62 mph on the speed gun.

So instead of simply overpowering hitters, she relies on her movement pitches – curve ball, rise ball and change-up – to mow through opposing lineups.

"I've never really been a big speed pitcher. I'm not one of those girls who can effortlessly throw 70 mph because they are super tall. I wish it could be me but it's not," Mathe said. "Spin is more important to me."

Pitchers can be successful from either the power angle or the spin approach, however, there is one big difference between the two.

Generally, power and speed are always there. If a pitcher throws 70 or above on a Tuesday, it's a good bet she will be doing the same on a Thursday.

But for spin pitchers, it can be more of a feel thing. Some days – even some innings – one pitch will be working better than another and it can change without warning.

"It's weird, your mechanics are the same but some days your curve ball is working better than your rise ball or your change-up doesn't want to be a strike," Mathe said. "It depends on the day."

Mathe's ability to throw multiple pitches to multiple locations certainly gets tested in the FVA, highlighted by Kaukauna, which has won four of the last five Division 1 state titles.

It's not just the Ghosts, though, that test Mathe and the Rockets as the conference is regularly stacked with talented hitters.

"There are definitely a lot of pressure situations. I need to be on my A game a lot and I need to get into that right mindset. If I'm hurting, I just need to push

SEE **Senior Standout** ON PAGE 15

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Experienced Rockets aiming high entering new season

Neenah News

The Neenah High School softball team seems to be primed for some big things this season.

Led by one of the top pitchers in the conference and a veteran lineup, the Rockets – who finished second in the Fox Valley Association last season – enter the 2026 season with some lofty expectations.

“We have big goals and high expectations,” commented second-year head coach Adam Hablewitz. “We’ve created an environment/culture of healthy competition and the athletes are working hard every day in practice to win an opportunity.”

Hablewitz admitted that coming into his first season last spring, his coaching staff wasn’t familiar with all of the athletes in the program.

He was pleased with how quickly every-

thing gelled together.

“We truly entered the tryouts and the beginning of the season having to build relationships with the athletes and the athletes quickly bought into the new culture we were trying to promote. The first year was a ton of fun,” Hablewitz commented. “Year two definitely feels different than year one. The athlete/coach relational and trust factor is already established with our returners. We have a number of athletes who we already know what they are capable of and the impact they can have on our season.”

One of the players that Hablewitz and the Rockets will be counting on this season is senior pitcher Kyleigh Mathe.

Mathe has earned all-conference recognition in her first three seasons, including the last two where she was named to the first team. Her talent and experience on the mound will spearhead the Rockets charge this season and set the tone of the rest of the team to follow.

“Kyleigh has been dominant for two seasons for a reason – she’s a relentless competitor who puts in a ton of work and preparation,” Hablewitz commented. “Having that veteran presence in the circle gives our entire defense a level of confidence you can’t coach. Our job this year is to back her up with consistent run support.”

Mathe also helps anchor the lineup for the Rockets, but Neenah has plenty of options when it comes to swinging the bat.

Senior infielder Taytum West, who will also pitch some innings for the Rockets, is a returning first-team all-FVA performer from a year ago, while sophomore infielder Natalie Coffee earned second-team honors last year and sophomore Carli Baltus was an honorable mention flex player a year ago.

The Rockets also return junior center fielder Norah Paider and senior first baseman Kayleigh Johnson to the lineup this year.

Neenah’s roster also got a boost from junior Libby Jahnke, who joined the team after transferring from Winneconne. Jahnke, who plays shortstop, was a first-team all-conference performer last year who batted .560 with eight home runs.

St. Mary Catholic

There is plenty to be excited about around the Zephyrs program this season as St. Mary Catholic is set to field a young, but fairly experienced lineup.

Head coach Jennifer Rodman is excited to have a lot of the same faces in the same places again this season and believes that will help bring the Zephyrs success this season.

“We are looking to be competitive in the Big East conference,” commented Rodman. “We do have a young team again this year, but all of our current sophomores received a lot of game experience last year so

SEE **Softball preview** ON PAGE 15

Neenah hopes to continue success with new-look roster

Neenah News

There will be a lot of new faces seeing time for the Neenah girls lacrosse team this season.

The Rockets graduated a large senior class from last season’s squad that posted a 10-6 record but will look to build on last year’s success with a new-look roster.

“While the team graduated a core group of seniors, the roster remains deep and athletic,” commented head coach Michael

Babbitts. “Neenah is positioned to be a contender in the Bay Valley Conference with the talent to challenge (the) perennial powers. We expect to have a fast-paced, defensive minded team that relies on our transition game to outwork opponents.”

The defense will center around junior Delilah Hahn, who Babbitts called “one of the conference’s most reliable defenders.”

The unit will also get a boost from senior Ainsley LeClair, a Division II Davenport University commit on defense, who will transition from a more attacking position to the defensive side.

The Rockets will have to replace two-time all-conference goalkeeper Elliott Pershing but Babbitts is confident that sophomore Bristol Beschta will be able to step into the role in net.

“We are impressed with her work ethic and growth over the last year,” Babbitts commented. “Her sure hands and quick instincts will pose a challenge for the teams we face this season.”

With LeClair moving to a defensive position, the Rockets will have to replace the bulk of last year’s offensive output.


Junior Josie Mroczkowski is the top re-

turning scorer from last season and will lead Neenah’s efforts to score goals. The Rockets’ offense took a blow when senior Ellery Marsh, who scored 17 goals last year, was lost for the season because of injury.

Neenah will also have to deal with a big turnover in the midfield where many of the starting spots from last year graduated.

Senior Izzy Bugge and juniors Kennedy Loudan and Skye Rajotte are the three most experienced midfielders for the


SEE **Lacrosse preview** ON PAGE 15




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2026 Softball Schedules






ST. MARY CATHOLIC

Mar 30	Howards Grove	(W) 7-2
Apr 7	Wittenberg-Birnamwood	4:30pm
Apr 9	@Shiocton	4:30pm
Apr 11	St. Mary's Springs	10:00am
Apr 11	Sevastopol	2:00pm
Apr 14	@Manitowoc Lutheran	4:30pm
Apr 16	Manitowoc Lutheran	4:30pm
Apr 17	@Manawa	4:30pm
Apr 20	Appleton East	4:30pm
Apr 21	Hilbert	5:00pm
Apr 23	@Hilbert	4:30pm
Apr 28	@Reedsville	5:00pm
Apr 30	Reedsville	5:00pm
May 1	@Iola-Scandinavia	4:30pm
May 5	Mishicot	5:00pm
May 7	@Michicot	5:00pm
May 8	@Xavier	4:30pm
May 12	Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah	5:00pm
May 14	@Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah	5:00pm
May 18	Peshtigo	4:30pm

Home games in bold. All home games played at St. Mary Catholic High School Softball Diamond.



NEENAH

Mar 28	D.C. Everest	(W) 10-3
Apr 7	Hortonville	5:00pm
Apr 9	@Appleton West	5:00pm
Apr 10	@Kimblery	4:30pm
Apr 16	Oshkosh West	5:00pm
Apr 21	@Appleton East	4:30pm
Apr 23	Kaukauna	5:00pm
Apr 24	Appleton North	5:00pm
Apr 25	@Cedarburg	10:00am
Apr 28	@Fond du Lac	5:00pm
Apr 30	Kimberly	5:00pm
May 1	D.C. Everest	6:00pm
May 5	@Appleton North	4:30pm
May 8	Appleton West	5:00pm
May 10	@Kimberly	4:30pm
May 11	Menasha	5:00pm
May 15	Appleton East	5:00pm
May 21	Fond du Lac	5:00pm
June 4	@Kaukauna	4:00pm

Home games in bold. All home games played at Neenah High School Varsity Softball Diamond.


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Serving Neenah & Fox Crossing

Neenah girls squad loaded for another successful run

Neenah News

It was a banner season for the Neenah girls track and field team.

The Rockets showcased a plethora of talented individuals en route to earning a runner-up finish at the WIAA Division 1 state track and field meet in June.

The core of that team that fared so well is returning this season and Neenah should once again have the talent and depth to be a player in the final meet of the season

Track PREVIEW

in La Crosse.

Leading the group of returning athletes will be junior Celia Gentile, who is returning after claiming a pair of state titles last June. Gentile won both the long jump and triple jump at the state meet, while also placing in the top eight in the 100 meters.

Gentile, who finished second at the state meet in the long jump as a freshman, also ran a leg on the Rockets' podium-finishing 400-meter relay team.

Sophomore thrower Emma Severson was dominant last season and has gotten off to a strong start this year after qualifying for state in both the shot put and discus as a freshman. She was the only freshman to qualify for state in both throwing events and took fourth in both.

Senior Payton Schaefer also returns after making the finals of the 400 meters at last year's meet, while fellow seniors Brynn Fox in the sprints and Elsa Gruber in the distance races have qualified as individuals in past season while also helping fuel Rocket relays at the state meet last year.

In addition, seniors Natalie Willes and Eme Olkowski, juniors Natalie Schultz, Kobi Meyer, Anna Benthein and Gabriella Motto and sophomores Izzy Malloy, Elsa Weiland and Kristin Manteufel were all part of relays that qualified for the state meet last season.

Neenah could also get a boost from freshman Sam Zilm, who led the Rockets' state-championship winning cross country team last fall.

The Rockets finished with 46 points at last year's state meet, five behind Arrowhead. The Warhawks also return both of their individual state champi-

ons from last year and the bulk of the athletes who scored points at the state meet.

The Neenah boys will have a good balance of veteran athletes and newcomers making up its lineup this season.

"We have most areas covered but we will need a lot of the younger athletes to take that next step and rise up to help fill out spots we are a little thin at and help push our other athletes to be the best we can be," commented head coach Kurt Krueger. "We have some very solid athletes in most areas which is encouraging, we just need to have others step into the mix."

Some of the returning athletes that will be looked at for consistent points will be seniors Will Kirkman and Nate Kramp in the throws, Evan McKenna in the sprints and Oliver Steiner and Zach Verhagen in the distance races; juniors Jaxen Berkley in the sprints, Daemon Logterman in the sprints and jumps and Drew Sabatke in middle distance; and sophomores Joey Herrin, Evan Mees and Oliver Peterka in the sprints and Owen Fox in the hurdles.

Kirkman was honorable mention all-conference last season in the shot put.

Senior Luke Johnston in the middle distance races, juniors Colton Kreger in the sprints and jumps and Dawson Oberer in the throws, sophomores Arlo Ferguson in the middle distance and Isaac Rangel in the distance races and freshmen Elliott Drake in the distance races and John Munson in the sprints are also expected to contribute.

"I'm very optimistic as the underclassmen have been working hard and learning from our returnees," Krueger commented. "It is certainly going to require a lot of hard work and dedication on their part, but I feel we can certainly put it together and have a successful season."

St. Mary Catholic

Both the Zephyr girls and boys track and field teams will have some athletes to watch as the 2026 season gets into full swing.

The girls will be led by returning state qualifiers in junior Claire Higgins and sophomore Ellie Davel.

Higgins was part of the Zephyrs 3,200-meter relay team that took fourth at state last year and has competed in La Crosse in the event the past two state meets.

Davel qualified for state her freshman year in the 100-meter hurdles and placed ninth last spring and had a strong debut season setting three individual school records and was a part of two record-setting relays. She set the school long jump record at an indoor meet earlier this year.

Junior Moorea Steckling nearly advanced to state in the hurdle events last season and gives the Zephyrs a strong 1-2 punch in those events as well as filling in spots in the sprint relays.

Junior Autumn Crowe will also be back with the St. Mary Catholic girls track squad after missing last year and

will help in the sprints and sprint relays.

"The sprints and hurdles will lead the team in points this year," commented head coach Chad McCartney. "The sprint relays will be very competitive."

The boys will also have some standouts returning led by senior Jacob Hall in the jumps and senior Zeke Hennessy in the throws. Sophomore Brenden Huelsbeck in the sprints also returns and is expected to provide points for the squad.

McCartney said the squad has had an influx of members of the Zephyr football team that has helped boost the numbers which will add depth for the squad.

"We're excited to see the results for both the track team and then the football team in the fall," commented McCartney. "Our boys team will be led by the seniors with many points coming from the field events."

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Prep sports roundup

SOFTBALL

Rockets open season with pair of wins

Neenah got a jumpstart on the 2026 season by winning a pair of games on the road last week.

The Rockets used one big inning to beat D.C. Everest, 10-3, while also pulling out a 5-3 win over Wausau West.

Neenah trailed 2-0 against the Evergreens entering the third inning when the Rockets erupted for eight runs to seize control of the game.

Taytum West, Kayleigh Johnson and Olivia Rasmussen each had two hits in the game for the Rockets, while Libby Jahnke blasted a home run and finished with five RBIs in the game.

Kyleigh Mathe and West combined on a two-hitter in the circle with Mathe striking out five in four innings and West fanning four in three innings.

Against Wausau West, the Rockets

jumped out to a 3-0 lead after two innings and led the entire way in the win.

Jahnke and Hailey Burt each had two hits in the game for the Rockets, while Norah Paider drove in a pair of runs.

Mathe went the distance in the circle for the Rockets, allowing four hits and a walk, while striking out six.

Zephyrs rally for victory in opener

St. Mary Catholic came back from an early 2-0 deficit to claim a 7-2 win over Howards Grove in the team's season-opener on Monday.

Gabby Guerrero struck out eight without walking a batter to earn the win. She allowed just four hits in the game, surrendering solo home runs in both the first and second innings as the Tigers grabbed the lead.

The Zephyrs got on the board in the bottom of the second and then took a 3-2 lead with a pair of runs in the third inning.

St. Mary Catholic added another run in

the fourth before plating three runs in the sixth to seal the win.

Audrey Weber and Scarlett Reichenbacher each had two hits in the game, while Guerrero had a double, three walks and scored two runs. Paxtyn drove in a pair of runs and had a double to highlight the sixth-inning rally.

BASEBALL

Zephyrs roll to win in opener

St. Mary Catholic opened the season with an 18-8 win over Lourdes Academy on Tuesday night.

No other information was available from the game.

TRACK AND FIELD

Rockets shine at Showcase Meet

The Neenah girls racked up a wealth of top-10 finishes to finish among the 26

teams at the Ripon Showcase Meet held at the Willmore Center last Saturday.

Emma Severson highlighted the meet by finishing first in the shot put competition. She finished more than two feet ahead of the rest of the field. Lexi Davis added a fifth place in the event.

Sam Silm added a second place in the 800 meters and then teamed with Izzy Malloy, Olivia Landrath and Natalie Willes to take second in the 3,200-meter relay.

Aubrey Murwar picked up a third place in the high jump, while the foursome of Kate Lenninger, Molly Snider, Mirella Taschner and Kobi Meyer were fourth in the 800-meter relay.

Other top-10 finishers for the girls were: Malloy, seventh in the 1,600 meters; Anna Berthein, eighth in the 800 meters; Elsa Gruber, eighth in the 1,600 meters; Tachner, tied for eighth in the high jump; Elise Braaten, ninth in 3,200 meters; and Resa Goethel, ninth in the pole vault.

SEE **Prep roundup** ON PAGE 15

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Lacrosse preview

FROM PAGE 12

Rockets and will be counted on to lead the rest of the young roster.

Junior Payten Schneider and sophomores Lola Johnson, Clara Voight, Kendra Gloude-mans, Lauren Fourbes and Sidney Mullins are also expected to contribute to the midfield.

“We are really impressed with this group of young midfielders,” Babbitts commented. “Though there is a large turnover at this position, these players are stepping into their varsity roles with enthusiasm and we are really excited to see how the season unfolds at this position.”

With the lack of proven scorers returning, finding an offensive chemistry will be a key for the Rockets this season.

But Neenah will also be counting on its young defense to help keep teams in check and give the offense time to develop.

“The Rockets need our new wave of attackers and midfielders to mesh quickly,” Babbitts commented. “Success will also hinge on our defensive consistency. If the defensive unit can maintain the ‘bend-but-don’t-break’ style we showed last season, Neenah will be in a position to win close games on our schedule. Finally, staying healthy through a rigorous conference slate will be essential to another successful season.”

Neenah boys

Neenah graduated the bulk of their goal scoring from last year, but with some of its top players on the defense returning, the Rockets will look to rely on that group to shoulder some of the load in the team’s success.

Senior defender Reshawn Vaughn is one of the top defenders in the conference and will anchor a unit that has both experience and depth. Sophomore Ian McAvoy is expected to take on a more prominent role with the group after earning regular min-

utes as a freshman.

Another key defensive returnee will be junior goalkeeper Isaac Scholl, who played the majority of the minutes in net last year for the Rockets. Scholl registered one shutout last season and head coach Eric Marsh believes he will be improved this season.

“(Isaac) had a strong sophomore season,” Marsh commented. “We are looking for him to add more depth to a stout defense.”

Offensively, there may be some question marks after graduating the bulk of their goal scoring from last season.

However, the Rockets do return potent scorer senior midfielder Drew Green, who tied for the team lead with 39 goals and finished the year with 50 points.

Sophomore Jude Marsh, who scored 19 goals and finished with 43 points last year, will be one of the attacking players counted on to play a bigger role this season.

“Our younger players will need to step up and score enough goals to match the shutdown capabilities of arguably the best defense in the conference,” Marsh commented. “There will be a handful of new faces on the varsity roster, but the majority have been there before and I think that experience will shine through as we have another season among the state’s best teams.”

Neenah has racked up double-digit wins in each of the first two seasons that lacrosse has been a WIAA sanctioned sport. The Rockets lost in the inaugural state title game in 2024 and last season reached sectionals before falling to eventual state champion Waunakee.

Marsh believes this year’s squad can produce the same level of success.

“The boys pride themselves on sharing the ball and going to battle for each other, so as long as that stays as the mentality, we will be successful,” Marsh commented. “We look to make yet another run at winning the conference as well as going deep into the state playoffs, with a state championship in mind.”

the top individual finishes for Neenah, with each securing a fifth place. Schiedermayer in the 60-meter hurdles and Oliver Peterka in the long jump were each sixth.

Other top-10 finishes for the Rockets were: Elliott Drake, seventh in the 800 meters; Isaac Rangel, seventh in the 3,200 meters; Gideon Benner, 10th in the 1,600 meters; and the 800-meter relay team.

The Rockets finished seventh in the final team standings.

Zephyr girls compete at indoor meet

Ellie Davel picked up a pair of third places to lead St. Mary Catholic at the UW-Oshkosh Small School girls meet on Tuesday.

Davel finished third in the 60-meter hurdles and then joined Autumn Crowe, Moorea Steckling and Lucy Norville to finish third in the 800-meter relay.

Marissa Hahn added an eighth place in the shot put for St. Mary Catholic.

Senior Standout

FROM PAGE 11

through it,” Mathe said. “All of these teams are super good. We are not guaranteed to win against any of them so you just really have to show up. If you are not feeling, you need to find a way to be feeling it.”

Mathe already has her future in the sport somewhat mapped out as she plans to attend Bryant & Stratton College in Wauwatosa next year.

She will study nursing at the school and pitch for the Bobcats.

“That school and sport balance is im-

portant to me. They seemed to have a lot of what I wanted so it seemed like a perfect match for me,” Mathe said. “We’ll see where that takes me.”

Bryant & Stratton College is a two-year school so Mathe could potentially have two years of college eligibility left after her tenure there.

Whether or not she will use those two seasons remains to be seen and she said that when the time comes, then she will make that decision.

“I’ll go as far as my body takes me really. I’m getting old and my joints are definitely feeling it,” Mathe said. “I still love the sport, so if they take me that far then definitely I will want to keep playing.”

Softball preview

FROM PAGE 12

they will be ready to contribute.”

St. Mary Catholic will also have a pair of seniors to rely on for leadership in outfielders Sammi Weiss and Audrey Weber. Weiss, a second-team all-conference performer last season, was the team’s leading hitter last season with a .359 average and 15 RBIs.

Sophomore Scarlett Reichenbacher will round out the projected outfield for the Zephyrs, while junior Ainslie Liddy and sophomores Paxtyn Trinkner and Emmi Weiss return to the infield.

Freshmen Ila Moder and Breanna Neibert will split time at catcher and first base for the Zephyrs.

St. Mary Catholic also returns sophomore pitcher Gabby Guerrero from last season. Guerrero pitched a majority of the innings for the Zephyrs and will have that year of experience under her belt in the circle this season.

“Our players will see a lot of time in the same positions this year so having that consistency will really help the team to be successful on the field,” Rodman commented. “I believe another strength we will have is our power at the plate as hitters. With that power, we are hoping to manufacture a lot of runs each game.”

Prep roundup

FROM PAGE 14

Neenah also took sixth in the 1,600-meter relay.

For the boys, Oliver Steiner in the 800 meters and Oliver Peterka in the long jump led the way with eighth-place finishes. Dawson Oberer added a 10th place in the shot put.

The Rockets also took seventh in the 3,200-meter relay.

Relay team leads Rocket finishers at invite

Neenah’s 1,600-meter relay team of Luke Johnston, Evan McKenna, Spencer Schiedermayer and John Munson sped to a third-place finish to lead the Rockets at the Redhawk Challenge Meet on Tuesday at the Willmore Center.

Dawson Oberer in the shot put and Daelmen Logterman in the triple jump earned

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Legal Notice

STATE OF WISCONSIN, CIRCUIT COURT WINNEBAGO COUNTY

IN THE MATTER OF THE NAME CHANGE OF: Joclyen Skyler Roundtree By (Petitioner) Joclyen Skyler Roundtree

Notice and Order for Name Change Hearing Case No. 2026CV000272

NOTICE IS GIVEN: A Petition was filed asking to change the name of the person listed above:

From: First – Joclyen Middle – Skyler Last – Roundtree To: First – Joclyen Middle – Skyler

Last – Schwartz Birth Certificate: First – Joclyen Middle – Skyler Last – Roundtree

IT IS ORDERED:

This Petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Winnebago County, State of Wisconsin:

Judge’s Name: Michael D. Rust Place: Winnebago Courthouse, Rm 410 415 Jackson St. Oshkosh, WI 54901 Date: April 13, 2026 Time: 3:30 PM

If you require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to participate in the court process, please call 920-236-4811 prior to the scheduled court date. Please note that the court does not provide transportation.

NOTICE TO NEWSPAPER AND PETITIONER:

Notice of this hearing shall be given by publication as a Class 3 notice for three weeks in a row prior to the date of the hearing in the following newspaper Neenah News.

BY THE COURT:

DATE SIGNED: March 13, 2026 Winnebago County Circuit Branch I Runs: March 20, 2026, March 27, 2026 and April 3, 2026.

WNAXLP

STATE OF WISCONSIN, CIRCUIT COURT WINNEBAGO COUNTY

IN THE MATTER OF THE NAME CHANGE OF: Ruby Lynn Rivera By (Petitioner) Heather Lynn Fremling

Notice and Order for Name Change Hearing Case No. 2026CV000300

NOTICE IS GIVEN:

A Petition was filed asking to change the name of the person listed above:

From: First – Ruby Middle – Lynn Last – Rivera To: First – Ruby Middle – Lynn Last – Rivera

IT IS ORDERED:

This Petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Winnebago County, State of Wisconsin:

Judge’s Name: Michael D. Rust Place: Winnebago Courthouse, Rm 410 415 Jackson St. Oshkosh, WI 54901 Date: May 1, 2026 Time: 11:30 a.m.

If you require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to participate in the court process, please call 920-236-4848 prior to the scheduled court date. Please note that the court does not provide transportation.

NOTICE TO NEWSPAPER AND PETITIONER:

Notice of this hearing shall be given by publication as a Class 3 notice for three weeks in a row prior to the date of the hearing in the following newspaper Neenah News.

BY THE COURT:

DATE SIGNED: March 27, 2026 Winnebago County Circuit Branch I Runs: April 3, 2026, April 10, 2026 and April 17, 2026.

WNAXLP

ATLAS

A semi-annual magazine reaching over 55,000 mailboxes in Oshkosh, Winneconne & Neenah

This Go-To Guide will deliver your advertising message, local content and Events Calendar to over 90,000 readers! Reserve your space today!

Pub Date	Ad Space/Copy Deadline	Material Close Deadline
May 13, 2026	Wednesday, April 22	Wednesday, April 28
October 14, 2026	Wednesday, September 23	Wednesday, September 30

Kid Scoop

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE
 Get puzzle answers, recipes and more at www.kidscoop.com
 © 2026 by Vicki Whiting, Editor Jeff Schinkel, Graphics Vol. 42, No. 18

WAIT! Don't do this page alone. If this page looks **TOO HARD**, find an older buddy to help you. If it looks **EASY**, find a younger buddy and help them!



The Bunny Buddies' Giggle Garden

Why did Bart Bunny get arrested for running through the farmer's garden?

Use the clues to fill in the missing letters. The letters in the second vertical row reveal the punchline to this riddle:

How does Brianna Bunny stay healthy?

1.	C				
2.		A			
3.				Z	
4.			E		
5.	M				
6.		B			
7.				E	
8.					N
9.			H		

- CLUES**
- Your teacher writes on a blackboard with this.
 - What ghosts like to do to houses.
 - A reward for winning.
 - Farmers plant these to grow crops.
 - Another word for engine.
 - The opposite of below.
 - What you are when you need rest.
 - A very large expanse of sea.
 - What is left after something burns.

Standards Link: Vocabulary; Spell grade-level appropriate words correctly.

What did Bella Bunny say to the last bite of her carrot?

Circle every third letter to reveal the answer.

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

- 13 = STARTS
- 9 = SPOON
- 16 = TWENTY
- 5 = HE
- 2 = COOKS
- 11 = RECIPE
- 6 = ONIONS
- 21 = STEW
- 3 = WITH
- 8 = FOUR
- 19 = LEMONS

Use the code to answer the above riddle.

7 = A 2 = E 6 = I 5 = R 1 = U
 13 = B 15 = G 14 = N 11 = S 10 = V
 9 = D 8 = H 12 = P 21 = T 3 = W

Do the math to reveal the answer to this riddle:

How does Bosco Bunny make gold soup?

15 - 10 = _____
 21 - 8 = _____
 9 - 6 = _____
 24 - 8 = _____ 36 - 28 = _____
 26 - 12 = _____

Standards Link: Number Sense: Calculate sums and differences.

Why did BayLey Bunny swim across the Atlantic?

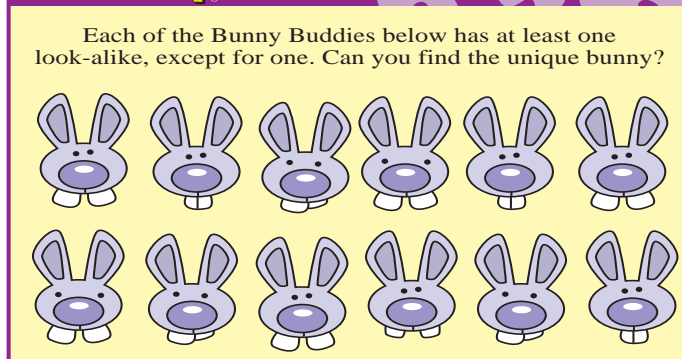


The Bunny Buddies have hidden marshmallow chickies all over this page. How many can you find in two minutes? Now have your buddy try. Who found the most?

Eggstra! Eggstra!
Scrambled Easter Eggs
 Look through the newspaper for letters that spell "Easter Eggs." Cut them out. With your buddy, take turns mixing up the letters and spelling a new word. A player gets one point for each letter used.

Standards Link: Spelling: Recognize common spelling patterns.

Kid Scoop Puzzler



Each of the Bunny Buddies below has at least one look-alike, except for one. Can you find the unique bunny?

How do you catch a unique bunny? ɹɹ ɹɹ ɹɹ ɹɹ ɹɹ ɹɹ

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

Double Double Word Search

ARRESTED
 GHOSTS
 CARROT
 BUNNY
 ENGINE
 GARDEN
 REVEAL
 SEA
 EGGS
 SWIM
 RIDDLE
 PAGE
 LAST
 NEW
 USE

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

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

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

Funny Filler

Have a buddy give you each type of word to fill in the blanks. Then, read the story aloud for lots of laughs!

Growing Problems

"This can't be right," said Baxter Bunny as he looked at his garden. Instead of a row of carrots, there were _____ sprouting

from the _____. He used a _____ to dig into the _____.

Bobbi Bunny saw her brother carrying a _____ basket of _____.

"How will we make _____ stew for dinner with nothing but _____?"

Baxter said, "Don't worry, Sis. I have a _____ idea!" He painted a sign that said:

"Buy one _____, get a _____ FREE!"

_____ came from miles around as word spread. Baxter and Bobbi soon had enough money

to buy a _____ of their favorite _____.

"Who knew there was a market for _____?" said Bobbi as they walked to the _____.

Standards Link: Spelling: Recognize common spelling patterns.

Write On!

Easter Bunny Spotted

Imagine you are a reporter and someone has reported seeing the Easter Bunny in your neighborhood. Write a news article about this. Be sure to tell *Who, What, When, Where* and *Why*.

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