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Lincoln County A&L Committee selects broker from RFP's

County Board to consider A&L's recommendation and decide whether to list Pine Crest for sale

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

On June 28, 2023, the Administrative & Legislative (A&L) Committee of the Lincoln County Board met to review three proposals received from interested commercial brokers in response to the County's request for proposals (RFP).

The members of the Committee discussed the contents of each proposal and spoke with representatives in attendance via video from two of the brokers that

See PINE CREST page 5



Perennials, flowering annuals, herbs, and other live plants are available from this vendor. Some vendors also offer fresh-cut flowers as they are in seasonal bloom. **Tina L. Scott photos.**

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Left: You might be very surprised to discover what you can purchase from local vendors at Merrill's Farmer's Market ... like handcrafted jewelry for instance. **Right:** Several vendors offer locally canned jellies and jams for sale.

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Left: Area farmers offer their produce for sale on Wednesday and Saturday mornings during the summer at Normal Park. Smiles are free. **Right:** From radishes to rhubarb, fresh fruits and vegetables are in abundance at the Merrill Farmer's Market at Normal Park on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, along with handcrafted items, baked goods, berries in season, and much more.

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Above: "You know it's good when your hands turn pink." **Right:** Engleberry Farms north of Merrill on Hwy. 107 has been open mornings for strawberry picking as the berries are ripe. This past weekend, ripe strawberries were abundant and ready to be picked. **Kayla Gabler photos.**

Oatmeal Raisin Spice Cookies \$125 24 ct.	Uncooked Parmesan Herb Chicken Fritters \$399 /lb.	Uncooked Steakhouse Chicken Breast Tenders \$369 /lbs.
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Merrill and Lincoln County businesses benefit from Bounceback Grants

BY TINA L. SCOTT EDITOR

In the last two years, business has been booming in Merrill and in Lincoln County. New businesses have emerged to fill vacant retail and commercial spaces, providing for new places to shop, new services, more jobs, and a greater variety of options for area residents and businesses to enjoy. This benefits local residents and could also help to attract others to the area to fill jobs, purchase property and pay taxes that provide for necessary services, and help increase declining student enrollment for the school district. It also means more visitors to the community, which benefits the area in many ways when money is spent locally. Sales tax revenue increases for Lincoln County and, when someone travels to the community to visit one business, they are more likely to frequent other area businesses on that trip, as well.



Mark Raymer and Ryan Peacock utilized the Badger Main Street Bounceback Grant program to help renovate an historical space on the west side of Merrill and turn it into the Easy Wash, Merrill's newest laundromat. Tina L. Scott photos.

Main Street Bounceback Grants

This booming business growth has been bolstered by free money designed to reignite Wisconsin's downtown business shopping districts and local economies after the pandemic.

In April 2021, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) announced the introduction of Main Street Bounceback Grants, with \$50 million from the American Rescue Plan Act put into the program, and in May 2022, an injection of additional federal funding added another \$25 million to the program. The program was originally set

to end in June 2022, but as a result of the additional funds, the program was extended to the end of December 2022.

The program ultimately offered new or existing businesses the chance to qualify for a \$10,000 one-time grant if they purchased a vacant commercial space at least 400 square feet in size or started a new lease for such a space between Jan. 1, 2021, and Dec. 31, 2022. Franchises and certain other business classifications were not eligible, helping to focus the grant monies on small independent businesses.

At the conclusion of the program, according to the WEDC, 9,429 businesses in Wisconsin had received one of the \$10,000 grants.

Locally, 36 businesses in Lincoln County benefited from Main Street Bounceback Grants, adding \$36,000 to our County's business community.

Of those 36 businesses, 25 of those businesses were in Merrill, infusing \$25,000 into the Merrill business community, and 11 Tomahawk businesses received a grant, infusing \$11,000 into their business district.

New and expanding Merrill businesses

The following Merrill businesses received Badger Main Street Bounceback Grants:

- Priority Medical Partners Direct
- Auntie Ray's Coffee House LLC
- Merrill Chiropractic
- Northside Auto
- Raymer's Westside Laundry
- Rubies & Diamonds Boutique LLC



Auntie Ray's Coffee House is Merrill launched their business on E. First St. in Merrill with the help of a Badger Main Street Bounceback Grant. The business has been so successful since its launch that it will soon be expanding.

- Henna North LLC
- FunTime Action Center LLC
- Dragons, Daggers 'n Games
- Tranquil Times Wellness LLC
- Strive 4 Life LLC
- Fick Bricks
- Systemic Solutions dba D's Dogs
- Ballyhoos Restaurant and Tavern
- Victoria's Floral
- The 710 Smoke Shop
- Greek Stop
- Wisco Upgrades LLC
- Klug Financial Solutions
- The Gathering Table
- The Pet Spa LLC
- Muddy Paws Dog Wash LLC
- B's Nest
- The Cosmo Theatre Inc.
- Ziebell Door Company

The majority of the grant recipients were brand new businesses at the time of their applications, and the

\$10,000 grants helped them open their businesses and/or made moving to a retail location possible.

Existing businesses that qualified for grants used the funds to physically expand their business interests/locations in Merrill.

The Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce assisted some applicants with the process.

Tomahawk business offerings expand

The following Tomahawk businesses received Badger Main Street Bounceback Grants:

- WAQ, LLC
- HMM Boutique
- Tomahawk Tattoo & Tan
- CrestPointe Properties LLC
- The Knot Haus Gift Gallery & Craft Supplies
- Frokjer Law, LLC
- Big Bear Mini Golf & Ice Cream
- Allegiance Employment
- Tomahawk Community Thrift Shop
- The Community Project
- Powersports Repair and More

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission assisted with evaluating grant applications and disbursing the funds to qualifying businesses.

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WA Rainier Cherries \$3.99 lb.
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Spiral Ham Bone In Frozen 10 lbs. ONLY 89¢ a lb.	American Cheese Loaf - Processed 5 lbs. ONLY \$5.99	Chicken Nuggets Breaded - Uncooked Frozen 32 oz. ONLY \$2.49
Brats Uncooked Beer - Frozen 45 oz. ONLY \$3.99	Mozzarella Cheese Whole Milk 16 oz. ONLY \$1.49	Peaches Diced IQF - Frozen 30 lbs. ONLY \$39.99
Hot Dogs Chicken - Pork - Beef Frozen 12 oz. ONLY 99¢	Monterey Jack Cheese Habanero Garlic Herb 2 lbs. ONLY \$1.99 a lb.	Onion Rings Battered - Frozen 32 oz. ONLY \$5.89
Pork Sausage Links Fully Cooked Frozen 9.6 oz. ONLY 99¢	Cheddar Sharp Cheese Sliced Processed 5 lbs. ONLY \$8.99	Pork Sausage Original - Frozen 6 lbs. ONLY \$5.99
Ham Boneless Deli Style - Frozen 11 lbs. ONLY \$1.29 a lb.	Bacon Sliced - Frozen 15 lbs. ONLY \$1.69 a lb.	Smoked Sausage Jalapeno Cheddar Frozen 6 lbs. ONLY \$1.99
Black Forest Ham Thin Sliced - Frozen 16 oz. ONLY \$1.49	Tilapia Fillets Skinless Boneless Frozen 32 oz. ONLY \$5.89	Pork Crumbles Fully Cooked - Frozen 5 lbs. ONLY 99¢ a lb.
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Pet of the Week

Meet Marquis. He is very sweet and loves to be around people. We are told he is great with kids, cats and small dogs. He knows how to sit, lay down and come. Marquis loves to get attention and will need a family that doesn't mind the hound talking. He is housebroken and loves to go for walks. Won't someone come and take this handsome 4 year old boy home soon?

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Pine Crest Nursing Home receives 5-star rating

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

On June 29, 2023, North Central Health Care (NCHC) announced Pine Crest Nursing Home had been awarded a five-star rating by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for outstanding care and service.

"The five-star rating is a testament to the tireless efforts of our dedicated team at Pine Crest, who work diligently day in and day out to provide compassionate and person-centered service to each resident," said Gary Olsen, Executive Director at North Central Health Care. "Achieving

a five-star rating is a significant accomplishment, as it signifies that Pine Crest consistently meets or exceeds the highest standards in every aspect of care provision."

CMS created the five-star quality rating system to help consumers, their families, and caregivers compare nursing homes more easily and to help identify areas about which they might want to ask questions, a press release from NCHC said. On the Nursing Home Care Compare website (<https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare>), nursing homes are rated with a 1-star rating being the lowest and a 5-star rating being the highest. "Nursing

homes with 5 stars are considered to have much above average quality and nursing homes with 1 star are considered to have quality much below average," the release said. Each nursing home receives an overall rating, in addition to individual ratings for health inspections, staffing, and quality measures including overall resident satisfaction.

"We are thrilled to have received a five-star rating, which reflects our team's commitment to delivering exceptional care and service to our residents and community," said

See RATING page 6

St. Stephens UCC offers grants to community groups for new projects

St. Stephens UCC in Merrill announced they will offer grants to community groups from the area that would like to start new projects.

The church received a \$1,500 Catalyst Grant from the Wisconsin Conference UCC that they can, in turn, offer to local groups to help them kick off new initiatives and projects that will benefit the underserved in Merrill, they said in a press release.

"The belief behind Catalyst Grants is that a lot of good ideas never get

tried because a local group lacks just the few hundred dollars it might take to start something great for the community," the release said. "Catalyst Grants intend to fill that need to help get new ideas moving."

Grant applications are available on the church's website: www.ststephensucc.net. Grant applications should be submitted to the church no later than Aug. 31, 2023.

"Previous grant recipients have started support groups, neighborhood

garden initiatives, educational programs, and other 'Love Your Neighbor' projects," the release said.

Winners will be notified by Sept. 30 and will be celebrated at the Food for Kids "Love Your Neighbor" Fundraising Banquet on Oct. 31 at Les and Jim's.

For more information on the grant or on the Food for Kids Fundraising Banquet, call the church office at 715.536.7322 or email church@ststephensucc.net.

Air quality concerns from Candian wildfire smoke cancels City Band concert

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

The Merrill City Band's first scheduled concert in the gazebo at Normal Park, which was set for June 28, 2023, was canceled due to air quality concerns.

"We really wanted to play and were very disappointed," said Merrill City Band Director Linda Becker that Wednesday evening via email. "The air quality has been in the unhealthy zone for days, but especially yesterday and today. A lot of our

members are older, as are lots of our audience members, and many have various heart and lung or other health issues. It was deemed unsafe for them to be outside."

"If band members could just breathe normally, it wouldn't be quite as bad," she said, "but they take about 300-500 REALLY DEEP breaths per concert. I even had some healthier, younger players that were concerned."

Many area citizens with asthma, heart issues, lung issues, autoimmune

diseases, and other conditions have remained indoors for much of last week, and some said they hadn't left their homes or stepped outside in days.

"We told our Facebook followers already on Monday that cancelation was a possibility," Becker said.

"I belong to an email group of community band members all around the country," she said. "Almost every group in the Midwest dealing with the air quality conditions either canceled or moved their concerts

indoors this week."

The Merrill City Band is hopeful they will get back to their regular performances now that air quality has improved, but weather reports suggest the blue skies and white clouds may be short-lived and Wisconsin hasn't seen the last of the smoky skies from the wildfires that continue to burn in Canada.

E. 10th Street reconstruction project to begin

**E. 10th Street
(Center Ave. - Lake Street)**

The M2023-01 utility and road reconstruction project is set to begin Wednesday, July 5, 2023, according to the City of Merrill Public Works Department.

Traffic will be limited to local traffic only, and there will be days when access will be limited.

The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of August, and garbage will be picked up on the regular schedule.

Lincoln County road construction to begin July 10

Lincoln County Highway Commissioner, John Hanz, announced road construction will start July 10, 2023, through August 31, 2023, for the following roads:

- CTH L
 - CTH S - East of 51
 - Prairie Rd. in the Town of Merrill
 - Meyers Rd. in the Town of King
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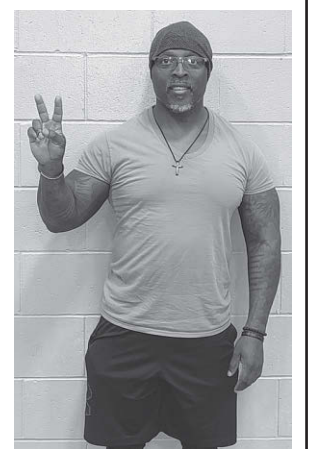


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OBITUARIES



Anne Theresa Ashbeck, 77, passed away unexpectedly on June 24, 2023. She was surrounded by her family. Anne was born October 12, 1945, to Nicholas and Eudora Dirx of Gleason, Wisconsin. After graduating from Merrill Senior High School, she became a respiratory therapist and worked throughout her career at Merrill and Wausau Hospitals.

While working at Merrill Hospital, she met her husband, Norbert "Nubs" Ashbeck, and they married on April 19, 1969. Together they had three children: Paula (Eric) Doty,

Chad (Jenny) Ashbeck, and Renee (Chad) Krueger and resided the remainder of her life in Merrill, Wisconsin. Anne was devoted to her family and loved spending as much time as possible with her children and grandchildren: Kira (23), Carson (22), Camden (18), Kendall (20), and Charlee (11). She could be found attending all of the sporting events, concerts, shows, and graduations of her children and grandchildren throughout their lives. She also valued several lifelong friendships and had a special bond with neighbors Cory and Nancy McCorkle and their children Caleb (21) and Connor (17).

For the past 25 years, Anne enjoyed traveling around the country with friends Herm and JoAnne Zunker, sewing, knitting, and reading. She was an avid lover of nature and music and had a passion for eagles, tracking baby eagles from Norfolk, Virginia through the internet. She also enjoyed watching the many birds who visited her flower beds, especially hummingbirds and cardinals.

She was preceded in death by her parents and siblings Daniel and Thomas Dirx.

She is survived by all of her children, grandchildren, and siblings Nicholas Dirx, Peter (Bonnie) Dirx, Patience Dirx, Mary (Al) Justice, Casey (Sue) Dirx, John (Rose) Dirx, and Timothy (Gail) Dirx.

Her family wishes to extend their gratitude to the Merrill Fire Department, Merrill Police Department, Wausau Aspirus Hospital, and University Hospital in Madison for the excellent care she received during her last days with us. Her family will be forever grateful to the family members and friends who were able to be with them in person or spirit, as well as for all of the thoughts and prayers they received.

Sometimes irreverent, sometimes feisty, sometimes mischievous, but always fiercely protective, thoughtful, and loving, Anne with an "e" will be dearly missed.

A private celebration of life will be held in Merrill in the fall, her favorite time of year.

Waid Funeral Home & Cremation Service of Merrill is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences are encouraged and may be made at www.waidfuneral.com.

PUBLISHER'S LETTER

That Old Gang of Mine

Dear Reader,

The day has turned the corner at midnight. The moon pierces through the treetops to a haven by a lake with a name that doesn't matter. The frogs are croaking their own throaty melody, an orchestral composition with an earthy refrain. A lone wolf howls in the distance.

In that rough-hewn setting, I wish I was with that old gang of mine, toasting the goodness of life with a merry libation. We would dialogue on truth and beauty, uncover the mysteries of life, and enjoy another evening of fellowship. We might even yowl at the moon, recapturing the primal energy of our earliest forebears.

But no one is here. Those boon companions are gone to far-away places. I'm for once and forever on my own without that old gang of mine. To be honest, I miss them, feeling cheated by the merciless passage of time that has left me with only the memory of their camaraderie and love.



PATRICK J. WOOD
Publisher

Author of "Dear Reader" and "Tapestry of Love and Loss"

Risk of pavement buckling rises with temperatures, WisDOT says

WISCONSIN – Hot temperatures in Wisconsin could create conditions for pavement buckling, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is advising motorists to be alert and take extra caution.

WisDOT said pavement can buckle when the weather quickly goes from cool to very hot.

"This causes slabs of pavement to expand and push against one another," WisDOT stated. "If the pressure becomes great enough, the pavement can buckle and create unexpected bumps or dips."

While it's difficult to predict if, or where, buckling may occur, WisDOT offered these tips:

- Slow down, buckle up and focus your full attention on the roadway.
- Watch for slowing traffic and be ready to move over for all roadside workers, including highway crews as they repair damaged pavement.
- Before your trip, check www.511wi.gov for the latest information on any incidents or delays. Live video feeds are now available via the 511 Wisconsin traffic cameras.
- If necessary, report serious pavement issues by calling 911. Be ready to provide specific location information.

Learn more by watching WisDOT's animation on pavement buckles at www.tinyurl.com/thybvm6z.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome letters to the Editor, a chance for members of the community to comment on issues of concern to them. All letters must be original, not duplications of letters addressed to public officials or written by others. The views and opinions expressed are those of the letter writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of this publication, its publishers, Editor, or staff.

TO THE EDITOR:

A Conditional Use Permit has been filed with Lincoln County to put in a railyard owned by Prairie River Junction, LLC on Duginski Rd., right across from Doering Dr.

The fact the permitting process has gotten this far is unconscionable for a number of very important reasons:

1. It is a fact, railyards decrease property values considerably and in a county with a low tax base, this could be financially disastrous for the county revenue.
2. There have been approximately 3 train derailments a day in 2023 thus far, so over 500, with the majority in railyards. Trains often carry very hazardous chemicals for both land and air. This proposed parcel sits approx. 50 ft. from a wetland that drains directly into Prairie River then into the Wisconsin River, that provides the water for the town of Merrill and all communities downstream. The estimated cost to clean up the derailment in Palestine, Ohio, alone is approximately \$375 million dollars. Though the railroads are responsible for the cleanup, Lincoln County doesn't have the funds to reimburse the property owners for their chemically poisoned land that is no longer habitable [should a derailment occur]. This property is also within blocks of the administration building and police department
3. The Commissioners took an oath and were bonded to guarantee decisions would be in the best interest of the citizens they serve upon taking office.
4. This project should not be near homes and watershed areas and provides zero benefit to the community.

– Kerrie Kanda
Merrill, Wis.

TO THE EDITOR:

Nursing homes - public or private?

I have visited several close friends, relatives, my grandmother and mother, over the past many years at Pinecrest Nursing Home. I have spent a considerable amount of time there and never observed mistreatment or lack of care or consideration or impatience toward residents by staff. Nor have I heard a single complaint by patients.

A psychiatrist from Wausau made a visit to my mother to see if he could prescribe medication that would help her, suffering from alzheimers, to make a better adjustment there. When I shared my opinion regarding service provided by staff, his fitting response was, "they are angels here".

So take your pick for your own future nursing home care: Pine Crest or a private for-profit nursing home that could possibly provide substandard if not abominable care.

To keep Pine Crest a county institution, sign the petition at Westside Grocery, Johnsons Gifts, Cenex near Post Office, or St. Vincent de Paul.

– Bill Ritter
Merrill, Wis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY:

- * Letters must be 250 words or less. (There will be no exceptions to this. Any letter longer than 250 words will not be printed.)
 - * The writer must include their full name, complete address, and a phone number where he/she can be easily reached for verification. Phone numbers and street addresses will not be published, but will be used for verification purposes, if necessary. Letters must be signed and the name, city, and state will be printed.
 - * Letters may be edited for style, grammar, and length. Form letters or those we determine to be libelous or slanderous will not be accepted. Any letter deemed derogatory, inflammatory, or involving vulgar language will not be published. We reserve all rights to reject material submitted to this publication.
 - * Letters will be published on a "first come, first served" basis. Any letters which we are unable to publish in the printed newspaper may be run online at www.merrillfotonews.com and/or may be printed in the paper at a later date.
 - * In fairness to all, and due to space constraints, there is a limit of two letters per year from an individual writer. Additional letters may be submitted to our Paid Letters to the Editor column and will require payment in full prior to publication at the same rate as Political Letters to the Editor (see policy below).
- POLITICAL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY:**
- All letters submitted as an endorsement for a political candidate, referendum, or political agenda will carry the same guidelines as above; however, they will be charged \$40.00 per letter of up to 250 words in length. Longer political letters will be accepted but will be charged \$10.00 per additional 50 words. All political letters must be prepaid prior to printing. Letters to the Editor will not be accepted from candidates running for election or representatives of an organization endorsing their own referendum, as these are clearly advertisements and not opinion letters; those submissions will be referred to our Advertising Department to be run as paid ads.

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Park City Credit Union Tomahawk branch held a Share The Care event in May. Staff and members collected donations for the Lincoln County Humane Society.
Submitted photo.

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2023 Council Grounds State Park ninth annual photography contest

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

The Friends of Council Grounds State Park are again holding their ninth annual amateur photography contest in 2023, and they want to encourage visitors to Council Grounds State Park (CGSP), located just north of Merrill, to “come and enjoy the park and remember to bring a camera along and take photos for the contest.”

Park visitors in previous years have captured some wonderfully unexpected and candid images of animals in the park and people enjoying Council Grounds, as well as great images of plants and landscapes, to enter into the contest.

Rules

There is no cost to enter and the rules are few and easy to follow. All photos entered into this year’s contest must have been taken within the boundaries of Council Grounds State Park between Aug. 1, 2021, and July 31, 2023, (a two-year period), and each person can enter only one photograph, so pick your best image to enter. Professional photographers and anyone who sells their photos are not eligible.

Images must be in color, submitted as high resolution digital JPEG files, emailed to: cgphotos@hotmail.com, and may only be submitted between July 1 and July 31, 2023. Keep images at their original aspect ratio (don’t crop them into weird thin photos) for best results. No panoramic, digitally enhanced, or altered photos. Submit images that can be enlarged and clearly printed in an 8x10” format.

Photos can be submitted in one of four contest categories, so submit your photo in the best category for your photo’s subject matter.

Photo contest categories are:

- Plants (includes wildflowers, trees, shrubs, fungi, berries, cones, etc.)
- Wildlife (includes animals, birds, insects, etc.—anything found walking, crawling, hopping, or flying in CGSP.)
- People using the park (includes people engaged in any activity in the park—walking, hiking, cooking, swimming, biking, fishing, exploring, just relaxing,

etc.). (Please do NOT include photos with recognizable faces of people.)

- Landscapes (includes broad scenes, sunsets, sunrises, rivers, etc., but remember, no panoramic images.) (This is the most popular category.)

Each photo submitted must include:

- Contest category
- Date taken
- Photographer’s name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number

By entering the contest, photographers verify the image is their own and agree to have their submitted photos used/copied/displayed/published (without fee or compensation) in conjunction with the contest, including in local publications, in articles relating to this or future contests; online at the Wisconsin Parks Website, on the Friends Facebook page, etc., and displayed in the Park contact station; on cards or postcards for sale by the Friends Group; and/or saved or re-used for any future purpose by the Friends of Council Grounds State Park group.

Any photo that does not comply with the contest rules, is not properly labeled, or is deemed inappropriate in any way by the Friends of Council Grounds State Park Board will be rejected.

Contest judges, DNR employees, and Friends Group members and their families are not eligible to enter.

Complete rules are available online at: dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/councilgrounds/photocontest or on the Friends of Council Grounds State Park Facebook page. Copies of complete rules are also available at the Park office and in the entryway at the Merrill Chamber of Commerce office.

Judging

After July 31, a panel of judges from the Friends Group will narrow the entries down to the top three in each category. Photographer names will not be revealed to the judges. Any category with fewer than eight entries may be canceled.

The three finalist photos in each category will then go to public voting to determine the final first-and second-place winners in each category. Public voting will take place from Aug. 15 through Aug. 31, 2023. Finalist



This photo of a developing tadpole was entered into the Wildlife category in a previous year’s Friends of Council Grounds photography contest. **Gregg Warning photo.**



This photo, though not a contest entry, is a colorful example of the kind of image that would make a great entry in the Plant category. **Laurie Nikolai-Svetlik photo.**

images may be viewed on the Friends of Council Grounds State Park Facebook page, at the Park contact station, and at the T.B. Scott Free Library in Merrill. The public will vote on their favorite single image on the Friends of Council Grounds State Park Facebook page or by emailing their vote for their favorite image to cgphotos@hotmail.com. Only one vote per person. Duplicate

votes will be eliminated. Winners will be notified and announced in Sept. 2023.

First-place winners in each category will receive a 2024 Wisconsin State Park vehicle sticker. Second-place winners in each category will receive Council Grounds merchandise or a gift certificate valued up to \$15.

PINE CREST from page 1

submitted proposals.

It didn’t take long for the Committee to narrow the choices down to two, eliminating the proposal submitted by Evans Senior Investments. The Evans firm didn’t have a representative in attendance at the meeting.

That left proposals from SVN and Marcus & Millichap.

Jay Hintze, Executive Director of SVN Hintze Commercial Real Estate, spoke to the Committee and said his firm had buyers ready to write an offer on Pine Crest Nursing Home. He said their initial written bid of a 4% commission was flexible and could potentially be reduced to 3%, but admitted his firm was relatively new to representing skilled nursing home properties. He also said he hadn’t had an opportunity to tour the actual Pine Crest facility when he was in Merrill. His firm proposed to list Pine Crest Nursing Home for sale for \$4.6 million.

Ray Giannini, Senior Managing Director of Marcus & Millichap REIS Seniors Housing Division, spoke to the Committee and proposed to list Pine Crest for—and said he was “confident” their firm could get—\$8.5 million from proposed buyers. He stressed his company’s experience in representing and selling seniors housing real estate. Marcus & Millichap proposed a flat fixed fee of 3% of the purchase price should his firm list and sell Pine Crest Nursing Home.

The Marcus & Millichap proposal emphasized his 27-year history with the firm and that the firm had sold more than \$700 million of seniors housing real estate, half of which was specific to skilled nursing facilities. Prior to that, he worked as a Senior Acquisition Analyst at a top-10, for-profit owner and provider of skilled nursing services with 250+ facilities in 14 states.

Marcus & Millichap’s proposal provided

recent comparable sales of skilled nursing homes in Wisconsin.

After discussions, and without the need to go into closed session, the A&L Committee decided to recommend Marcus & Millichap as the broker to represent Lincoln County should the Lincoln County Board vote to move forward with listing Pine Crest Nursing Home for sale. Committee members cited the broker’s lengthy experience working with and representing skilled nursing home facilities, the 3% proposed broker fee, and Giannini’s confidence in finding a buyer who would pay \$8.5 million for the property, a full \$3.9 million more than the sales price SVN had proposed.

In addition, they noted Marcus & Millichap had taken a personal tour of Pine Crest and developed a thoroughly researched, personalized presentation focusing on the facility and the Merrill community specifically and had also demonstrated how they would market the property. The firm’s proposed timetable suggested they would be able to market the property and deliver the Lincoln County Board with Letters of Intent from interested buyers within 50 days of signing a contract with their firm. That would leave time for additional negotiations and could still result in a closing six months from the signing of the contract.

Now it is up to the Lincoln County Board to decide if they will sign with the broker recommended by the A&L Committee and if they will officially list Pine Crest Nursing Home for sale.

The entire Lincoln County Board will meet next on Tuesday, July 18, at 6:00 p.m. at the Lincoln County Service Center. The public can also attend the meeting remotely. The Agenda for the meeting has not yet been finalized and released but will be available on the County’s website when it is at: <https://co.lincoln.wi.us/meetings>.

LEGAL NOTICES

Legals 7700

BY THE COURT:
DATE SIGNED: June 21, 2023
Electronically signed by Becky S. Byer
Probate Registrar
STATE OF WISCONSIN,
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
Carolyn M. Meyers
Notice to Creditors
(Informal Administration)
Case No. 2023 IN 28

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:
1. An application for informal administration was filed.
2. The decedent, with date of birth 11/15/1935 and date of death 04/05/2023, was domiciled in Lincoln County, State of WI, with a mailing address of 1005 Elm St, Merrill, WI 54452.
3. All interested persons waived notice.
4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent’s estate is October 20,

Legals 7700

2023.
5. A claim may be filed at the Lincoln County Courthouse, 1110 E. Main, Merrill, Wisconsin, Probate Office.
June Bebel
1104 Homestead Rd
Beaver Dam, WI 53916
920-382-7928
Published 6/29/23, 7/6/23 & 7/13/23
WNAXLP

BY THE COURT:
DATE SIGNED: June 9, 2023
Electronically signed by Becky S. Byer
Probate Registrar
STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
Bonnie Joy Schmidt
Notice to Creditors
(Informal Administration)
Case No. 2023 IN 27

Legals 7700

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:
1. An application for informal administration was filed.
2. The decedent, with date of birth 11/08/1949 and date of death 05/16/2023, was domiciled in Lincoln County, State of WI, with a mailing address of W2566 Violet Ln, Merrill, WI 54452.
3. All interested persons waived notice.
4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent’s estate is October 6, 2023.
5. A claim may be filed at the Lincoln County Courthouse, Merrill, Wisconsin, Probate Office.
Dianna Gustafson
N11980 CTY RD CC
Tomahawk, WI 54487
715-966-1198
Published 6/22/23, 6/29/23 & 7/6/23
WNAXLP

City of Merrill Property For Sale

The City of Merrill is offering these formerly tax delinquent properties for sale. This is a sealed bid sale. Please submit bids for the properties below by Thursday July 20th, 2023. Bids will be considered based on highest bid amount and proposed use.

Property Address	Property PIN #	Minimum Bid
503 Wisconsin Street	25131061130177	\$5,000
306 N Cleveland Street (Vacant Lot)	25131061230351	\$9,000
305 East Street (Vacant Lot)	25131061130413	\$2,000
1704 E Second Street	25131061820067	\$6,000

Bidders are responsible for checking the accuracy of the provided information. Bids must be submitted to the Clerk Treasurer’s Office in a sealed envelope marked “PROPERTY BID” no later than 4:00 pm Thursday, July 20th, 2023. Bids must contain bidder’s name and contact information and proposed use of the property. Property will be conveyed via Quit Claim Deed. The City of Merrill reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to accept the bid most advantageous to the city. For more information please contact Rod Akey at 715-536-5594.
Published July 6, 2023

WNAXLP

Thursday night concerts in the gazebo set to begin

Thursday night concerts in the gazebo at Merrill's Normal Park, now dubbed Thorogood Thursdays at Normal Park due to their event sponsorship, are set to begin on Thursday, July 13, 2023. [Thorogood is a Division of Weinbrenner Shoe Company, headquartered in Merrill.]

Tuck Pence will kick things off on July 13 at 6 p.m. and the community is invited to bring a lawn chair or spread a blanket on the grass and enjoy free musical entertainment in the park. Additional sponsors Park City Credit Union, Reindl Printing, Ed & Sharon's, and Merrill Sheet Metal helped make the Tuck Pence performance possible.

Thorogood Thursdays are scheduled to bring live music to the park every Thursday, except Aug. 17 during the Lincoln County Fair, from July 13 through Aug. 31. Musical genres will vary from week to week, with something for everyone and the return of some of the most popular performers back by popular demand.

From Beatles hits performed by The Britins to a little oompah-pah-pah by Neal Zunker and the Music Connection, to the instrumental variety and vocals Copper Box brings to the gazebo, Normal Park will be the place to be on Thursday evenings this summer.



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TUESDAY & THURSDAY: 7:00PM ONLY

INDIANA JONES
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SATURDAY: 1:00, 3:00, 7:00 & 9:00PM
SUNDAY: 1:00, 3:00 & 7:00PM
MONDAY & WEDNESDAY: 1:00 & 7:00PM
TUESDAY & THURSDAY: 7:00PM ONLY

ELEMENTAL
"PG" (1HR 43MIN)
FRIDAY: 1:00, 7:00PM
SATURDAY: 1:00, 3:30, 7:00PM
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Beyond Books Community ArtShare: Wait, that's LEGO too?

The Beyond Books Community ArtShare Program at the T.B. Scott Free Library is excited to present: Wait, that's LEGO too?

During July and August, Tim and Dawn Dunbar will showcase a wide, new assortment of their LEGO collection on display at the library.

Guests at the library can view the collection and vote for their favorite to a chance to win their very own LEGO succulent kit!

Tim and Dawn Dunbar accidentally started collecting LEGO sets in the late 1980's when they bought some sets for their daughters. It has since turned into purchasing dozens of new sets each year. Tim said they consider picking out kits they like and spending time together assembling them to be more of a hobby than a collection. Sharing them with others is fun, so every set, now totaling 620, is currently assembled and on display in their home. This amounts to around 400,000 individual LEGO pieces.

Last year the Dunbars visited Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry to view the Nathan Sawaya LEGO sculpture exhibit.

On July 25, the T.B. Scott Free Library will also host LEGO Day at the Library. Come and enjoy fun things to do on the second floor. Tim and Dawn will once again be available from 4-6 p.m. to answer questions and demonstrate another remote-controlled LEGO creation.

Check out all the completed LEGO kits on display including dinosaurs, Star Wars robots, the movie UP, and a very detailed old fishing village. You're sure to think, "Wait, that's LEGO too?"



RATING from page 3

Ryan Hanson, Pine Crest Nursing Home Administrator. "Our dedicated team of healthcare professionals, including our compassionate nurses, skilled caregivers, and support staff, are the backbone of our success. Their expertise and commitment to our residents' well-being are truly commendable."

"Pine Crest takes immense pride in fostering a warm and nurturing environment that promotes physical, emotional, and social well-being for its residents," the release said. "The facility offers a comprehensive range of services, including skilled nursing care, memory care for individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's disease, rehabilitation therapy,

and engaging social activities designed to enhance residents' quality of life."

Pine Crest Nursing Home is a 120-bed skilled nursing facility that has served Lincoln County for nearly 70 years. Located at 2100 E. Sixth Street in Merrill, the nursing home sits on approximately 20 acres of shared land with the Lincoln County Government Services Center and the Lincoln County Department of Social Services building. The facility provides short-term rehabilitation, long-term care, dementia and memory care, and hospice/comfort services for adults and is managed by North Central Health Care. North Central Health Care serves communities in Marathon, Lincoln, and Langlade counties. For more information, go to www.norcen.org/PineCrest.

June Garden of the Month

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

Park City Gardeners have announced the June 2023 Garden of the Month is owned by Joe and Carrie Osswald and located at 1310 E. 8th St. on the corner of East 8th and Elm streets in Merrill.

“Joe and Carrie invite you to enjoy a view of their serenity,” Park City Gardeners representatives said.

“Joe and Carrie moved into their home four years ago. The previous owners left behind a solid base of perennials which has been expanded into a beautiful flower garden,” they said. “Over the years, Joe continually looked for plants and flowers that complemented the beautiful perennials ... Each year he has added and continues to add a little more to create a beautiful serene garden. The garden includes perennials, annuals, shrubs, and wildflowers. Many of the plants have not blossomed yet, giving them beautiful color all summer long.”

“In addition to the garden, there is beautiful foliage and many flowers adorning the landscape around the house. As Joe and Carrie travel throughout the area, they continually look for unique décor to add to their garden and yard.”

Their goal is to make their yard and garden a truly “happy place,” the Osswalds said.



Joe and Carrie Osswald's property has been named Garden of the Month for June 2023. Submitted photos.



A walkway between cultivated flower beds makes for a serene place to walk among the blooms.



Curated objects, such as this fountain, enhance the flowers and foliage in the Osswald garden.

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Price County Department of Health and Human Services

Price County is accepting applications for a **Social Worker** to join our team in the **Children & Youth Unit** of the Department of Health and Human Services. Work involves serving children, youth and families faced with youth justice and child welfare issues and includes family-based support services to keep families intact or to reunify families who have experienced out of home placements. Position has extensive contact with the public, other service providers in the community and state, law enforcement and the court system, and other employees in the department. Position functions are performed in an office, client home, and community setting. Work involves in-home services including family assessments and treatment planning, case management, after-hours on-call services, and alternate care services. Responsibility for cases and decision-making occurs jointly with the supervisor. Position is under the direct supervision of the Children and Youth Unit Supervisor and the general supervision of the Health and Human Services Director.

This is a full time, regular position with a full benefit package and starting hourly wage range of \$27.89 to \$30.26, depending on experience. Benefits include Wisconsin Retirement System with employer match, health insurance, 10 days of vacation after 90 days of service, 10 paid holidays, paid sick leave, employee lifestyle enhancement perk, and paid maternity/paternity leave. Dental/vision, health savings account, flex spending, WI Deferred Comp, life, short-term disability, accident, and cancer/critical illness coverages are available.

A full description of minimum requirements and application instructions can be found on the Price County website's employment opportunities page at www.co.price.wi.us, by emailing a request to hroffice@co.price.wi.us or by calling 715-339-5131.

Completed applications and resume must be received by the Price County Office of Administration no later than 4:30 pm on July 12, 2023, to be considered for this position.

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We have a position opening in August for a part time maintenance employee. Approximately 25 hours per week. Duties include general building clean up, vehicle and equipment clean up, ground care and maintenance, Snow removal, Etc.

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Fri., Aug. 11, 2023, 4-11 p.m. Cabaret Cove
1540 Pueblo Dr., Rhinelander \$12.00 each incl. pizza, salad and bread, w/cash bar and payment at door.
Carol Henrichs: 715-499-0365
Contact information: Jan Johnson 715-490-6765

WCAN (Wisconsin Community Ad Network) and/or the member publications review ads to the best of their ability. Unfortunately, many unscrupulous people are ready to take your money! **PLEASE BE CAREFUL ANSWERING ANY AD THAT SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!** For more information, or to file a complaint regarding an ad, please contact **The Department of Trade, Agriculture & Consumer Protection 1-800-422-7128 (WCAN)**

Rummage Sales This Week 7200

Christmas in July. Craft Fair. New & Used. Lavender, Rose plants, House plants, Garden Flags, New framed pictures, New plush throw blankets, Planters, Fresh flowers, Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner served. New items added weekly. Cash only. Weather permitting. Thurs 9-9; Fri 9-5. The whole month of July. 108 E 4th St., Merrill Or by appointment 715-722-0252 ask for May.

Large 9 Family Sale: N1305 Deer Run Ave, Merrill. Everything you can imagine and more to furnish office or household, display stands, Large items, solid furniture, 7 Days a Week, 9am-5pm, weather permitting.

Large sale with a goal! Ethan Allen drop front desk, end tables, drop leaf table, file cabinets, upholstery material, small kitchen appliances, assorted kitchen and glassware, linens, Pampered Chef, German plates & mugs, holiday decorations, metal kitchen rack, dolls, baskets, pictures and frames, fire-place tools, games & puzzles, lawn and garden tools, drill press, 2 man saw; new still in the box, laundry tubs including all plumbing fixtures; new, never installed, 36" pocket door including frame and all hardware; much more. All items are clean. Our goal? To be able to use our garage this winter!
Thurs. 7-5
Fri. 7-5
Sat. 9-4
204 Prairie Lane
West on Main St. south on Prospect St. Then left onto Prairie Lane. Watch for the signs.

Rhinelander: Friday, 7/7-Sunday, 7/9, 8 a.m.- 6 p.m. CASH ONLY. Furniture pickup TBD. Household goods, furniture, tools, books (Military history and sci-fi), decorations, mint collectibles, toys and posters, prebuilt and painted military, aircraft and various sci-fi models, model kits, electronics and records, tabletop wargame miniatures and games (Battletech, etc.) 518 N. Stevens St.

TOMAHAWK- 22 W. Lincoln Ave. Puzzles Only garage sale July 7 & 8, 9-2. Most priced \$4 or under. Buy 4, get 5th Free.

Vintage Collectable Sale 304 N State St., Merrill. Weather Permitting, July 7 & 8, 10AM-2PM. Lots of MCM, Depression Glass, Vases, Guys Stuff.

Fund Raiser Garage Sale Trinity Lutheran Church, Merrill 107 N State St. Fri. July 14, 8AM-6PM, Sat. July 15 8AM-1PM.

Rummage Sales Upcoming 7202


GARAGE SALE KITS NOW AVAILABLE!
Let Garage Sale Gail help you with your next sale!
Kit Includes:
• 2 garage sale signs
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• 3 balloons
• 1 pen
• 1 inventory sheet
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Household, hunting, tools, fishing items, musky lures, old collectibles & new items, great for gifts!

Estate Sales 7208

JANE'S Estate Sales & Services LLC
Tomahawk: Friday, 7/7, 12 p.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, 7/8, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m., Sunday, 7/9, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m. Four wheeler, pontoon, appliances & more! **EVERYTHING MUST GO - HOME TO BE DEMOLISHED! - NO EARLY SALES.** We DO NOT give out prices or information prior to the sale. Please do not text, call or email requests. - First come, first served. Deli style numbers will be given out starting at 11:00am on Friday. 2095 Lake Nokomis Rd

Miscellaneous Sales 7212

QUALITY FREEZER BEEF Burger \$5.10/lb; Roasts \$6.75/lb; Ribeye Steaks \$14/lb; Filet Mignon \$14/lb; T-bones \$13/lb; Various other cuts avail Holton Homegrown 106098 Holton Rd. Abbotsford **715-470-0458 No Sunday Sales**

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Guns 7264

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Miscellaneous Merchandise 7266

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PRICE COUNTY CORPORATION COUNSEL

Price County is accepting applications for the position of **Corporation Counsel**. This position is responsible for advising and representing the County Board, governing bodies, committees, departments, and officials of the County in civil legal matters involving the County. The duties and responsibilities of the Corporation Counsel are established by the County Board and performed under, and subject to, the review and direction of the Administrative committee with the approval of the County Board.

This is a full time, regular, exempt position with a full benefit package and starting annual salary range of \$90,771 to \$96,324, depending on experience. Benefits include Wisconsin Retirement System with employer match, health insurance, vacation, 10 paid holidays, paid sick leave, employee lifestyle enhancement perk, and paid maternity/paternity leave. Dental/vision, health savings account, flex spending, WI Deferred Comp, life, short-term disability, accident, and cancer/critical illness coverages are available.

Located in north central Wisconsin, midway between Hayward and Minocqua, Price County is home to a variety of natural resources. Our abundance of woods and waters provides endless outdoor recreational opportunities. The communities in Price County offer shopping, dining, services, affordable housing, and a friendly atmosphere.

A full description of minimum requirements and application instructions can be found on the Price County website's employment opportunities page at www.co.price.wi.us, by emailing a request to hroffice@co.price.wi.us or by calling 715-339-5131.

Completed applications and resume must be received by the Price County Office of Administration no later than 4:30 pm on July 12, 2023, to be considered for this position.

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A group of Merrill kids held a lemonade stand to raise money to purchase supplies for the Lincoln County Humane Society. Emersyn, Graysen, Kenzingtyn, and Hudsyn had fun with their lemonade stand and shopping for the pets. Submitted photo.

Ashbrenner of Merrill takes first place at State

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

Athletes from the Merrill Bluejays Trap Team attended the State Shoot on June 23, 2023, at the Wisconsin Trapshooting Association (WTA) Homegrounds in Nekoosa, and Merrill's Maria Ashbrenner took first place in the State in the Ladies Intermediate/Advanced Division, shooting 97/100.

Nicholas Kriegel was the top male scorer for the Bluejays, also shooting 97/100 in the Junior Varsity Division.

From the Merrill team, 37 athletes competed at State.

Throughout the season, Merrill athletes participate in American Trap, competing against thousands of other athletes throughout Wisconsin.



"Love Your Neighbor" Fundraising Banquet seeking nominations

Nominate a business, individual, or family who positively impacts our community

BY TINA L. SCOTT
EDITOR

Food For Kids, a non-profit organization in Merrill dedicated to eliminating child hunger in the community, will host a "Love Your Neighbor" Banquet in October to raise funds for their cause.

As a part of this year's banquet, Food For Kids wants to honor their "neighbors" who "positively impact" the Merrill area community, and they are asking the community to nominate a business, individual, or family deserving of recognition.

Nominations are currently being accepted in three categories.

- Corporate Neighbor of the Year
- Small Business of the Year

- Neighbor of the Year (Individuals or a Family)

Nominations will close on Aug. 31, 2023.

The Food For Kids Committee will review all nominations and select a winner for each category. Winners will be notified by Sept. 29.

The "Love Your Neighbor" awards will be presented at the Food For Kids "Love Your Neighbor" Banquet on Oct. 28, 2023, at Les & Jim's Lincoln Lanes, which begins at 4 p.m. Organizers are hopeful all nominees will attend the banquet.

At the banquet, the Food For Kids Board of Directors will also recognize and present an award to their "Partner Agency of the Year."

For more information, go to: <https://forms.gle/EYSqYiUaQeMVcn89>.

Lincoln County residents invited to attend Northwoods Six-County Lakes Meeting

The Northwoods Six-County Lakes Meeting will be held on Friday, July 14, from 8:30 a.m. to noon, at Nicolet College in Rhinelander, and Lincoln County residents are invited to attend.

Lake group leaders and members from six northern Wisconsin counties will convene for a discussion of water resource issues. The meeting will feature a panel of experts involved with enforcing laws and regulations that address boating and safety, shoreland zoning, short-term property rentals, fish and game rules, and general outdoors-related activity.

Panelists are:

- Karl Jennrich, Director, Oneida County Planning and Zoning
- Erika Roeder, Administrator, Iron County Zoning
- Darren Kuhn, Conservation Officer, Wisconsin DNR
- Grady Hartman, Sheriff, Oneida County (or designee)
- Wisconsin DNR Conservation Warden (to be announced)

The meeting will also include an update on state government policy related to water given by Mike Engleson, Executive

Director of Wisconsin Lakes; an update on invasive zebra mussels and spiny water flea from Gretchen Gerrish, Director of the UW Center for Limnology's Trout Lake Research Station; and a presentation on loons and lead poisoning given by Mark Naniot, Director of Rehabilitation at Wild Instincts in Rhinelander.

There will be time for a question-and-answer session in which attendees can raise issues of specific concern to their lakes. Master of ceremonies for the meeting will be Eric Olson, Director of UW-Extension Lakes.

Exhibits will be offered by area educational, nonprofit, and government organizations. Attendees are expected from Oneida, Vilas, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, and Iron Counties.

The event is jointly sponsored by the Oneida County Lakes and Rivers Association (www.ocbra.org) and the Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association (www.vlcra.org). No pre-registration is required. For more information, contact Ted Rulseh at 920.242.8671 (trulseh@tjrcommunications.com) or Tom Ewing at 630.985.8472 (president@vclra.org).

MAPS accepts June donations

The following donations were approved and/or accepted at the June 21 Merrill Area Public Schools (MAPS) Board of Directors meeting:

Donation of labor and materials from the Silver "M" Club and SGS Environmental valued at \$6,150 for placing recognition bricks in the plaza at Jay Stadium; donation of cash from Incredible Bank Foundation valued at \$20,000 for theater lighting upgrades and Theatre Jays program support; a check from Stacy Literski valued at \$30 for Girls' Soccer; funds from Aspirus Merrill Hospital valued at \$1,800 for training pupil services staff to offer Aggression Replacement training and Learning to Breathe for middle school students; a check from AGRA Industries, Inc. valued at \$250 for DECA Color Run supplies; funds from Culvers of Merrill valued at \$190 for Merrill FFA via the Culver's Scoops of Thanks Day; diapers for a family in need from the Mary Geiss Memorial Foundation valued at \$44.86 for helping out a family at Pine River School for Young Learners; funds from Sutton's Wine Bar valued at \$300 for The Nest at Merrill High School; a monetary gift from Bob & Janet Grunenwald valued at \$1,500 for a JV baseball fence at Merrill High School; a monetary gift from Merrill Foundation valued at \$2,000 for the MHS Theatre Jays; a check from Cordova Agency Inc. valued at \$125 for the DECA Color Run; a check from Gail Abegglen valued at \$50 for the Merrill FFA in memory of Alissa Sosnovske; sensory items, weighted vests and jacket, and visual timers from the Mary Geiss Memorial Always Believe in Children valued at \$500 for Kate Goodrich Elementary School Special Education student needs; a check from Packaging Corporation of America valued at \$100 for DECA Color Run supplies; a check from Club X to C valued at \$866 for the DECA fundraiser; and a monetary gift from Community Foundation of NCW valued at \$1,019.19 for the MHS FAB Lab for partnership with the elementary schools to promote STEAM Education and the Beyond Crayons and Computers Grant.

2023 Merrill Summer Baseball Schedule

Junior Legion			
Mon. July 10	Plover (DH)	Athletic	5:30 p.m.
Thurs. July 13-Mon. July 17 th		Regional's	
Post 46			
Fri. July 7-Sun. July 9 th		Merrill Tournament	
Mon. July 10	Plover	Away	7:00 p.m.
Tues. July 11	WI Rapids	Athletic	7:00 p.m.
Merrill Rangers			
Sun. July 9	Everest	Athletic	1:30 p.m.
Wed. July 12	Waupaca	Athletic	7:30 p.m.

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A hazy shade of summer

BY MIKE WARREN
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

WISCONSIN – Hot, dry and hazy. Those have been the words most often used to describe Wisconsin's summer weather so far. To make matters worse, there appears to be no end in sight to the latter.

Hundreds of wildfires burning in northern parts of Canadian provinces are sending a seemingly endless supply of haze and smoke to Wisconsin and beyond. And this may just be the beginning.

"A lot of these fires that are burning are in areas where they either can't extinguish the fires because they're in such remote areas, or they just don't have the staff," said the Wisconsin DNR's Ron



Gray skies filled with smoke coming down from Canadian wildfires have been a common occurrence this summer in Wisconsin and many other states. Submitted photo.

Most unhealthy smoke impacts have been felt across much of eastern Wisconsin, in particular along the Lake Michigan shoreline, according to the DNR's Craig Czarnecki.

"In the Milwaukee area we are seeing some very unhealthy AQIs (Air Quality Indices) there. In fact, Milwaukee is currently experiencing some of the highest levels of air pollution, not just in the U.S., but across the globe, right now," Czarnecki said, during the same June 27 conference call.

Some of the thickest smoke plumes of the summer were seen moving north to south across the Badger State during the late morning hours of June 27, when the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources issued a 48-hour Air Quality Advisory for the entire state.

"Go inside if you have any symptoms, things like coughing and shortness of breath" Czarnecki added.

"If you do have a respiratory or cardiovascular health condition that puts you at greater risk and need to spend time outside, a well-fitting N95 mask may be helpful," said Mark Werner from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. "Air conditioning can be helpful, but not everyone has access to air conditioning, so if you have a neighbor or relative who doesn't have air conditioning, it's a good idea to check on your neighbors and relatives who you think may be more at risk," Werner added.

"People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion and consider avoiding all physical outdoor activities; everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion and consider avoiding prolonged or heavy exertion," read the DNR's Air Quality Advisory.

"There's a few things people can do to protect themselves from the wildfire smoke," says Czarnecki. "I guess the big one – if you don't have to be outside, the best way to avoid wildfire smoke is to stay indoors. And in your home, make sure your doors and windows are closed, so you can keep that wildfire smoke and those particles outside. And then run your air conditioning on recirculate if you can, to help circulate some of that fresh air."

For more information on current air quality, please see: <https://airquality.wi.gov>.

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Schneider, during a June 27 conference call with Wisconsin media outlets. "They've brought in firefighters from France, from Italy, Australia, Mexico, so they have a lot of partners helping them to extinguish these fires, but it looks like we're gonna have – as long as we have this northerly flow from the air that goes from the northern provinces in Canada down through the Midwest – we're going to be seeing this smoke," Schneider added. "The only thing that we can hope for is the fires are extinguished, which may be months before some of the

Canadian forest fires are extinguished, or a change in the weather pattern which would take the main flow of the air, instead of that northerly flow, maybe more of a western or southwest pattern, like we normally see in summer in Wisconsin."

Schneider also mentioned this has become an above-average year, and early season, for forest fires in Canada, which is facing the same high fire dangers and drought situations like we are here in Wisconsin. For those reasons, the DNR is keeping its firefighters here, and not sending aid to Canada.

"We did send some firefighters to Michigan to help them with a 2,400-acre fire," Schneider said. "We do have a compact with Ontario and Manitoba, and part of the reason why we didn't send any firefighters to Canada yet is because of our drought here in Wisconsin. Typically we're not very busy with fires in June in Wisconsin, but this year due to the drought, we are using all of our resources from Wisconsin DNR to take care of Wisconsin first," Schneider added. "Hopefully we keep getting more rain and then eventually we can assist our partners to the north."

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