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# Merrill man dies in single UTV crash

A 48-year-old Merrill man has died as the result of injuries sustained in a single UTV crash in the early hours of Dec. 31, 2023.

The Lincoln County 911 Dispatch Center received a 911 call at approximately 1:32 a.m. on Dec. 31 reporting a single UTV crash on Scott Rd. south of Heldt St. in the Township of Scott, with the driver reportedly trapped and unresponsive, a press release from the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) said.

The driver, Chad J. Glaze of Merrill, was pronounced dead by Lincoln County Coroner Valerie Caylor.

A male passenger in the UTV refused medical treatment and left the scene in a private automobile, the release said.

According to preliminary investigation, it is believed the UTV was southbound on Scott Rd. when it lost control, entered the ditch, and rolled. Road conditions are believed to have been a factor. Icy road conditions were reported throughout northcentral Wisconsin counties during the evening of Dec. 30 into early morning on Dec. 31, with multiple vehicle crashes closing roads for periods of time in several area counties. The crash remains under investigation according to the LCSO.

In addition to the LCSO and Lincoln County Coroner, the Merrill Fire Department and Merrill Police Department also assisted in response to the accident.



## No snow snowmen

Without snow to make real snowmen, snowman decorations keep the Wisconsin winter spirit alive, while residents watch the skies and wait, wondering how long it will actually be until we see snow and normal Wisconsin weather.

Joseph Frederick photos.



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A member of the Merrill Fire Department, attached to a cable, prepares to wade out into the Wisconsin River to look for occupants in the vehicle. Photos courtesy of Merrill Fire Department.

# Vehicle in the water

BY TINA L. SCOTT  
 EDITOR

At approximately 7:42 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2023, the Lincoln County 911 Dispatch Center received a call that there was a vehicle in the Wisconsin River, partially submerged, at the end of Lokemoen Rd. in the Town of Merrill. The 911 caller was uncertain whether anyone was inside the vehicle.

Emergency crews, including Merrill Fire Department Engine 61, Medic 61, Medic 62, and Utility 68 w/Boat 69 were dispatched to the Lokemoen boat landing.

"Upon arrival at scene Engine 61 assumed command and found a mostly submerged 4-door SUV," a press release from the Merrill Fire Department said. Emergency



Emergency crews from the Merrill Fire Department investigate a vehicle found partially submerged in the Wisconsin River last week.

personnel were also unable to determine whether the vehicle was occupied from their position at the boat landing.

"Personnel from Medic 61 donned cold water rescue suits," the release

See **VEHICLE** page 2

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**VEHICLE** from page 1

said. "One rescuer attached to a safety line was able to walk out to the vehicle and visually inspect for occupants. There did not appear to be any occupants in the vehicle."

"After consulting with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office, it was decided to remove the vehicle from the water.

Utilizing the winch on Engine 61, personnel were able to attach a cable to the driver side rear wheel and remove the vehicle from the water. Once the vehicle was removed from the water, it was confirmed to be unoccupied. The scene was turned over to the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office," the release concluded.

The incident remains under investigation.

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# Free warm clothing and vaccines available this Saturday

Highland Community Church is sponsoring a Warm Clothing Giveaway and Vaccine Clinic at their Merrill Campus, 508 Eugene St. in Merrill. The event this Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. will also be an opportunity for the church to celebrate "Dia de los Reyes Magos" ... or

"Three Kings Day" a/k/a Epiphany ... with the community.

Clothes, shoes, and accessories will be available for every age--and there is no charge. Free flu and COVID-19 vaccines will also be available.

# Aspirus releases top baby names of 2023

WAUSAU, Wis. - Naming a newborn is a key step in welcoming the littlest and

latest addition to the family. There are thousands of names for parents to choose

from, but in the end, each name given to a child is special and unique, as they carry it with them throughout their life.

From Jan. 1 to Dec. 26, 2023, the Aspirus Health System welcomed 2,881 babies into the world. A total of 1,517 different names were given to those newborns and Aspirus has gathered the most popular baby names given throughout the system.

Here are the top baby names of 2023:

**Boys**

- Levi (25)
- Oliver (22)
- Hudson (19)

**Girls**

- Amelia (18)
- Harper (14)
- Emma (14)

Aspirus cares for mothers and babies throughout the entire pregnancy, from the first prenatal visit through delivery.

The newborn intensive care unit at Aspirus Wausau Hospital provides the added reassurance that world-class care is available within the Aspirus system if a baby needs specialized care after he or she is born.

For more information, visit [aspirus.org/obstetrics-gynecology](http://aspirus.org/obstetrics-gynecology).

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"Although our process is primarily remote, in-person appointments are also available intermittently throughout the year. Please call or email us for more details!"

# 988 billboard campaign

Thanks to the generosity of the Connexus Cares Foundation, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Northwoods has initiated a 988 billboard campaign throughout their tri-county service area. Billboards reminding people of Wisconsin's 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline service, which answers calls, texts, and chats that come from residents throughout the state, will be displayed in Lincoln, Langlade, and Marathon Counties.

The 988 Wisconsin Lifeline service is operated by Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin, an agency based in Green Bay, with trained counselors serving throughout the state. Counselors are trained to listen and support people through their distress with a focus on de-escalation and coping skills, a press release from NAMI Northwoods said. Some of the counselors and staff are bilingual, and third-party interpreters for more than 240 languages and dialects are available 24/7 for calls to 988. Counselors answer and respond to calls, texts, and chats as quickly as possible to minimize wait times between initial contact and counseling. The program is supported and funded by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.



# Akey is new Merrill City Administrator

## Merrill takes a new approach to staffing

BY TINA L. SCOTT  
EDITOR

Effective Jan. 1, 2024, Rod Akey of Merrill became the new City Administrator for the City of Merrill. Akey had been serving as Interim co-City Administrator, sharing the duties of the position with Merrill Police Chief Corey Bennett since October 2022, following the retirement of Merrill's former City Administrator. Now, he will officially assume the role full time and Bennett will likely be relieved to go back to having "just" one job as Police Chief.



Rod Akey is Merrill's new City Administrator.

Tina L. Scott photo.

75% of his engineering workload, Akey projects. "And we do have Dustin Bonack and Gabe Steinagel," he said, referring to the Superintendents of the Street Department and Water Utility, respectively. "They've been doing a very good job." That takes the pressure off on the public works side of things, he said. In the realignment, he anticipates he will spend his time approximately "75% focusing on the City Administrator stuff and 25% the public works/engineering side."

### Putting the community's interests first

Something a lot of residents probably don't know? The City has been saving money since October 2022 by utilizing Akey and Bennett as Interim co-City Administrators because both served in this role while also continuing to serve in their original positions (City Engineer and Chief of Police)—and they did so without any additional compensation. "Corey and I didn't ask for a penny more the whole time we were doing the fill-in stuff," Akey said referring to the Interim role.

The two stepped up and did what needed to be done, putting the City—and the community's interests—first, for more than 14 months.

In accepting the new position, Akey's salary will increase about \$1,500 a year going forward.

### Well qualified for the position

In addition to his experience garnered in his role as Interim co-City Administrator since October 2022, Akey brings more than 30 years of engineering and management experience to the new position.

He attended the University of Wisconsin-Marathon and Madison, receiving a bachelor's degree in Civil Environmental Engineering in 1993.

Since January 2016, Akey has served as the City Engineer/Public Works Director for the City of Merrill. Responsibilities in this role included overseeing the Merrill Street Department, Water Utility, and Waste Water Utility, in addition to civil and commercial design, layout, and construction oversight; State of Wisconsin DNR permit compliance for storm water; and assisting with Tax Incremental District (TID) project coordination and RDA project development.

Prior to taking this position, Akey was a private consulting engineer operating Akey Engineering Service since February 2002, providing civil and commercial design, layout, and construction oversight for state, county, township, and private construction projects and assisting with local, state, and DNR permit compliance.

Akey's prior experience also includes training with the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) District 7 in Rhinelander; six years as a resident engineer for Black Construction, Inc. in Kempster, Wis.; and three years as an engineering technician for the Lincoln County Highway Department in Merrill. Duties in those roles included construction survey, layout and design for state, local, county and private projects; job cost analysis; bid preparation and analysis; job and machinery budget cost analysis; construction project estimating; layout and management oversight for construction projects; construction project estimating; performing gravel tests; completing permits for operations; and even operating

machinery and plowing snow for Lincoln County when needed.

Akey is accredited with the State of Wisconsin and maintains a Professional Engineering (PE) license with the state which includes 30 hours of continuing education every 2 years.

### Engineering Assistant opening

The City is currently recruiting for the open Engineering Assistant position. The requirements? "A bachelor's degree in civil engineering with the ability to get a state job, State of Wisconsin PE within four years or so. We're looking for somebody probably coming right out of college," Akey said.

### Other positions are also evolving

The City is taking a more creative, integrated approach to meeting personnel needs in all areas. "We have done a few other things as far as combining, like an Administrative Assistant from the Water Utility is going to be at the Street Department, and she's still going to be doing some of the Water Utilities work. So we're trying to find areas to save money," Akey said.

"We really have to start looking at—not just what's easy," he said. "You know, we got a job open, so let's not [just automatically] replace that person. We have to look over the whole City [City of Merrill personnel] and see what makes sense."

"You know, all we have left is personnel [expense] to cut," Akey said. "As far as our expenses going, we can't raise taxes more than our new growth. We can't just raise taxes like the school was able to do [just recently when the state changed the school's levy tax guidelines]. There's state levy limits that were imposed [on City governments] back in 2011 from Act 10." Looking at the big picture when vacancies occur is one way they're working to manage the money they have to work with.

The City is also looking at succession planning, especially as it relates to key positions and personnel. More on that to come.

### The best person for the job was already a City employee

When Dave Johnson retired in October 2022, an Ad Hoc Committee was formed to look at the options for filling the City Administrator position, Mayor Steve Hass explained. The Council appointed Akey and Bennett as Interim co-City Administrators as they explored how to recruit someone to fill the vacated role.

Early on in the process Public Administration Associates made a presentation to the committee advising that the cost of recruiting for a new City Administrator would cost at least \$50,000-\$60,000, Mayor Hass said.

As time moved on with Akey and Bennett meeting the needs of the position on a day-to-day basis, the committee considered whether the best person for the job might already be a City employee.

"We decided to stay in-house with the Administrator's position," Mayor Hass said. "Rod and Corey have both proven to be very valuable in that position/role, working together. And Rod stepped up to the plate and said he'd like to throw his hat in the ring."

With more than a year of watching Akey's performance in the interim role, they already knew what they could expect from him in the role, and the decision was an easy one for the committee and the City Council. It also saved the City of Merrill considerable money.

By filling the position in-house, the City saved more than \$50,000 in recruitment expenses and then some. "We did save that amount of money by not going that route [doing an outside recruitment search]," Hass said. "We also don't have to pay moving expenses."

### A creative approach to staffing needs

Overall, the City is taking a more creative approach to balancing their staffing needs, especially for critical positions, Hass and Akey explained.

"We are moving in the right direction," Hass said. "Rod will still maintain the City Engineering position, but we are hiring an Engineering Assistant position."

This will result in additional savings for the City. Essentially eliminating a City Administrator's salary—since Akey will serve as both City Administrator and City Engineer—and then adding a new Engineering Assistant position, should net the City around \$60,000 in savings, he said, as opposed to hiring a new City Administrator and also continuing to have a separate Public Works Director/City Engineer.

The Engineering Assistant position will offload about

## Aspirus Health provides information on prostate cancer, encourages screenings

Aspirus Health recently provided information on prostate cancer and said screenings are a key defense against it.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), about 288,300 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year.

"The good news is it has one of the highest survival rates of any type of cancer due to the slow speed at which it grows and spreads, as well as the opportunity for early detection," Aspirus said.

Prostate cancer originates within the prostate gland, a small, walnut-sized organ situated below the bladder, crucial for the male reproductive system. Abnormal cell growth in the prostate can lead to prostate cancer.

"Early stages often have no symptoms, making screening helpful in



Photo courtesy of Aspirus

detecting abnormalities sooner," said Katie Bittner, DO, Aspirus Family Medicine Physician. "Detecting and treating certain prostate cancers can sometimes improve survival rates and minimize the extent of treatments recommended."

Aspirus Health Screening Guidelines recommend that men aged 50 and older get screened annually for

prostate cancer. "The most common screening tool for prostate cancer is the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test," Aspirus said. "This blood test measures the presence of PSA circulating in the bloodstream and is usually the first step in any prostate

See SCREENINGS page 4

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THE FOTO NEWS (ISSN 0191-8958) is published weekly by Multi Media Channels LLC, N2919 County Road QQ, Waupaca WI 54981. Subscription price by mail: \$100 per year; domestic U.S. Mail only, nonrefundable but transferable. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE FOTO NEWS, 921 E. Main St., Merrill, WI 54452.

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# OBITUARIES



**Monica Norma Talbot**, 95, of Merrill, passed away Friday, December 22, 2023, at Bell Tower Residence under the care of Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services.

Monica, the youngest child of eight, was born on October 1, 1928, at Holy Cross Hospital in Merrill, daughter of the late Adlord and Friedal (Schillak) Talbot. She was baptized at St. Francis Catholic Church on October 28, 1928, by Father Michael Prock. Her baptismal sponsors

were Melvin and Marie Talbot. Monica's grandparents were pioneer residents of then Jenny, now the City of Merrill, and she was a proud supporter of Merrill. When Monica was growing up, her father was the fire chief of the Merrill Fire Department. He died in the line of duty on October 7, 1941. Recently Monica attended a ceremony where his death was recognized as line of duty death.

After attending college for one year, Monica was employed in the office of Wisconsin Public Service Corporation for 40 years, retiring in 1990.

She was a member of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church where she served on the parish council, as an organist, and the choir director. She served as the organist for the weekly mass at Pine Crest Nursing Home for many years. Monica was a volunteer at Good Samaritan Health Center and Bell Tower Residence, where she was a personal care giver for several people. She was also an Associate member of the Holy Cross Sisters.

Music was a major factor in Monica's life, she was a charter member of the Sweet Adelines. She enjoyed reading, golfing, birdwatching and watching the Brewers, Badgers, Packers, and the Merrill High School Sports Teams.

Monica is survived by her niece, Mary O'Neill; and nephew Ronald Talbot, great nephews Jack Talbot, Michael Talbot, Patrick Talbot and Joseph Kendziorski. Great nieces Paula Kendziorski and Kim Kendziorski. Plus many great, great-nieces and-nephews; and wonderful friends.

Monica was preceded in death by her parents, Adlord and Friedal Talbot; six brothers, Lester Talbot, Melvin Talbot, Cyril Talbot, Clifford Talbot, Arthur Talbot, and Harold Talbot; sister, Alta Guerin; and many nieces and nephews.

A funeral liturgy for Monica was held at 11:00 A.M. on Wednesday, January 3, 2023, at the Taylor-Stine Funeral Home, Merrill. Father Charles Hoffman presided. Burial followed in St. Francis Xavier Catholic Cemetery, Merrill. Visitation began at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday at the funeral home.

Monica requested any memorials be made to the Merrill Historical Society, Merrill High School Choir, or the charity of your choice.

The Taylor-Stine Funeral Home is serving the family, online condolences can be made at [www.taylorstinefuneralhome.com](http://www.taylorstinefuneralhome.com)



**Ronald "Ron" L. Schreiber**, age 86, of Merrill, passed away on Friday, December 29, 2023, at the Aspirus Wausau Hospital, after many medical complications. He was born on April 28, 1937, to the late Victor and Ruth (Batchelder) Schreiber in Merrill, WI. He attended and graduated from Rhinelander High School with the class of 1957. Ron met Marlee Grobe, and the two were united in marriage in

Rhinelander on June 16, 1962, a union lasting over 61 years. She survives.

Ron worked as a police officer in Rhinelander from 1960-1966, before moving to Merrill. He worked for Associated Co-op before becoming a salesman at Whitburn Motors in Merrill. He then worked as a youth counselor for the Lincoln Hills School for 22 years before his retirement. Ron loved his job at Lincoln Hills and enjoyed being able to help the young people there. He joined the transport team for the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department for the next 12 years. He had a passion for deer hunting, something he faithfully did for 73 years, not ever missing a season! Ron also looked forward to fishing trips and working in his shop at home. He would tinker with various things, also making many trailers. Ron was a dedicated family man that adored his grandchildren and great grandchildren. Family and friends would enjoy listening to Ron's stories and hearing him recall all of his experiences and adventures with his sharp memory. He enjoyed being outdoors, surrounded by the beauty of nature. Ron was also an animal lover, especially dogs and horses. He will be sadly missed, but will always be in the hearts and minds of his friends and family.

Ron is survived by his loving wife Marlee Schreiber of Merrill, sons: Kerry Nimz of Merrill, Jeff (Jamey) Nimz of Wausau, Mike (Teresa) Schreiber of Merrill, Steve Schreiber of Arkansas and Tim (Janet) Schreiber of Merrill, grandchildren: Heather Nimz-Moore, Sunshine Nimz, Chandra Nimz, Dennis (Denise) Bloecher, Zach (Carly) Bloecher, Jacob Nimz, Robin Radloff, Ryan Radloff, Katie (Ryan) Tomajcik, Michael (Mercede) Schreiber, Savannah (Jordan) Roberts, Jennifer Schreiber and Amber Schreiber, great grandchildren: Rayne, Zoe, Saffron, Emma, Violet, Evan, Shane, Lucas, Bianca, Aidan, Izabella, Evelyn, Connor, Grayson, Michael, Croix, Violet and Ila, great great granddaughter: Aria, sister: Darlene Plautz of Merrill, sister-in-law: Pat Schreiber, son-in-law: Mike Ament of Tomahawk, brother-in-law: Bill Wagler of Rhinelander and numerous nieces, nephews and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, daughter: Laurie Ament, sister: Shirley Wagler, brother: Larry Schreiber and brother-in-law: Richard Plautz.

The memorial service for Ron will be held on Friday, January 5, 2024, at 11 a.m. at Waid Funeral Home. Pastor Adam DeBroux will officiate. Visitation will be held on Friday, January 5, 2024, from 9 a.m. until the time of the service, also at the funeral home. Inurnment at Merrill Memorial Park Cemetery will take place at a later date.

The service will be live-streamed for those unable to attend, and can be viewed at 11 a.m. on Friday, January 5, 2024, under his obituary on the funeral home website. It will then be posted as a recording for future viewing.

In lieu of flowers, family requests that donations in Ron's name be directed to the Lincoln County Sports Club at <https://lcsesportsclub.com>.

Ron's family wishes to thank the doctors and the nursing staff at the Aspirus Wausau Hospital, for their care and compassion shown to Ron and his family during his final days, it meant a lot.

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](http://www.waidfuneral.com).



**Rodney Einer Engel**, born November 26, 1960 in Merrill, WI, passed away on December 7, 2023 in Pinecrest Nursing Home, Merrill, WI. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

Rodney was a truck driver for most of his life, a job he loved. He was a passionate NASCAR fan and enjoyed being surrounded by family and friends.

Rodney is survived by his beloved wife of 17 years, Lori Engel; his children, Roseanne Newsom, Carrie Engel, Kayla

Schroeder, Rodney Engel Jr, Randy Diels Jr, Dana Diels, Andrew Diels, Leroy Ellis, Nick Ellis, Joseph Ellis, and Jake Ellis; and his grandchildren.

Family and friends are welcome to join us for the celebration of life at Social and Sick in Merrill, WI. The celebration of life will be January 21st, from 1:00pm to 5:00pm.



**Jack D. Grawien**, 75, Town of Pine River passed away peacefully on Friday, December 22, 2023, at his home.

He was born December 14, 1948, in Merrill, son of the late Elwood and Ruth (Hoff) Grawien. On June 27, 1970, he married Audie Schmeling in Neenah. She survives.

From 1969 until 1997 Jack worked at the Neenah Paper Mill. Throughout his life Jack loved being outdoors and outside. He proudly served his country in the 502nd Combat Support Group in the United States Army during the Vietnam War.

Survivors include his wife, Audie Grawien, Town of Pine River, two sons, Yancy Grawien, Appleton and Shannon "Otis" Grawien, Merrill, two grandchildren, Tristan and Elijah, his siblings, Lloyd (Linda) Grawien, Wausau, Rodney (Dorothy) Grawien, Merrill, Jody (Barb) Grawien, Gleason, Heidi (Jerome) Zinzer, Irma, two sisters-in-law, Peggy (Carl) Kennedy, Shawano and Vicky (Paul) Blaney, Jacksonville, FL along with numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

The funeral service for Jack was held at 11:00 A.M. on Friday, December 29, 2023, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Town of Pine River. The Rev. Greg Laska officiated. Burial followed in Springbrook Cemetery, Town of Pine River. Visitation took place from 4:00 P.M. until 7:00 P.M. on Thursday, December 28, 2023, at the Taylor-Stine Funeral Home, Merrill, and again on Friday beginning at 10:00 A.M. at the church.

Taylor-Stine Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Merrill, is assisting the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.taylorstinefuneralhome.com](http://www.taylorstinefuneralhome.com)

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Evelyn F., shown in the photo snuggling on a shelter kitten at the Lincoln County Humane Society, recently stopped in to donate money to help provide supplies for the animals at the shelter. Submitted photo.

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## SCREENINGS from page 3

cancer diagnosis. A digital rectal exam is less effective than the PSA blood test in finding prostate cancer, but it can sometimes find cancers in men with normal PSA levels. Therefore, it may be included as a part of prostate cancer screening based on risk."

"Patients often have questions about what it means to complete prostate cancer screening," Bittner said. "We try to make this a joint decision-making process, discussing the most up-to-date recommendations for screening options, depending on the patient's age and other risk factors. Quite often, this is simply completing a blood test."

To schedule an appointment with a primary care physician or to find one, visit: [aspirus.org/find-a-provider](http://aspirus.org/find-a-provider).



PUBLISHER'S LETTER

Journey Across Time: Exploring the Morality and Possibilities of Time Travel

Dear Reader,

In the ever-expanding realm of human curiosity, the notion of time travel has captivated minds for centuries.



While the concept of time travel may seem confined to the realms of science fiction, theories and speculations from brilliant minds like Einstein hint at the tantalizing possibility.

The allure of reconnecting with those who've left us is undeniably powerful. Imagine the chance to spend an afternoon with departed friends and family.

As we grapple with these hypotheticals, it's essential to consider not just the question of "can we," but also the "should we."

Yet, as we ponder the prospect of navigating the corridors of time, ethical questions arise. Would we disrupt the natural order of events?

In the face of these complexities, one truth remains: The past, present, and future are intricately interconnected.

Looking forward poses its own set of challenges. The unknown future, a realm of infinite possibilities, sparks both excitement and trepidation.

So, while we may not have unlocked the secrets of time travel - yet - the mere contemplation of its possibilities invites us to reflect on our past.

PATRICK J. WOOD
Publisher

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.

TO THE EDITOR:

RE: Pine Crest

Ryan Hanson, Pine Crest Administrator (539-2532), told me he wouldn't express his opinions, but he would provide me with facts.

There are about 95 employees at Pine Crest, over 90% of whom live in Lincoln County.

The annual operating budget for Pine Crest is in the \$12-13 million range. Revenue comes from Medicaid, insurance and Medicare, supplemental payments from the state (a complicated formula), and the tax levy.

The tax levy is \$440,000 and constitutes less than 1/20 of

total revenue.

Wages for employees take up over half of the annual budget (Ryan didn't have an exact figure), but it's at least \$6 million.

Medicaid residents at Pine Crest constitute around 75% of total residents. Medicaid traditionally pays the least, usually under the actual cost of care, which is why private nursing facilities keep Medicaid residents down to 10-15%.

North Central Health Care, which manages Pine Crest, pays the \$650,000 annual debt on Pine Crest.

To sum up: For \$440,000 annual tax levy, Lincoln County gets a nursing home with an annual budget exceeding \$12 million, over half of which budget pays wages for nearly 100 employees.

Who can honestly say that Lincoln County can't afford Pine Crest?

- Paul Gilk
Merrill, Wis.

MOVIES YOU GOTTA SEE

50 years later, "The Sting" gets better with every watch

BY JALEN MAKI

Have you ever watched a movie for the first time, thought it was fine, then watched it again later on and realized it absolutely rules?

For me, one of those movies is The Sting.

Released on Christmas Day in 1973-50 years ago last week-The Sting stars Paul Newman and Robert Redford and reunites them with Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid director George Roy Hill.

The film, set in 1936, begins with Johnny Hooker (Redford), a young con man in Joliet, Ill., scamming an unsuspecting guy on the street out of a big chunk of change.

Gondorff in the Windy City, Gondorff eventually agrees to make a play to take down Lonnegan and get payback for Luther's death, and we're off.

Gondorff enlists the help of some fellow swindlers who also knew Luther and want to get revenge against Lonnegan. After finding out that Lonnegan is a high-stakes poker enthusiast, the crew decides to pull a scam called "the wire," a grift in which a gambler is conned out of a large sum of money at a fake horse betting parlor.

Hooking and reeling Lonnegan in is its own scam-which also might be the most fun stretch of the movie.

Hooker later learns that the guy they ripped off was a money runner for notorious and brutal mob boss Doyle Lonnegan (Shaw, dialing up the menace).

Hooking and reeling Lonnegan in is its own scam-which also might be the most fun stretch of the movie. Gondorff poses as a loud, drunken Chicago bookie named "Shaw" and buys his way into Lonnegan's poker game on the 20th Century Limited train running between New York City and Chicago.



grand. Lonnegan, although a card cheater himself, does not handle this well. Hooker then swoops in, acting as "Kelly," an employee of "Shaw" who tells the incensed Lonnegan he wants to double-cross his boss and take over his gambling operation.

I won't spoil the actual execution of the con, but watching Gondorff, Hooker, and the gang meticulously pull it off is riveting.

See MOVIES page 10

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.

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.

Please send announcements, news briefs, photo submissions and letters to the editor to: tscott@mmclocal.com

LEGAL NOTICES

Legals 7700

BY THE COURT:
DATE SIGNED: 12/12/2023
/S/Judge Russell
CIRCUIT JUDGE/COURT COMMISSIONER

STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
Notice and Order for Name Change Hearing

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

IT IS ORDERED:
This petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin:

Legals 7700

This petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin:

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED:
Notice of this hearing shall be given by publication as a Class 3 notice for three (3) weeks in a row prior to the date of the hearing in the Foto News a newspaper published in Lincoln County, State of Wisconsin.

DATE SIGNED: December 15, 2023
Electronically signed by Becky S. Byer
Probate Registrar

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF DAWN EILEEN EVENSON

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:
1. An application for informal administration was filed.

BY THE COURT:
DATE SIGNED: 12/26/23
/S/Robert R. Russell
CIRCUIT JUDGE/COURT COMMISSIONER

STATE OF WISCONSIN
CIRCUIT COURT, LINCOLN COUNTY
Notice and Order for Name Change Hearing

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

TOWN OF MERRILL
NOTICE OF TOWN CAUCUS

A Town Caucus will be held immediately following completion of the Town of Merrill monthly Board Meeting, Monday, January 8th, 2024 at 6:30 PM.

OFFICE INCUMBENT
TWO (2) TOWN SUPERVISORS TIM MUESKE
CUTLER NOWAK

TERM OF OFFICE IS FOR TWO (2) YEARS
BEGINNING ON TUESDAY APRIL 16th, 2024

Mitzi Flegner, Clerk www.townofmerrillwi.gov
Published January 4, 2024 WNAXLP





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### Area Events & Entertainment Community Calendar

Jan. 4 - BINGO at St. Francis Xavier School  
 Jan. 4 - Open Mic Night at Sawmill Brewing Co.  
 Jan. 5-7 - Merrill Youth Squirt B Hockey Tournament at the MARC  
 Jan. 6 - Winter Ice Oval Races in Gleason  
 Jan. 10 - Trivia Night at Sawmill Brewing Co.  
 Jan. 11 - Open Mic Night at Sawmill Brewing Co.  
 For more information, go to: merrillchamber.org/events or contact the event sponsor.

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 MONDAY THRU THURSDAY: 7:00PM ONLY

**MIGRATION**  
 "PG" (1HR 32MIN)  
 FRIDAY: 7:00PM  
 SATURDAY & SUNDAY: 1:00, 3:00 & 7:00PM  
 MONDAY THRU THURSDAY: 7:00PM ONLY

**WONKA**  
 "PG" (1HR 56MIN)  
 FRIDAY: 7:00PM  
 SATURDAY & SUNDAY: 1:00, 3:30 & 7:00PM  
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 Dinner served: Tuesday 4:00-8:00 PM

**FRIDAY NIGHTS**  
**JAN. 5TH - BAKED SALMON**  
**JAN. 12TH - SHRIMP**  
 Dinner served: Friday 4:00-8:00 PM  
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 • SATURDAY: Bar Open at 3pm  
 • SUNDAY: Bar Open From 11am-7pm

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**WEEKLY BRIEFING - JANUARY 4<sup>TH</sup> - 10<sup>TH</sup>**

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**Pet of the Week**

This sweet man is **Steven!** He came to us as a stray and appears to be mostly blind but does seem to see shapes. He is just the sweetest boy and enjoys going for walks and will just need someone to be able to work with him on his new surroundings so that he can get use to them. He would be great with someone who is home more often. Meet Steven and fall in love soon!

Visit all the adoptable pets at the Lincoln County Humane Society, 310 N. Memorial Dr., in Merrill. Hours: MON.-SAT. 12-4 PM & SUN. 12-2 PM. Call the shelter at 715-536-3459, or visit us at www.furrypets.com.

SPONSORED BY **Dave's County Market**  
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Lincoln County Human Society sends a big thank you to Grace Lutheran Sunday School for donating some no-sew blankets for the animals at the shelter. Submitted photo.

## Getting outside in winter is good for you

As the saying goes, there's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing choices.

Even though the winter weather is turning colder, don't give up your outdoor time. Getting outdoors is still a great way to boost health. Bundle up in moisture-wicking layers and don your coat, hat, gloves, and snow boots and head outdoors for your health and well-being:

### Outdoor time elevates moods.

Exposure to natural light – even in the shorter days of winter – raises levels of serotonin, the body's "happy chemical." Sunlight is also a good way to get a natural dose of vitamin D, which is good for your bones and immune system.

### Memories Improve.

Researchers at the University of Michigan conducted a study that revealed walking in a natural setting versus an urban one improved recall ability by nearly 20 percent.

### Reconnecting and recharging outdoors is safe.

Unplugging from your computer, smartphone



Getting outdoors in the winter is healthy and fun! Some Merrill High School physical education classes even incorporate outdoor sledding, like this photo taken last season. Tina L. Scott photo.

and television is important even when it's cold out and can be accomplished by simply going outside. Epidemiologists agree outside is still the safest place to gather. Add a patio heater or fire pit to your backyard to make it even cozier.

### Activity boosts immunity.

According to MedlinePlus, exercise helps decrease your risk for heart

disease, maintains bone health, and can help flush bacteria out of the lungs and airways.

### More calories are burned in the cold.

Being outside in the wintertime requires your body to work harder to keep you warm. Consequently, you burn more calories. Engage in a friendly snowball fight with your kids or take a walk with Fido to the park to rev up your metabolism and have a little fun along the way.

### It doesn't take long to reap nature's benefits.

Here's a bit of good news for cold days. A study from the University of Michigan concluded that spending just 20 minutes in a natural setting reduces the level of cortisol, the stress hormone.

Taking care of your yard in the wintertime is a good way to log some time

outside and it helps prepare it for spring.

Just remember if you're using a snowthrower, chainsaw, or other outdoor power equipment to do some of the heavy lifting this year, read the owner's manual first and abide by all safety precautions.

These tips were excerpted from an article provided by TurfMutt.com. TurfMutt was created by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute's (OPEI) TurfMutt Foundation and has reached more than 70 million children, educators, and families since 2009. Through classroom materials developed with Scholastic, TurfMutt teaches students and teachers how to "save the planet, one yard at a time." TurfMutt is an official USGBC® Education Partner and part of their global LEARNING LAB.

## MERRILL FOTO NEWS Student of the Week

This Week's Featured Student is **Malayna Kufahl**  
 Daughter of **Katie Kufahl & Eric Meyer and Brian Kufahl**  
 Malayna is in 6th Grade at St. John Lutheran School. She was nominated by Mrs. Koch.

**What is your favorite subject in school? Why?**  
 My favorite subject is language arts, because I like spelling.

**What is your favorite part of school? Why?**  
 My favorite part of school is being able to hang out with my friends in class and at recess.

**What would you like to do/become someday? Why?**  
 When I grow up I want to be a veterinarian because I love animals and want to be able to help them.

Student of the Week Sponsored by:

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## LCHS November Donors

The Lincoln County Humane Society would like to thank the following donors for their support in November:

Meghan Stevenson; Dean Barker; Destiney Bean; Dale Casperson; Ruth James; Louis Reichelt; Darlene Raunio; Cecil Ballou; James & Rosemary Schielke; Nadine Appel; Janet Selnes; Pamela Welch; Pledging Foundation; The Fix Is In, Inc; Kendra Hawley; Ivy Catlin; Paypal Giving Fund; Sharayah Lee; Tasha Jaeger; Erin Wells; Dick & Gay Baumgart; Deb & Bruce Gerdes; Schulz Heating & Cooling; First Riverside Presbyterian Church; Amy Marthenze; Jane Parsons; Linda Tompach; Ellen Malinowski; Christine Canning; Network for Good; Rick & Judith Lombard; Brett & Jennifer Beaumier; Lynn Roeder; Christine & George Brahos; Kimberly Freund; Claudia Krause; Yvonne Stults; Gilberto Alvarado; Hilary Scully; Troy & Angela Mcpherson; and William & Patricia Haskin.

We appreciate the support of our shelter pets!





# THE GLEASON CORNER

BY TINA L. SCOTT, EDITOR

## 17 Scoops: Sweet treats and good eats in Gleason year round

17 Scoops, located at N5336 Wis. Hwy. 17 in Gleason, began as a seasonal business in April 2022, but in 2023, owner Andrea Roggenbuck decided to keep the business open year-round, adopting weekend hours (12-8 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 12-7 p.m. on Sunday) for winter. Summer hours will resume in spring.

The Gleason ice-cream shop always has at least 17 flavors of Chocolate Shop ice cream to choose from, and during peak season in the summer, offers up to 24 flavors, including four Italian ices made by Chocolate Shop, along with 17 signature sundaes. Ice cream is available in cups and cones, shakes and melts, floats, smoothies, ala modes, and ice cream "to go" by the pint, sundae pint (a sundae to go), quart, and half gallon, and a 10 pack of cones.

An ala mode is one of their most popular winter ice cream treats, made with a hot drink. "It's a float [similar to a root beer float] but instead of it being soda, it's a hot drink," Roggenbuck said. "They can choose and mix and match whatever flavors they want." Two scoops of ice cream are combined with their choice of hot drink: Caribou coffee, hot chocolate, spiced chai, hot apple cider, etc. For instance, the mocha ala mode is coffee with Zanzibar ice cream. "That one's fun," Roggenbuck said. "The coffee one people have [also] been doing with the Iced Latte Da flavor, which is a caffeinated ice cream, so it really tastes more like a latte." [The Iced Latte Da flavor is described as fantastic Wisconsin-made caffeinated espresso ice cream with a fudge swirl and chocolate chunks.]

Roggenbuck is proud to offer the Chocolate Shop brand. It's made in Madison with milk from Wisconsin cows, she said. "It's the best. It's actually one of the heaviest cream ice creams. It's homemade, batch by batch, since 1962." In early 2023, "they started homogenizing their own milk. So they're actually getting it straight from the cow and doing all of it themselves," she said. "And the cows live just a few miles from the plants. It's really great."

17 Scoops also offers food—from breakfast sandwiches to hot dogs to wraps,

BLTs, and more, available as a sandwich alone or a basket that includes a pickle, chips, and a drink. They carry both Coke and Pepsi products, Roggenbuck said, as well as Jolly Good soda, another Wisconsin-made product. "We are a Jolly Good supplier, so people can buy their Jolly Good by the 12-pack, or however many they want," she said.

They also offer soups—a great winter treat—with a soup of the day, such as cheddar broccoli, tomato basil bisque, chicken noodle, Northwoods chili, farmer's market vegetable, and cheesy potato and bacon. They have daily soup and sandwich specials "so if you buy a sandwich or a sandwich basket, you get a dollar off your soup," Roggenbuck said.

While the majority of summer business orders take place at the front windows, with visitors enjoying ice cream at the outdoor tables, in winter an ice-cream cabinet/counter is available indoors along with indoor seating space.

Indoors, in addition to delicious treats and eats, 17 Scoops sells candy, small toys, some books, Gleason-themed mugs, and t-shirts and sweatshirts with ice cream and Gleason area themes that Roggenbuck designed herself to help promote local outdoor recreation opportunities including Harrison Hills, Gleason as the "Trout Fishing Capital of the World," the "Lakes of the Harrison Hills," and Gleason in general. She will be creating and adding more designs, and hopes to also offer more local and Wisconsin-made products next year, including candles and fudge. They are also considering expanding the indoor seating/store area.

The shop features a Northwoods Information Center to provide visitors more information about all of the recreation opportunities in the area, along with ATV trail maps and special maps for the Gleason Area.

In the winter, when the snowmobile trail is open, "it comes right through here," Roggenbuck said. "They can zip right off and come on in here." It's a great opportunity for a hot meal and a sweet treat on a winter day.



Andrea Roggenbuck serves up more than 17 flavors of delicious Chocolate Shop ice cream. Tina L. Scott photo



An ala mode combines ice cream and a hot drink, perfect for a cold winter day. Tina L. Scott photo



17 Scoops dishes up delicious hard serve ice cream, made in Wisconsin. Tina L. Scott photo

**Gleason Mennonite Church**  
5626 State Road 17, Gleason, WI

For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.  
Matthew 18:20

**Luther Memorial Church**  
N5308 Town Hall Rd., Gleason, WI

*Come Worship with Us...*

Saturday Worship with Communion 6:00 pm	Sunday Worship with communion 10:30 am Sunday School 9:15 am
--	--

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• Cabins

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Free Local Delivery

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Displays in Rhinelander and at our Shop Located 1 Mile N. of Gleason on Hwy 17

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Phone: 715-536-7121  
Fax: 715-539-3686

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- Maintenance Staff up to \$35/hr

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- Or Email your resume to [gebeyer@lincolnwindows.com](mailto:gebeyer@lincolnwindows.com)

We are an equal opportunity employer.

**Announcements 7005**

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)

If you would like to be included in this Business Directory, please call 715-536-7121



**General Employment 7110**

**Title: CDL Class A Driver** – No weekends and home every night! **Salary Range:** \$23-\$25 per hour, based on experience  
**Job Type: Full-time**  
Styrene Products Inc. is seeking an experienced Class A CDL driver with a great attitude and a desire for a unique driving position. Drivers typically start at 5/6 AM and return from routes by mid-afternoon/ early evening that same day.

- No weekends, no overnights, with most routes local in Wisconsin.
  - Our ideal candidate will have:**
    - A minimum of 5 years of CDL Class A driving experience
    - Excellent attendance
    - Ability to be a problem solver
    - Self-motivated and can work under minimal supervision
    - Represents the company well while on the road and at customer locations
- Styrene Products, Inc. is a custom fabricator of expanded polystyrene products. Our products are used in a variety of applications with an emphasis on packaging solutions. We have been in business approximately 40 years and operate 2 facilities in the state of Wisconsin. We offer our employees the flexibility needed to maintain a healthy work/life balance.
- Many ways to apply!**
1. Apply online at Indeed
  2. Stop by 5320 Fuller Street in Schofield, WI to pick up an application. You can fill it out that day or take it home and return at your leisure!

**Professional and Technical 7135**

**OTR TRUCK DRIVERS FT/PT Put Your Career in Gear!** Competitive wages & full benefits. Mileage, Drop pay, Paid weekly Home weekends, NO east/west coast, 28 central states. Van & Hopper Division. Agriculture experience a plus. Fox Valley company since 1958 Call Frank 920-788-6242 or 920-858-0238. Van Groll Trucking, Kaukauna

**Estate Sales 7208**

**JANE'S Estate Sales & Services LLC**  
Wausau: Friday, 1/5, 11 a.m.- 4 p.m., Saturday, 1/6, 9 a.m.- 3 p.m., Sunday, 1/7, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m. Beautiful east side historic home. Treasures of all types! - 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 10:00am on Friday. NOTICE: NO PARKING ON 10TH ST. 1002 Fulton St

**Musical Instruments 7220**

FOR SALE  
**Peavey XR600C mixer amp** w/speakers & cords. Very clean, good condition. \$650. 715-675-2455, ask for Dan.

**Firewood 7244**

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**Miscellaneous Merchandise 7266**

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**PAYING CASH FOR GUNS, AMMO & RELATED** Any amount or condition. Collections & Estates Welcome. 715-229-9148 or cell 262-853-3853

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**Dogs 7272**

**AKC CAVALIER KING CHARLES SPANIEL PUPS** dewts/shots/vet/worm ready to go! \$900 715-536-0697 or 715-316-2522 (WCAN)

**BOSTON RAT TERRIER PUPS** Shots/Wormed/Vetckd Can Dlvr \$400 715-255-2661 (#269146)

**Cockapoo Puppies** -Female Sweet Friendly Fluffy \$500 OMO 715-669-3512

**FOR SALE MINI BERNESE CHRISTMAS PUPPIES** shots Price reduced \$600 608-396-1374

**LINCOLN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT JOIN OUR TEAM**

**We Are Hiring A Health Aide**

The Health Aide provides nail care to the senior population and hearing screenings in schools. Perfect position for someone wanting to work a few hours per month.

Starting wage is \$16.86 per hour. 8-10 hours a month with additional hours in the fall for hearing screening.

Position requires graduation from high school and satisfactory completion of a certified nursing assistant course; or any combination of training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

**Apply Today at [co.lincoln.wi.us/jobs](http://co.lincoln.wi.us/jobs)**

Application forms are available at the Lincoln County Service Center, 801 N. Sales Street, Merrill and at [co.lincoln.wi.us/jobs](http://co.lincoln.wi.us/jobs). An equal opportunity employer.

**New Year - New Career!**

Don't miss your opportunity to recruit new employees by advertising your open positions in the Foto News **New Year - New Career!** Special Section.

**Publishes:** Thursday, January 11th & 18th  
**Deadline:** Friday, January 5th

**GET 25% OFF the 2nd week in the Merrill Foto News!**  
Run your ad on January 11th at regular price. Run the same ad in the Foto News on January 18th for 25% off the regular price.

**BOTH WEEKS -- ADD MORE MARKETS AT 25% OFF!**  
Run the same ad in any additional papers and get 25% off the Merrill Foto News regular ad price.

**MERRILL Foto News**

**Contact:** Jennifer Gartmann - 715-218-1644  
Dinah Schneider - 715-905-1001

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Kolbe & Kolbe Millwork Company, Inc. is recognized throughout the industry as a leader in the manufacturing of custom, superior quality windows and doors that can be found in some of the most visionary residences and commercial projects in North America.

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**Seeking Full-time 1st Shift Production Team Members No Experience Required**

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EOE

**TESTING & CERTIFICATION MANAGER**

**POSITION SUMMARY:**  
Manage all aspects of the certification programs from testing to labeling.

**PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**  
Manage certification timelines for new and existing products including test schedules, report reviews and product submittals as required.

**ADDITIONAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Company representative for association meetings related to code-compliance
- Oversee third-party audit requests; respond to audit results
- Trouble-shoot product failures; work with engineers to modify and resolve

**DIRECTLY SUPERVISES:**  
Testing support personnel

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED:**

- Bachelor degree in Engineering,
- Business or related field preferred; will consider work experience and train qualified candidate
- Minimum 4 years' experience in window industry
- Detail-oriented
- Proficient in Excel
- Ability to manage multiple projects at one time

**MAIL RESUMES:**  
Weather Shield HR, PO Box 309, Medford, WI 54451

**EMAIL RESUMES:**  
[Careers@WeatherShield.com](mailto:Careers@WeatherShield.com)

**WEATHER SHIELD WINDOWS & DOORS**



**Dogs 7272**

**CUTE & CUDDLY PUREBRED BORDER COLLIE PUPS** Shots/Wormed Great Pet/Working Dogs Parents/site \$150 715-667-3342

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**GOLDENDOODLE PUPS** Shots/Wormed/Vet-chkd Can Dlvr \$400 715-255-2661 (#269146)

**MINI COCK-A-POOS** Hypo-allergenic, Non-shed, shots/vet F-\$600, M-\$500; PUREBRED REG COCKER SPANIEL PUPPIES 715-758-2433

**MINI GOLDENDOODLE PUPS** Will be 20 pounds. Cute and Cuddly. 715-409-0533

**PUREBRED GOLDEN RETRIEVER PUPPIES** shots/vet/wormed, M-\$300, F-\$400, 715-223-5663 No Sun Calls

**PUREBRED GOLDEN RETRIEVER PUPS** Shots/Wormed, Vet Ckd M-\$300, F-\$350 cash only 715-267-6370 No Sunday Calls



**Purebred Jack Russell Terrier** puppies. First shots and dewormed. \$400 each. Call or text 715-921-2930

**Sheltie Mix Pups** intelligent & Good w/kids. \$100 OBO No Sun Calls 715-223-1119

**SHELTIE PUPPIES** shots/vet checked M-\$250 F-\$300 Ready to Go 715-218-2670



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Online Bidding Ends Monday, January 8th

**New & Used Semi Parts, Welder, Large Metal Shear, Screw Drive Air Compressor, Tools & More - Green Bay, WI**  
**Open House Friday, January 5th from 10:00am-3:00pm**  
1750 Paulsen Rd, Green Bay, WI 54313  
Online Bidding Ends Thursday, January 11th

Bidding Starts at \$1! For more information call 920-383-1012 Highest Bid Wins!  
Terms: 10% Buyers Fee, Bryce Hansen, registered WI auctioneer #225

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**Homes For Sale 7454**

**FOR SALE BY OWNER- 3 BD, 1 BA house,** full basement, back deck. Tomahawk, 117 Prospect St. 715-360-2078 or 432-557-6875.

**Passenger Cars 7538**

**GET YOUR DEDUCTION AHEAD OF THE YEAR-END!** Donate Your Car, Truck or SUV to assist the blind & visually impaired. Arrange a swift, no-cost vehicle pickup & secure a generous year-end tax credit. Call **HERITAGE FOR THE BLIND** today at! 844-374-3067 (WCAN)

**SUVs 7544**

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**Miscellaneous Services 7374**

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Matthew K. of Merrill was out doing some holiday shopping and decided to pick up some much-needed items and donate them to the Lincoln County Humane Society, a little Christmas present for the pets at the shelter. Submitted photo.

**Don't be late with your Classified Deadline Mondays at 4:00 pm**

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# REPORTS

## LINCOLN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE REPORT

**FOR WEEK ENDING DEC. 31, 2023**

On 12/25/2023 at approximately 9:12 p.m. a deputy with the Sheriff's Office observed a vehicle traveling northbound on USH 51 near CTH V in the Town of Birch at an extremely high rate of speed. The deputy indicated the vehicle was traveling in excess of 100 mph. The deputy radioed for help and attempted to go after the vehicle. A short time later a second deputy observed the vehicle still northbound on USH 51 traveling 127 mph. The second deputy attempted to pursue the vehicle but terminated the chase for safety concerns. The information was passed on to the Oneida County Sheriff's Office. At this point the car and driver have not been identified.

On 12/26/2023 at approximately 7:42 a.m. emergency crews were sent to the Lokemoen boat landing in the Town of Merrill for a car partially submerged in the Wisconsin River. [See front page article.]

On 12/27/2023 at approximately 6:42 p.m. in the area of 1st St. and Center Ave. in the City of Merrill a deputy stopped a vehicle for failure to yield the right of

way at the roundabout. When stopped, the driver, a 21-year-old male from Merrill, told the deputy that he didn't have a valid driver's license. During the stop, the driver asked the deputy to just let him go and then offered the deputy money to let him go. The driver was cited for a criminal charge of operating a motor vehicle 3+ times in a 3-year period, as well as failure to yield the right of way. The driver was then required to wait for someone with a valid license to come and move his vehicle.

On 12/30/2023 at approximately 4:32 p.m. deputies were sent to the area of USH 51 and Schulz Spur Rd. in the Town of Merrill for a reported motor vehicle crash with injuries. Investigating deputies discovered the driver, a 40-year-old male, had lost control of his vehicle on icy roads and crashed. The driver sustained minor injuries and was transported to Aspirus Merrill Hospital by ambulance. The two occupants were uninjured and transported to Aspirus Merrill Hospital to be with the driver.

On 12/30/2023 at approximately 6:46 p.m. deputies were sent to the area of USH 51 and Lincoln Dr. in the Town of Merrill for a reported motor vehicle crash with injuries. Investigating deputies discovered that the driver, a

73-year-old Marshfield man, was southbound on USH 51 when he lost control of his vehicle on icy roads. As a result of this, the vehicle flipped on its driver's side, pinning the driver in the car. The driver sustained minor injuries and was transported to Aspirus Wausau Hospital by ambulance.

On 12/31/2023 at approximately 6:17 p.m. deputies were sent to the area of CTH M and Tower Rd. in the Town of Corning for a reported motor vehicle crash with injuries. Investigating deputies discovered that the driver, a 33-year-old Antigo man, was westbound on CTH M when he said he lost control of his vehicle on loose gravel on the road, causing him to overcorrect the vehicle. The vehicle then entered the ditch and rolled onto its roof. Both the driver and his passenger, a 47-year-old woman from Ladysmith, were transported by ambulance to Aspirus Merrill Hospital. A dog in the vehicle was transported by a deputy to the Lincoln County Humane Society to be cared for until the owner could get the dog. There were four car vs deer crashes this week.

of approximately 5-8 shots fired near Ott's Park. Officers responded to the area and no gun shots were heard. Another officer stated that he was outside and heard the gun shots, but they were believed to be several miles out of town. This investigation was closed.

**12-26-23**  
At 3:46 p.m. officers were advised of a suspicious male party at the Merrill High School football field, who was standing on the 50 yard line. Contact was made with the male party, who advised officers that he was just practicing field goal kicks. No enforcement action was taken.

At 6:32 p.m. officers were advised of a hazardous situation in the City of Merrill. The reporting party advised that a manhole cover was broken and that someone would get hurt. Officers responded to the area and located a manhole cover that was damaged. Officers put a barricade over the manhole cover and advised the Merrill Street Department about the issue.

**12-27-23**  
At 7:04 a.m. officers were advised of a gas meter that had been tampered with. The reporting party advised that someone had taken a screw from a gas regulator. Officers responded to the scene and spoke with a resident who was a person of interest in this case. Officers do

not have definitive proof of this resident tampering with the gas meter, and the case is still under investigation.

At 2:50 p.m. officers responded to a property damage complaint. Officers were advised that a vehicle struck a recycling bin the night prior and was captured on video. Officers collected vehicle parts from the scene, and this incident is still under investigation.

**12-29-23**  
At 2:26 p.m. officers observed a female party who was known to have active warrants for her arrest. When officers attempted to make contact with the female, she fled on foot. The female party was then located, identified, and taken into custody.

At 8:18 p.m. officers were advised of an odd odor coming from the 6th ward area in the City of Merrill. Upon further investigation, officers found out that there was a farmer spreading manure on his field just southwest of town.

**12-30-23**  
At 5:29 p.m. officers were advised that a female suspect had taken items from a store and had other stolen items inside of her vehicle before leaving. Officers were able to locate the vehicle and identified the two female suspects. During the investigation, a K9 was requested to the scene and had a positive alert on the vehicle. During a

search of the vehicle, narcotics were located and the female suspects were taken into custody.

At 8:09 p.m. officers responded to a two-vehicle accident where one party was possibly trapped. During the incident, State Hwy. 64 had to be closed down. During the investigation, one driver was found to be operating under the influence and taken into custody.

**12-31-2023**  
At 1:32 a.m. officers were requested to assist in a vehicle crash just outside the City of Merrill. Officers arrived on scene and located the operator of the vehicle who was no longer alive. Officers remained on scene and assisted deputies who later arrived.

At 6:46 p.m. officers were dispatched in reference to a vehicle that had driven into a fire hydrant. The fire hydrant and vehicle sustained disabling damage. The operator and passenger of the vehicle were uninjured. The driver was issued a citation after he confessed he had fallen asleep behind the wheel.

At 9:00 p.m. officers were dispatched to a business after receiving a call that a male party had fallen and was now bleeding. The individual was found to be intoxicated, with a large gash to his forehead. The individual was transported to the hospital for treatment.

## MERRILL POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORTS

**12-25-23**  
At 7:18 p.m. officers were advised

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- CLUES ACROSS**
- Bleated
  - Snakelike fish
  - Database management system
  - Russian-American violinist
  - Wendy's founder Thomas
  - Ancient Italian-Greek colony
  - Negatives
  - Rescued
  - Self-immolation by fire ritual
  - Assigns tasks to
  - Island nation native
  - Trade
  - Detergent brand
  - Famed NY Giant
  - Before
  - Split pulses
  - Extremely angry; highly incensed
  - Body part
  - American state
  - David \_\_, US playwright
  - Move one's head slightly
  - Secret rendezvous
  - Improved
  - A place to exercise
  - 18-year astronomical period
  - Automobile
  - You can take it
  - A radio band
  - Jaws of an animal
  - Short-billed rails
  - Chinese province
  - Shameless and undisguised
  - Horizontal passage into a mine
  - Adult males
  - Fail to entertain
  - Dried-up
  - City in north-central Utah
  - Southern U.S.

66. German river
67. Oxygen
68. Make law
- CLUES DOWN**
- Curved segment
  - Wings
  - From pentane (Chemistry)
  - Gradually gets into
  - Commercial document (abbr.)
  - Overhang
  - Christmas and New Year's have them
  - Type of bulb
  - Lacking a plan
  - Tattle
  - Rockers like it "heavy"
  - One who's been canonized
  - Indicate time and place
  - Nobel Prize winner in physics
  - The voice of Olaf
  - Fragmented rock
  - They \_\_
  - Master of Philosophy
  - Backside
  - Landmark house in L.A.
  - An act of undue intimacy
  - From which a later word is derived
  - Equal to 10 meters
  - Neither
  - Computer language
  - Sacred book of Judaism
  - A woolen cap of Scottish origin
  - A way to dedicate
  - Challenges
  - British Air Aces
  - Large, influential bank
  - Portended
  - Cavalry-sword
  - Vaccine developer
  - Napoleonic Wars general
  - Italian Seaport
  - Hip joint
  - \_\_ Clapton, musician
  - Insect repellent
  - Decorative scarf
  - Delaware

T	C	V	N	E	R	I	V	R	E	D	E
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# Merrill woman arrested for OWI, fourth offense

On Jan. 1, 2024, at 2:15 a.m., a 29-year-old Merrill woman was arrested for operating a motor vehicle under the influence (OWI), fourth offense, according to a press release issued by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) Wisconsin State Patrol (WSP).

A Trooper with the Wisconsin State Patrol Wausau Post stopped a black 2018 Hyundai Elantra on Schofield Ave. near Alderson St. in Marathon County for exceeding the posted speed limit and a registration violation. Indicators of

impairment were observed in the driver, Marissa Rose Atkinson, and a subsequent investigation, including field sobriety tests, indicated the driver was operating under the influence and she was arrested.

Pursuant to the direction of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, as found in Supreme Court Rule 20:3.6, Trial Publicly, you are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

## MOVIES

from page 5

and they adapt and adjust on the fly like the pros they

are, never breaking a sweat. Newman's one of the coolest dudes who's ever been on screen, and his swagger is cranked to 11 throughout. *The Sting* is a film that

demands the viewer's full attention. If one conversation, one line of dialogue, or even one quick glance is missed, the intricate house of cards that is the plot might collapse for the viewer, even if the scam itself remains perfectly intact. *The Sting* is an impressive feat of filmmaking—the complexity of the con is topped only by the deftness of its execution, and it is incredibly fun to be with these guys for a couple of hours as they avenge their fallen friend.

I enjoyed *The Sting* on my first watch, but in going back and revisiting it a few times, I've continued to notice things I hadn't before, and it adds even more depth to an already engrossing and lively story. Most movies aren't necessarily rewarding on a continual basis, but *The Sting* is, unequivocally.

When they first meet, Gondorff informs Hooker of the importance of the grift's longevity. "You have to keep this con even after you take his money," Gondorff says. "He can't know you took him." Like the con, *The Sting*, similarly, has endured. 50 years after its release, it holds up as well as any movie of its era.

Follow Jalen on Letterboxd at [letterboxd.com/jalenmaki182/](https://letterboxd.com/jalenmaki182/) to see what he's been watching, and read more at [medium.com/@jalenmaki](https://medium.com/@jalenmaki).

**SUDOKU**

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Level: Intermediate

Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

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# MAPS releases Community Survey results on facilities planning

BY TINA L. SCOTT  
EDITOR

A press release issued by Merrill Area Public Schools (MAPS) said residents indicate support for facilities improvements in the district and the associated \$16 million price tag associated with those improvements outlined in the “base plan” option presented in the MAPS community-wide survey conducted in November. The survey was mailed to every household in the MAPS district in November and could be completed and returned either by mail or online.

The results of that survey were provided to the MAPS Board of Education and administrators at the December School Board meeting on Dec. 13, 2023, by Bill Foster, President and Founder of School Perceptions LLC, the independent, Wisconsin-based firm hired to conduct the survey based on their “extensive expertise conducting school district surveys,” according to the release.

The report from School Perceptions is available on the district website at: [mapsedu.org/district/facilities-planning.cfm](https://mapsedu.org/district/facilities-planning.cfm) (on the far right, under the “Resources” heading, click on “December 13, 2023 Presentation Community Survey Results.”)

## Survey demographics

- 1,522 total survey respondents, of which 92% were residents of the MAPS district and 8% (approx. 121 survey respondents) were not.
- 18% of survey respondents (approx. 274) are employees of MAPS.
- 32% of survey respondents have children attending MAPS schools, while 68% do not.
- 33% of survey respondents are age 65 or older
- 33% of the parents responding and a whopping 76% of the non-parents/non-staff responding said they prefer to get their school/district information from the *Merrill Foto News*.

## Key findings according to MAPS

- The MAPS press release cited the following key findings:
- When asked to share advice regarding the future of Prairie River Middle School, there was no clear majority or direction given.
  - 68% of resident parents showed support for the \$16 million proposed base plan. This demographic (resident parents with students in MAPS) represents about 25% of the community.
  - 56% of resident non-parents/non-staff indicated willingness to support the \$16 million proposed base plan. This demographic (residents without children attending MAPS) represents about 75% of the community.
  - Using a weighted analysis calculation, School Perceptions estimated that there was 59% support for the \$16 million proposed base plan.

## The proposed \$16 million base plan

- The base plan proposed in the survey, with a \$16 million price tag, which “would address the most pressing issues and better utilize the District’s best buildings,” according to the press release, would consist of:
- Updates to Jefferson Elementary to accommodate new usage, including:
    - Renovate an area for the Head Start program.
    - Renovate an area for the Bridges Virtual Academy.
    - Renovate an area for the Northern Achievement Center.

- Maintain gym and kitchen.
- Address existing outdated building plumbing, HVAC, and electrical systems.
- Create separate entrances for NAC and Head Start.
- Create dedicated playground areas.
- Move Pine River School for Young Learners (PRSYL), Bridges Virtual Academy (BVA), and the Northern Achievement Center (NAC) program to the Jefferson Elementary building.
- Demolition of the Northern Achievement Center (NAC) and the Storage Building (Old NAC).
- Renovate underutilized high school space to accommodate the District Office and build new maintenance building.
- Move District Office to the Merrill High School building.
- Demolition of the District Office and maintenance building.
- Sell the current Pine River PRSYL property.

## Background on MAPS facilities needs

Merrill Area Public Schools currently serves grades Pre-K through 12 totaling approximately 2,272 students. The district’s declining enrollment suggests some realignment of facilities would better serve current needs. Enrollment in 2013-14 was 3,515 students, and enrollment has been steadily declining in all but one year. The MAPS press release cited declining enrollment of “over 17% in the last 10 years” looking at numbers up to and including the 2022-23 academic year.

However, comparing 2013-14 enrollment of 3,515 students with 2022-2023 enrollment of 2,272 students—a difference of 1,243 students—reflects a decline of closer to 35% in the last 9 years. Funding received from the state is based on the number of students enrolled. Fewer students means less money from the state.

The district owns 11 school buildings of various ages, which has become expensive both operationally and with maintenance needs. Those operational costs aren’t going down. In addition, a comprehensive study evaluated all 11 buildings owned by the district according to utilization and investment needed, revealing \$91.7 million in future investment needs for building maintenance.

In response to declining enrollment, MAPS hosted community focus groups to explore options to make the “Best Use of the Best Buildings” throughout MAPS.

Other notable findings in the report presented to the School Board include:

- Only 52% of the Prairie River Middle School building is being utilized. Future maintenance costs are projected at \$34.3 million.
- Only 56% of the Merrill High School (MHS) building is being utilized. This is one of the reasons the base plan proposes to move MAPS District Offices to the MHS building, to utilize space already available. Future maintenance costs are projected at \$28.5 million.
- 74% of the Washington School building is being utilized, and 77% of the Kate Goodrich building is being utilized, with \$7.2 million and \$8.4 million in upcoming maintenance needs, respectively.

• Currently 0% of the Jefferson School building is being utilized, and that building will require a \$6.3 million future maintenance investment, making it an excellent candidate to be utilized as proposed in the base plan.

• The future investment dollars allocated to the PRSYL building (\$2 million), maintenance shop (\$1 million), District Office (\$1.4 million), storage building (old NAC) (\$1 million), current NAC building (\$1.3 million) ... totaling \$6.7 million will cease to be a concern once those buildings are demolished/sold if the base plan is implemented.

## No debt is a plus, but still coming up short

Of significant note, MAPS has no debt, and MAPS Superintendent Shannon Murray said that is not the norm. Most school districts carry the weight and cost of debt for past investments as an ongoing expense. This lack of debt is a positive. However, according to the report presented to the School Board, MAPS also has the lowest property tax mill rate in our conference and one of the lowest in the entire state, at just \$5.14 for 2022-23. Note: The MAPS mill rate for 2023-24 is \$5.84 as a result of the change in the state’s guidelines implemented last summer which enabled the district to increase tax levies for operating expenses from \$7.71 million to \$9.81 million and subsequently raised taxes for most area homeowners to roughly the rate it was prior to the expiration of the most recent MAPS referendum. This, combined with adjustments to staffing and expenses made prior to the beginning of the 2023-24 year, put MAPS in a position to manage this year’s operational budget without referendum. However, it doesn’t provide for the funds to meet all the building maintenance needs identified in the comprehensive study and it doesn’t provide for the \$16 million needed to implement the proposed base plan to better utilize the district’s existing facilities based on current enrollment.

## Next steps

Voters would need to approve a capital referendum to fund the project; the current base plan is estimated to cost \$16 million.

When asked to provide a summary, Foster from School Perceptions said at the School Board meeting, “What did we learn? A majority of all subgroups support the District exploring a capital referendum. A majority of all subgroups also would support the base plan as described in the survey. If the election were held today, voters would likely approve this recommended base plan.”

The MAPS administration and Board of Education will continue to study and discuss this important subject moving forward, the press release said.

“We are very grateful for the survey responses from our community and staff,” said Murray. “This input is critical to help inform and guide decision-making by the School Board and administration in the coming weeks regarding a facilities referendum in the future.”

Questions can be directed to Shannon Murray, MAPS Superintendent, at 715.536.4581 or via email at [shannon.murray@mapsedu.org](mailto:shannon.murray@mapsedu.org).

## LCHS November Honorariums

The Lincoln County Humane Society would like to thank everyone who donated in honor of a loved one in November:

Marilyn Kufahl by Dennis & Sharon Karow, Shirley May Borhardt, Kay Hall, Francis & Cindy Stieber, Jill Kraft, Jeffrey & Susan Kraft, Jennifer & Billie Schwede, Sandra Gottschalk, Festis, Hank, Bocephus, Spin by Carolyn Byer; Warren “Cub” Fischer by Arnold & Elizabeth Lange, Carol Wyma, Rebecca Hafemeister, Margo & Brad Pophal, Kathryn Pophal, Family & Friends; Carl Duley by Arnold & Elizabeth Lange; Sassy the cat by Julie & Alan Coss; Garrett Walters by Glenda Cunningham; Phillip Kohrs by Ingrid Erickson; Ron & Linda Fischer by Family; Donna Eckerle by Maxine & Jay Tlusty; Missy the dog by Bill & Carol Sparr, James & Jan Hansford; Mike Loka by Judy Sargent (Lincoln County Health Department); and Michelle P. Latsch by Colleen Hickman, Jerrod Sippel, and Matt Hickman.

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# Merrill wrestlers are Team Champions at Northern Exposure Tournament

The Merrill Varsity Wrestling Team competed in two Christmas tournaments.

## Hodag Scramble in Rhinelander

On Dec. 21, 2023, the Bluejays wrestled in the Hodag Scramble in Rhinelander. Merrill took 5th out of the 26 teams. Two Varsity Merrill wrestlers took home wins in their weight class: Dusty Schmirler at 106 and Allison Hunter at 114 in the Girl's Division. "Dusty and Allison had great days, pinning all their opponents," said Merrill Varsity Wrestling Head

Coach Brian Suchocki. "Dusty continues to improve weekly. Allison has competed many years and it continues to pay off on the mat."

Remington Skic, Callum Wheeler, and Mikal Plautz all took third place in their weight classes.

"Remington stayed aggressive in all his matches," Suchocki said. "He lost a tough match in the semis. I'm impressed with his work ethic and attitude as he continues to evolve."

"Callum is stepping it up this year. Callum really dominated in his third place match against a tough



Dusty Schmirler is the Champion in his weight class at the Hodag Scramble tournament.

Photos courtesy of Merrill Wrestling Program.

opponent," he said. "And Mikal is putting it together as a Senior,"

Suchocki said. "Other coaches are taking notice of how much he has improved. Mikal made the most of his third place match by getting a pin over his opponent."

## Northern Exposure tournament

Merrill hosted the Northern Exposure tournament on Dec. 28 and emerged the Team Champions. Merrill competed against Crivitz, East Troy, Marquette Senior, Oconto, Sauk Prairie, Waukesha South, Wausau East, and Wisconsin Dells.

"We wrestled well as a team and got better throughout the tournament," Suchocki said. "Even though we are young as a team, we are starting to come together." "Even when we lose we are battling," he said. "In the last dual against Sauk Prairie, the runner-up, we wrestled with intensity and focus."

"You could see the wrestlers wanted it for each other," Suchocki said. "We had some outstanding performances from all the wrestlers. Leading the way were Jayden Graap (120), Brady Norton (138), Callum Wheeler (144), Jace Olson (175), and Mikal Plautz (285) with 7 wins and 0 losses throughout the



The Merrill Varsity Wrestling Team takes the Team Championship at the Northern Exposure wrestling tournament.



Mikal Plautz goes 7-0 at Northern Exposure.



Allison Hunter wrestles her opponent. She took first place in her weight class in the Girl's Division at the Hodag Scramble tournament in Rhinelander.



Brady Norton goes 7-0 at Northern Exposure.

tournament."

"Jayden had his first action with the Varsity team and looked good," he said. "It was great to get him in the lineup."

"Brady is now starting to put together some solid performances, and he wrestled really well," Suchocki said.

"Callum established himself and now is picking up momentum going into the second half of the season."

"It was a special tournament for Jace," Suchocki said. "Not only did he go 7-0, but he received the award for the most pins in the least amount of time. It was great to see him

compete so well. Jace is using good technique, and it's showing in the results."

"Mikal showed some emotion after his last match and really got the team fired up," he said. "We need that."

Wrestlers with 6 wins were Dusty Schmirler (106), Remington Skic (126), Hunter Opper (165), Austin Depies (190), and Noah Klug (215). Brett Suchocki (132) had 5 wins.

"Overall it was a great effort by the team," Coach Suchocki said. "We are looking forward to the second half of the season starting with the SPASH dual at home on Jan. 4."

## 2024 WINTER MERRILL HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCHEDULE

### Girls Basketball (Varsity, JV & JV2)

Fri. Jan. 5	Stevens Point (JV and JV2)	Home	5:45 pm
Fri. Jan. 5	Stevens Point (Varsity)	Home	7:15 pm
Tues. Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (JV & JV2)	Home	5:45 pm
Tues. Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity)	Home	7:15 pm

### Boys Basketball (Varsity, JV, JV2 & JV3)

Fri. Jan. 5	Stevens Point (JV & JV2)	Away	5:45 pm
Fri. Jan. 5	Stevens Point (JV3)	Away	6:30 pm
Fri. Jan. 5	Stevens Point (Varsity)	Away	7:15 pm
Tues. Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (JV3)	Away	4:15 pm
Tues. Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (JV & JV2)	Away	5:45 pm
Tues. Jan. 9	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity)	Away	7:15 pm

### Girls Wrestling (Varsity)

Thur. Jan. 4	Stevens Point (Varsity)	Home	6:30 pm
Thur. Jan. 11	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity)	Home	6:30 pm

### Boys Wrestling (Varsity & JV)

Thurs. Jan. 4	Stevens Point (Varsity)	Home	6:30 pm
Sat. Jan. 6	Multiple Schools (Varsity)	Home	8:00 am
Thurs. Jan. 11	WI Rapids Lincoln (Varsity)	Home	6:30 pm

### Ice Hockey (Varsity & JV)

Thurs. Jan. 4	Marshfield (JV)	Home	5:00 pm
Thurs. Jan. 4	Marshfield (Varsity)	Home	7:00 pm
Thurs. Jan. 11	D. C. Everest (JV)	Away	5:00 pm
Thurs. Jan. 11	D. C. Everest (Varsity)	Away	7:00 pm

The Sports Calendar of events is sponsored by:



## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

**Remington Skic**, a Freshman at Merrill High School (MHS), has been named Athlete of the Week. Remington started wrestling when he was four years old (his dad coached), first for the Junior Jays, then Prairie River Middle School (PRMS), and now is on the MHS Varsity Wrestling Team, competing at 126 pounds. He has also played football in seventh and eighth grades at PRMS and this year for MHS on the JV2 team as a Defensive Back. Remington also plays baseball, having started in Little League and also playing Babe Ruth baseball in seventh and eighth grades, and plans to play for MHS this spring.

At school, Remington is a member of Junior Optimists and Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and his favorite class is Intro to Business.

In his free time he likes to hunt (deer, geese, bear, turkey), go snowmobiling, and go ice fishing; and he is pretty involved in sports all year long.

The son of Brenda and Wally Skic of Merrill, he has not yet decided on his career path following high school graduation.



Remington Skic

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