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## Hometown Christmas

Hometown Christmas was held in downtown Tomahawk on Friday, Dec. 13. The event kicked off with a parade on W. Wisconsin Ave., followed by live window displays, sponsored by Tomahawk Main Street Inc. Those who braved the chilly temps could huddle around a warming fire offered by the Tomahawk Fire Department and grab a snack at a Park City Credit Union-sponsored s'mores pit. View more photos on Pages 2 and 3, as well as at [www.tomahawkleader.com](http://www.tomahawkleader.com).

Photo by Jalen Maki



A memorial to Corey Proulx, a Lincoln Hills School counselor who died in June 2024 following an assault by a 16-year-old prisoner, is shown on Nov. 1, 2024, in Irma, Wis. Proulx's death prompted calls from Republican lawmakers to lift restrictions on pepper spray use at the youth prison.

Drake White-Bergey for Wisconsin Watch

## One child, \$463,000 per year: Ballooning costs of troubled Lincoln Hills youth prison

BY MARIO KORAN  
WISCONSIN WATCH

DEVIN BLAKE  
MILWAUKEE  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
NEWS SERVICE

*This story was produced by Wisconsin Watch and Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service. It was made possible by donors like you ([www.wisconsinwatch.org/donate/](http://www.wisconsinwatch.org/donate/)).*

Wisconsin budgets nearly \$463,000 a year to incarcerate each child at the state's beleaguered juvenile prison complex in the North Woods, a figure that has ballooned over a decade as enrollment has plummeted.

A new Department of Corrections budget request would nearly double that figure to about \$862,000 a year — 58 times what taxpayers

spend on the average K-12 public school student.

It comes as efforts to close the Lincoln County complex — home to Lincoln Hills School for boys and Copper Lake School for girls — and build a new youth prison in Milwaukee ([www.tinyurl.com/rddevdwt](http://www.tinyurl.com/rddevdwt)) have slowed to a crawl.

Six years after the Legislature approved the closure plan, Republican lawmakers and Democratic Gov. Tony Evers are blaming each other during funding and policy disagreements that have delayed the closure.

A 2018 legal settlement restricted how guards could discipline youth. That followed a series of scandals involving allegations of inhumane conditions, such

**Lincoln Hills**  
CONTINUES ON PAGE 10

## 2024 "Fill The Need" Food Drive

For the last 27 years Heritage Chevrolet has asked you to fill a new Chevrolet Silverado for the benefit of the Tomahawk and Nokomis Food Pantries.

Go to [www.heritagechev.com](http://www.heritagechev.com) and click on the **FILL THE NEED** link.

Make a monetary donation to the food pantry of your choice. You will then be entered in the drawing for one of the prizes contributed by our local merchants.

Alternatively, you can drop off your check payable to either food pantry at Heritage Chevrolet.

This year's drawing will be held live on WJJQ on Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:15pm

Merchant	2024 Prize	Value	Merchant	2024 Prize	Value
Lincoln County Cycles	Troy Built Sidewalk Edger	\$500	CIS Insurance Group	\$50 Gift Card to Scarlet Garden	\$50
Ingman's Service	Oregon Pressure Washer	\$400	Coasters	\$50 Gift Certificate	\$50
Bethel Excavating & Northern Wisconsin Land Services	Toro Battery Operated Trimmer	\$70	Billy Bob's	\$50.00 Gift Certificate for Billy Bob's	\$50
Tomahawk Sports Center	10 Yards Road Gravel Delivered in Tomahawk Area	\$300	Chuck's Sports Shop	2 \$25 Gift Certificates for Chucks	\$50
Heritage Chevrolet	10 Yards Top Soil Delivered in Tomahawk Area	\$300	HMM Boutique	\$50 Gift Card for HMM Boutique	\$50
Just 4 U Fitness	Skidoo Snowmobile Jacket	\$350	Cheese Shoppe	Holiday Basket	\$50
Sideways Wine & Craft Beer	\$500 Heritage Chevrolet Gift Card	\$500	Erv's Sales & Service	\$50.00 Gift Certificate for Erv's	\$50
Bootleggers Lodge	Single Person 3mo. Special w/ Access Card	\$100	Hewitt Meat	\$50.00 Gift Certificate	\$50
Woodland Lakes Realty	Joint (couple) 3mo. Special w/access Card	\$145	Holly's Bar	2 \$25.00 Gift Certificates for Holly's	\$50
Loop Hole	2 \$100 Gift Certificates	\$200	Hometown Feed Mill & General Store	2 \$25 Gift Certificate	\$50
Northwoods Community Realty	Tomahawk Experience Dinner for Two	\$150	Kracker Barrel	2 \$25 Gift Certificate	\$50
Kevin Urmann State Farm Insurance	Hampton Bay Fire Pit	\$125	NAPA	2 \$25 Gift Cards to NAPA of Tomahawk	\$50
Tomahawk Pharmacy	2 \$50.00 Gift Cards	\$100	O'Reilly's Auto Parts	2 \$25 Gift Cards	\$50
Hackel Plumbing	Adirondack Chair	\$100	Scentability	2 \$25 Gift Certificate	\$50
Absolute Electric	2 \$50.00 Chamber Bucks	\$100	Roots Hair Salon	\$60 Gift Certificate to Roots Salon	\$60
Honeycomb L.O.F.T	Gift Basket	\$100	Tilted Loon	\$50 Gift Certificate for the Loon	\$50
Knot Haus	2 \$50 Chamber Bucks	\$100	Tomahawk Eye Care	Routine Eye Exam	\$50
Rita's Scarlet Garden	\$100 Chamber Bucks	\$100	Tomahawk Family Restaurant	\$50 Gift Certificate	\$50
WT Silverado	4 \$25 Gift Cards to Honeycomb LOFT	\$100	Tomahawk Touch of Gold	\$50 Gift Card to Touch of Gold	\$50
Subway	2 \$50.00 Main Street Bucks	\$100	Tomahawk Warehouse Liquor	2 \$25 Gift Certificate	\$50
Cerry's Greenhouse	4 \$25 Gift Certificates	\$100	Viegut's Do It Express	2 \$25.00 Gift Certificates	\$50
	4 \$25 Gift Cards to Silverado	\$100	Windmill Ice Cream Shop	2 \$25 Gift Certificates	\$50
	3 5-\$5.00 off Coupons	\$75		2 \$25 Chamber Bucks	\$50
	\$50.00 Gift Certificate	\$50			



**IMPORTANT NOTICE:**  
FOOD DONATIONS WILL NOT BE RECEIVED AT HERITAGE CHEVROLET. If you wish to donate food, take it directly to the food pantry of your choice. You will not be entered in the drawing.

Fill the Need is co-sponsored by the Wisconsin Chevy Dealers, WJJQ, Creative on Nokomis and Heritage Chevrolet.

CHEVROLET 

FIND NEW ROADS

Entry deadline is December 18<sup>th</sup>, and this year's drawing will be held live on WJJQ on Thursday, **December 19<sup>th</sup>** at 2:15pm  
Together, let's make sure no one goes hungry this Christmas.



1227 N. Fourth St., Tomahawk, WI  
715-453-2119  
[www.heritagechev.com](http://www.heritagechev.com)



## MMC announces holiday break for printed editions

MMC will not publish a printed edition of this paper between Dec. 26 through Jan. 1. This will allow our employees to enjoy quality time with their families during the holiday season.

This publication will resume publishing on its regular day after the new year begins.

Thank you for your understanding, and we wish you a joyous holiday season!

Patrick Wood  
Publisher

# HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS 2024



Photos by Jalen Maki



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and keys



WIN ONE OF TWO  
**GMC TRUCKS**

**DEC 31**

**HO-CHUNK GAMING**  
WITTENBERG



# DATCP: How to avoid holiday shopping scams

## FOR THE TOMAHAWK LEADER

WISCONSIN – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is reminding consumers to be on alert for common holiday shopping scams.

“During the winter holidays, many Wisconsinites exchange gifts to bring joy and show their appreciation for others,” DATCP stated. “Unfortunately, scammers also know that gift buying and giving is a holiday tradition and will try to take advantage of consumers’ good intentions.”

### Package delivery scams

“Have you received a text message about a failed or delayed package delivery? Knowing that many consumers make their holiday purchases online, scammers send these texts and emails hoping you will click on the link they send,” DATCP said. “But opening that link will direct you to a convincing copy of a real delivery company’s website that asks for your personal information or an additional ‘shipping fee.’”

**DATCP’s tips:** To check the status of a delivery, go directly to the delivery company’s or retailer’s website. Don’t click the links in a text or email.

### Online marketplace scams

Online marketplace like Craigslist, eBay, or Facebook Marketplace allows users to buy and sell products directly with each other.

“Whether you are selling or buying, be wary if a user asks you to pay upfront, requests you move your conversation to text messages or another platform or says they need you to send them a security code – which could give them access to your private accounts,” DATCP stated.

**DATCP’s tips:** Keep conversations on the platform they started on. Never send anyone a security code sent to you, for any reason.

### Fake website scams

DATCP said scammers create fake versions of common retailers’ websites, then try to trick consumers into making “purchases” on the fraudulent platform.

“They may use ads, social media posts, or emails and text messages to draw users in,” DATCP explained. “By making a ‘purchase’ on a fake website, you are sending money to a scammer and giving them your payment information, which could lead to further fraudulent charges or even identity theft.”

**DATCP’s tips:** Never open a link you are sent, even for a familiar site. In-

stead type the address directly into your browser. Before entering any information, closely examine a website’s address for unusual phrasing or incorrect spelling, and confirm that “HTTPS” (not “HTTP”) is at the beginning of the address before entering personal information like your password or credit card number. The “S” stands for “secure.”

### Safe online shopping tips

“No matter how you make your purchases this holiday season, there are precautions any consumer can take to keep their money and identity safe,” DATCP said. “Avoid making purchases over a public Wi-Fi network, since you never know who could be monitoring that data. Use a credit card, since this payment method has built-in fraud protection. Ask your credit card company if they offer additional protections, like ‘virtual card numbers.’”

For more information and consumer protection resources or to file a complaint, visit DATCP’s Consumer Protection webpage at [www.ConsumerProtection.wi.gov](http://www.ConsumerProtection.wi.gov) or contact the Consumer Protection Hotline at 800-422-7128 or [DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov).

# News Briefs

## Donations to cover student lunch debts being accepted

A Park City Credit Union account established to cover student lunch debts at the School District of Tomahawk is continuing to accept donations. To contribute to the account, visit Park City Credit Union.

## Open Arms Community Meal served Tuesdays

Open Arms Community Meal is served each Tuesday at St. Mary’s Corpus Christi Center, 320 E. Washington Ave., Tomahawk. The Corpus Christi Center opens at 4 p.m., and the meal begins at 5 p.m. All are welcome. To volunteer, call 715-224-3306 and leave a message.

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## Need Pet Food?

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is a non-profit organization to help local pets in need.

Monetary & dry pet food donations needed.  
Drop off: T. Warehouse Liquor & Auntie Em’s Resale  
Info: Sunnie 715-612-5866

# BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

A son, Braxton Keizer, was born to Jessalyn Holub and Isaiah Scheffler, Merrill, on Nov. 22, 2024. He was born at 11:57 p.m., weighed seven pounds, five ounces and was 19.5 inches long.

# BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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**TOMAHAWK LEADER** Focused on our Community  
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Phone: 715-453-2151

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**Deadline for ads & copy is 5PM THURSDAY.**

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**Letters to the Editor Policy**  
Letters to the Editor must include the writer’s full name, address and other contact information (only your name and town of residence will appear in print and online). We will not accept a letter from an unidentified source. Letters should be no more than 500 words and may appear in our weekly print issue. Letters may be edited by our staff for length, clarity and facts.

The Tomahawk Leader will only print letters that address a specific issue or article that may be of interest to the bulk of our readers.

Letters can be submitted to [leadernews@mmclocal.com](mailto:leadernews@mmclocal.com) or Tomahawk Leader, 24 W. Rives St., Rhinelander, Wis., 54501. We will not print letters that:

- Contain potentially libelous material. Libel is any malicious, unsubstantiated or untrue statement about someone that damages their reputation. Submissions must have facts to back up all claims.
- Support discrimination on any grounds. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or culture.
- Are vulgar, profane, obscene or otherwise offensive.
- Make explicit or implied threats. This includes personal attacks, intimidation, bullying or threats of harm against a person or organization.
- Contain copyrighted material or that have been printed in another publication. All letters must be an original writing by the signer and exclusive to the Tomahawk Leader.
- Identify another person, unless that person has given their explicit consent. We assume that any person identified in a letter has consented to be mentioned in the letter.

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The writer of a Letter to the Editor maintains copyright of their letter. Any other individual or organization must seek permission from the writer if they wish to reprint a Letter to the Editor.

**Political Letters to the Editor**  
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; those submissions will be referred to our advertising department to be run as ads.

**Advertising Errors:** The Leader will not be responsible for errors in any advertisement beyond the first publication of that advertisement. In case of error, adjustment is limited to the cost of that portion of the ad wherein the error occurred.

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Pastor John Miskimen

**Grace Lutheran ELCA**  
108 W. Somo Ave.  
715-453-4066  
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Sat. 5 pm • Sun. 9:00 am  
Pastor Julie Sinkula  
Streaming Worship on our website:  
[www.gracelutherantomahawk.com](http://www.gracelutherantomahawk.com)

**ReviveNow Church**  
1328 County Rd. A,  
Tomahawk 715-453-8783  
**Sunday Service & Facebook Live Stream: 9:30am**  
**Prayer Meetings: Wednesday 6pm**  
Pastors Jaco & Leslie Theron

**Spirit Baptist**  
Hwy. 86, 1/4 Mile West of Hwy. 102, Spirit  
715-657-0304 • 715-657-0764  
Duane Harper Pastor  
Affiliated w/Baptist General Conference

**Berean Baptist Church**  
19 N. Third St., Tomahawk  
Pastor Charles Scheele  
715-453-3407  
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Morning Service - 10:45 am Sunday  
Mid-week Bible study - 7:00 pm Wednesday

**St. Mary’s Catholic**  
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Tomahawk • 715-453-2878  
Fr. Louis Maram Reddy, Pastor  
Mass times: Saturday 6 p.m.  
Sunday 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.  
Confessions: Saturdays, 9 a.m.;  
Anytime by Appointment

**St. Francis of Assisi Catholic**  
Pier-Willow  
12 Miles North of Tripoli at 5209 Willow Road  
Fr. Louis Maram Reddy, Pastor  
Saturday 4 p.m. Mass

**St. Augustine Catholic**  
Intersection of D & B, Harrison • 715-453-2561  
Fr. Louis Maram Reddy, Pastor  
Sunday 8:00 a.m. Mass

**Northwoods Vineyard**  
418 Kaphaem Road  
Tomahawk • 715-453-6700  
Pastor Nate & Shelley Nelson  
Reg. Serv. 9:30  
Facebook Live Stream 9:30

**United Methodist Church**  
Tomahawk & Spirit  
Rev. Lisa Weaver  
715-453-4378  
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8:30 in Spirit, 10:30 in Tomahawk in person & 10:30 Online Via Zoom

**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
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**TOMAHAWK LEADER**  
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**LINCOLN COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT**

As reported by the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office Monday, Dec. 9:  
 On 12/3/2024 a deputy on patrol conducted a traffic stop on CTH Q and Lake Rd. in the Town of Scott for a vehicle with expired registration. The deputy made contact with the driver, a Wausau man, 40. At the time of the initial contact, the driver told the deputy that he had been stopped earlier in the night by a deputy from Marathon County. The LISO deputy, in checking the man's driver's license, learned that his driving status was cancelled. The deputy then made contact with the Marathon County deputy and learned that they had cited the man for the expired registration and gave him a written warning for the cancelled license violation. As a result of the Marathon County contact, the LISO deputy took the man into custody for a criminal charge of driving without a valid license, second offense within three years.  
 On 12/6/2024 the 911 Center took a call of an ATV being stolen from an address in the N1500 block of Range Line Rd. in the Town of Pine River.

Sometime between 7:20 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Dec. 4, unknown subjects stole a 2001 Honda 400EX ATV. A neighbor had reported that the day prior to the theft, they had seen an older model white/silver Dodge pickup truck with rust on it drive slowly past the address where the ATV was stolen from. During the investigation, the deputy learned that there was also security footage from two different locations showing the suspect vehicle. It is described as a white Chevy truck pulling a red horse trailer. If anyone is familiar with this vehicle or remembers seeing anything suspicious in the area, they are asked to contact the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office at 715-536-6272. This remains under investigation. Deputies conducted 43 traffic stops and 32 security checks.  
 Deputies responded to five car vs. deer crashes and one car vs. bear.  
 Driving complaints: Three.  
 The 911 Center took six hang-up calls and six nuisance calls.



**TES student donates birthday money to NFHF**

Caleb Fedrowicz, a seven-year-old first grader at Tomahawk Elementary School (TES), recently donated \$100.00, received as a birthday gift, to the Never Forgotten Honor Flight (NFHF). Pictured are Caleb and his mom, Candace, with Tom Garrigan, American Legion Post 93 Commander; Bruce Pfingsten, Post Vice-Commander; and Terry Baldowsky, Honor Guard Captain and Post member.  
 Photo courtesy of Tom Garrigan

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 See all opportunities at: [SPI.CAREERS](https://SPI.CAREERS)  
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**PUBLISHER'S LETTER**

**A New Year with New Beginnings**

Dear Reader,

As the calendar turns to another New Year, we find ourselves at a familiar crossroads, a time for renewal and reflection. It's a time when we take stock of our lives, weighing the good against the bad, and consider the impact we've had on the world around us. The New Year offers a chance to set new goals and make resolutions in the hopes of becoming the best versions of ourselves.



Yet, as many of us know, the resolve we feel on January 1st can be fleeting. How often do we revisit our resolutions a year later, only to find they've been forgotten, buried under the weight of daily routines and unexpected challenges? Despite our best intentions, life has a way of diverting our focus, and those grand plans can slip away unnoticed.

But perhaps that's okay. The beauty of the New Year lies not just in our ambitions but in the grace we grant ourselves when we fall short. It's a time to acknowledge our humanity, to understand that growth is not always linear, and that the journey itself—full of missteps and lessons—is what truly matters.

So as we step into this New Year, let's embrace the opportunity to dream, to set intentions, and to strive for better. But let's also be kind to ourselves when we stumble, and remember that each new day brings with it the possibility of renewal.

Wishing you a joyous New Year, full of hope, reflection, and the endless potential of new beginnings.

**PATRICK J. WOOD**  
 Publisher

Author of "Reflections" a new book now available on Amazon.

**Tripoli man killed while performing maintenance on skid steer**

FOR THE TOMAHAWK LEADER

TRIPOLI – A Tripoli man was killed while performing maintenance on a skid steer earlier this month.

According to the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office, on Thursday, Dec. 5, the Lincoln County 911 Center received a call reporting that a man had been crushed by a skid steer at an address on County Rd. T in the Town of Somo.

The Sheriff's Office said the reporting party, the victim's son-in-law, went to the property and found the victim, identified by the Sheriff's Office as Mark Krueger, 67, of Tripoli, pinned between the boom and the frame of the skid steer.

The reporting party advised dispatch that Krueger was unresponsive and he was unable to find a pulse.

According to the reporting party, Krueger had been working on the machine by himself at the time of the incident, using a front end loader and a chain to lift the skid steer bucket to perform maintenance. During the process, the chain failed and the arms fell on Krueger, pinning him between the boom and the frame of the skid steer.

The reporting party used the front end loader to lift the skid steer bucket off of Krueger to allow fire and medical personnel to extract him, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Krueger was ultimately pronounced dead at the scene.

Tomahawk EMS and the Tomahawk Fire Department, as well as Sheriff's Office deputies, responded to the scene.

**JOB OPENING**

CESA 9 is hiring a **Business Operations Specialist: Payroll & Accounts Payable** to join our team! CESA 9 provides a supportive, engaging, and collaborative work environment with competitive pay and benefits. As a government entity we participate in the Wisconsin Retirement System and provide full-time employees with health, dental, life, long-term disability insurance, plus paid time off.

Top qualifications of the position include:

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Back row, from left: Coach Jon Long, Reagan Gorell, Autumn Merrigan, Lily Krueger, Freya Alberg, Madeline Long, Elizabeth Arnott, Aubrey Seubert, Manager Novalyne Jashinsky, Coach Tim Albert; front: Aliyah Nelson, Lizzy Long, Gracie Long, Claire Albert, Lydia Ziert, Anita Ziert, Ellie Micke. Photo by Stacie Petta Photography



### Girls' Wrestling

Back row, from left: Leni Lang, Matilde Milanetto, Gracie Long, Kinsley Lange, Payton Haring, Reese Molitor, Alli Palmer, Kylie Peissig, Elise Gibeault, Alicia Voermans, Faith Derleth; middle: Cedar Hoffman, Molly Jablonski, Mykala Schiltz, Abbie Rosenmeier, Nora Mann, Lydia Shaney, Aubrey Tollefson, Cadence Thompson, Cambree Bouton, Camryn Kracklow, Lillian Taves; front: Julia McGovern, Kaylee Roberts, Abigail Schertz, Kami Gabrich, Abbey Carr. Not pictured: Grace Waring, Alena Cerkas.

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**Boys' Varsity Basketball**

Back row, from left: Coach Breitenfeld, Niklas Nelson, Nathan Riemer, Jeremiah Johnson, Coach Neve, Jason Watkins, Logan Norman, Edwin Riese, Coach Zimmerman; front: Colton Seslar, Malachi Scheffler, Matthew Walbeck, Brody Rigney, Tyler Sundquist, Dominic Boos. Photos by Stacie Petta Photography



**Boys' JV Basketball**

Back row, from left: Coach Breitenfeld, Gavin Maule, Ryan Montag, Niklas Nelson, Nick Esselman, Jason Watkins, Tanner Cruz, Ryan Sundquist, Coach Zimmerman; front: Stephen Bezka, Victor Riese, Isaac Urmann, Nathan Riemer, Jules Barthelemy, Landon Sonnenberg, Edwin Riese.

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-Vince Lombardi

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# GO HATCHETS



## Hockey

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Photo by Catherine List Photography



## Boys' Wrestling

Back row, from left: Skylar Harper-Dalvig, Caeron Dahmn, Tanner Wanta, Nathan Norman, Zander Zehner, Ethan Eibeault, Kaiden Kapellusch, Hudson Evans, Fletcher Baumann, Drew Tollefson, Noah Williamson, Aiden Cruz, Connor Jones, Blake Younker; middle: Kenny Turner, Caden Gustafson, Colton Mckmeekin, Miles McGowan, Jack Derleth, Masen Towle, Dane Islo, Keegan Jones, Walter Horabik, Bradyn Ristau, Liam Murphy; front: Tristan Bridges, Nathaniel Litzau, Owen Oates, Keneth Aleman, Zack Larson, Tyler Waller, Harman Hoffman, Dawson Jones, Aaden Collins.

Photos courtesy of John Repinski




## Boys' Swimming

Back row, from left: Brock Fischer, Max Amelse, Aidan Sigl; middle: Michael Lucas, Dane DeKiep, Bruce Peetz, Connor Germano, Toby Scott; front: Sam Zastrow, Jack Amelse, Nathan Rosenmeier, Zach Germano, Manager Lauren Hansmann.

Photo courtesy of Theresa L'Esperance

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**LINCOLN HILLS**

FROM PAGE 1

as frequent use of pepper spray, strip searches and mechanical restraints and solitary confinement.

Republicans earlier this year pushed to lift pepper spray restrictions after a 16-year-old incarcerated at Lincoln Hills struck a counselor in the face, resulting in his death ([www.tinyurl.com/yxhyebx](http://www.tinyurl.com/yxhyebx)). A judge denied requests to alter the settlement in a dispute that has added to closure delays, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported.

Meanwhile, the facility's population is dwindling. As of late November, it served just 41 boys and 18 girls on a campus designed for more than 500 youth.

Wisconsin Watch and Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service spoke to judges, lawmakers, former prison staff and researchers about the eye-popping price tag to incarcerate fewer young people. They attributed the trends to demographic changes, a paradigm shift from large youth prisons to smaller regional facilities and scandals on the campus that made judges hesitant to send teens to Lincoln Hills.

"No judge wants to send a kid to Lincoln Hills," said Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Laura Crivello, who has presided over juvenile cases. "You feel like you're damning the kid. And if you look at the recidivism rates that come out of Lincoln Hills, you pretty much are damning a kid."

Here's a closer look at the numbers.

**Who sets budgets for youth prisons?**

Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake schools are the state's only youth prisons, but they are among four main state facilities for young people convicted of serious juvenile offenses. The others are Mendota Mental Health Institute, a psychiatric hospital in



The main entrance of Lincoln Hills School and Copper Lake School is shown on Nov. 1, 2024, in Irma, Wis. Six years after the Wisconsin Legislature approved a plan to close the embattled youth prison, Republicans and Democrats are blaming each other for delays that have kept the complex open.

**Drake White-Bergey for Wisconsin Watch**

Madison that treats youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and Grow Academy, a residential incarceration-alternative program outside of Madison.

The Legislature sets uniform daily rates that counties pay to send youth to any of the locations — spreading costs across all facilities.

In 2015, lawmakers approved a daily rate of \$284 per juvenile across all four facilities, or nearly \$104,000 a year. This year's rate is \$1,268 a day, or nearly \$463,000 annually.

The annual per-student rate would jump to about \$841,000 in 2025 and nearly \$862,000 in 2026 if the Legislature approves the latest Department of Corrections funding request.

By contrast, Wisconsin spent an annual average of \$14,882 per student in K-12 public schools in 2023, according to the Wisconsin Policy Forum.

**Why have costs ballooned?**

A campus built for more than 500 is mostly underused as enrollment declines, but taxpayers must still pay to maintain the same large space. It affects county budgets since they pay for youth they send to state juvenile correctional facilities.

Fixed infrastructure and staffing costs account for the largest share of expenses,



This aerial view shows the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake schools, the state's youth prison in Irma in northern Wisconsin.

**Google Earth**

said department spokesperson Beth Hardtke. Spreading the costs among fewer juveniles inflates the per capita price tag.

But taxpayers haven't seen overall savings from the steep drop in enrollment either. The state in 2015 budgeted about \$25.9 million for the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake complex. That number climbed to about \$31.3 million by 2023 with the addition of staff — a cost increase nearly in line with inflation during that period.

Driving requests to further hike rates: The Department of Corrections seeks \$19.4 million in 2026 and \$19.8 million in 2027 to expand Mendota Mental Health Institute's capacity from 29 beds for boys to 93 beds serving girls or boys — an expansion required by state law.

The expansion requires adding 123 positions at the



"The cost of sending one young person to Lincoln Hills would be enough to pay several young people working jobs over summer or the span of the school year," says Rep. Darrin Madison, D-Milwaukee. He is shown here speaking during a press conference on Sept. 10, 2024, at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, Wis.

those released in 2014. The rate for girls was worse than the nearly 42% it was four years earlier.

Stein compared Lincoln Hills to a restaurant that tries to compensate for lost customers by raising meal prices. If prices keep rising, customers will look for a different restaurant, he said.

"That, in a nutshell, is how you get into this spiral where you're seeing fewer residents, higher rates, and greater costs for counties," Stein said. "Then it's just rinse and repeat."

**How much do other states spend to incarcerate youth?**

Wisconsin is not the only state spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per juvenile it incarcerates.

A 2020 Justice Policy Institute report ([www.tinyurl.com/3wve6n8m](http://www.tinyurl.com/3wve6n8m)) showed Wisconsin spent less than the national average in 2020. But Wisconsin's per-juvenile costs have since more than tripled as Lincoln Hills remains open and incarcerates fewer young people.

Incarcerating juveniles is generally more expensive than it is for adults, said Ryan King, director of research and policy at Justice Policy Institute. Rehabilitation plays a bigger role in juvenile corrections, and those programs cost more. Incarcerated children typically access more counseling, education and case management programs.

States nationwide are rethinking their approach to youth incarceration as crime rates fall and more research shows how prison damages children, King said.

"There was an acknowledgement that locking kids up was not only failing to make communities safer, but it was making kids worse, and really just putting them in a position where they were more likely to end up in the adult system," he said.

**How is Wisconsin trying to reshape juvenile justice?**

In 2018, then-Gov. Scott Walker signed Act 185, designed to restructure the state's juvenile justice system. The law kicked off plans for a new state youth prison in Milwaukee and authorized counties to build their own secure, residential care centers ([www.tinyurl.com/477b6mac](http://www.tinyurl.com/477b6mac)).

Milwaukee and Racine counties are moving forward on such plans to build these centers. The centers function similarly to county jails: County officials operate them under Department of Corrections oversight. Officials hope keeping youth closer to home will help them maintain family connections.

"We have always pushed smaller is better. You can't warehouse young people like you do adults," said Sharlen Moore, a Milwaukee alderwoman and co-founder of Youth Justice Milwaukee. "Their brain just doesn't comprehend things in that way."

The law aimed to close troubled Lincoln Hills and give judges more options at sentencing while balancing the needs of juvenile offenders and the public. But those options have yet to fully develop.

Today's alternative programs typically have limited space and extensive waitlists. That won't be fixed until more regional facilities go online.

**How else could Wisconsin spend on troubled youth?**

Triggiano, now director of the Marquette Law School's Andrew Center for Restorative Justice, was astounded to learn youth incarceration costs could nearly double next year.

"You just want to drop to your knees because if I had that money, we had that money, what could we do differently?" she said.

She quickly offered ideas: programs that recognize how traumatic experiences shape behavior ([www.tinyurl.com/4m5hm6v3](http://www.tinyurl.com/4m5hm6v3)), violence prevention outreach in schools, community mentorship programs — evidence-based practices shown to help children and teens. Milwaukee County had worked to create some of those programs before funding was pulled, Triggiano said.

"It all got blown up in a variety of ways at every juncture," she said. "Now there's going to be an attachment to the secure detention facility because that's all people could muster up after being slammed down every time we tried to do something that we thought was going to work."

State Rep. Darrin Madison, D-Milwaukee, echoed Triggiano and offered additional spending suggestions, such as housing resources, mental health support and summer jobs programs.

"The cost of sending one young person to Lincoln Hills would be enough to pay several young people working jobs over summer or the span of the school year," Madison said.

Wisconsin's disproportionate spending on incarcerating its young people runs counter to the Wisconsin Idea, its historical commitment to education, he added.

"We're so committed to incarcerating people that we're willing to eat the cost of doing so, as opposed to making investments in deterrence and getting at the root cause of the problems."

**Share your Lincoln Hills story**

If you or someone you know has spent time in Lincoln Hills or Copper Lake schools — whether as an incarcerated juvenile or a staff member — we want to hear from you. Your perspectives could inform our follow-up coverage of these issues. Email reporter Mario Koran at [mkoran@wisconsinwatch.org](mailto:mkoran@wisconsinwatch.org) to get in touch.

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**PUSHING ON**

# Rhinelanders, community work together for skate park

BY EILEEN PERSIKE  
MMC STAFF

RHINELANDER – The creation of a Rhineland skate park is another step closer to reality. Design plans for the project were unveiled Thursday, Dec. 5 during a presentation at ArtStart.

It was Dec. 2021 when a group of young skateboard enthusiasts asked the city of Rhineland to create more inclusive spaces – especially for at-risk youth. Many of the youth who spoke at the city council meeting back then and were at the design presentation last week, belong to OverIt, an organization for Rhineland area teens. Their interest in a meeting space for kids who maybe don't fit a particular mold was renewed then following the death of a friend and fellow member of the group.

"I don't think any of us knew what this would look like, but we were kind of just coming face to face with a disconnect in our community and facing problems that affected all of us and clearly people beyond just us in our group, and I think we just reached a limit where we didn't have any other choice but to speak up, and we knew we needed to reach out," Anthony Gaudio, OverIt President said.

"This whole project would never have happened without the idea that came from the original group, Stephen Moren, Ava Kurilla and Jaden Roberts, and unfortunately, the project gained attention and became a serious thing when we lost our friend Stephen," Gaudio added.

Hunger Skateparks in Indiana was awarded the engineering and design



Anthony Gaudio, President of OverIt, tells the story of how a group of young skateboarders approached the city of Rhineland to ask for help in the form of a skate park.

Photos by Eileen Persike



After a presentation from Hunger Skate Parks, discussion was opened up to those in attendance to talk about what they want the skate park to be.

bid, funded by a \$75,000.00 earmark by the city council. Co-owners Bart Smith and Christy Wiesenbahn have worked with OverIt, ArtStart, area artists and a steering committee to create a skate park that would be a place for youth to gather and hang out, but also be of interest to the general public.

They presented their initial plans to a group of more than 40 skaters, city council members and interested community members.

"Thanks for having us, what a cool community," Smith said. "We love your enthusiasm and think it's amazing."

The preliminary plans offered a couple of theme

options, a mythical forest or a lighthouse beacon. The forest option, with elements that include subtle nods to the Hodag, forests and green space, had overwhelming support among the group.

"The Hodag is everywhere," Wiesenbahn said. "It really came through as important, so we dug a little deeper and thought about your woods and what kind of woods do these creatures come from. We're from a wooded area in Indiana, so I get it; the idea of the cabin and the movements you can't account for. So we thought that the mythical forest idea was a good place to start."

The designs were

opened up to discussion, with suggestions from attendees. City alder Carrie Mikalauski said as a non-skater, she wanted the park to be representative of the community as a whole.

"Something that everyone can be a part of, so the very beginning, intermediate and some more difficult things – what those are, I have no idea, but that's the idea we were hoping for," Mikalauski said. "But I think it's beautiful the way that it is."

The plight of OverIt to help fight mental illness, loneliness and social isolation was taken up as a community development project that incorporated art as a way of coping.

In furthering the cause, Rhineland was one of 18 cities nationwide chosen to participate in the One Nation One Project arts and health initiative in 2023; the skate park was selected as the city's big project.

Though the ONOP project unveiling was July 27 – before any structural work for a skate park was done, the steering committee invited the community to participate in "A Push Against Loneliness" event that included a March Against Social Isolation, a skate jam, music and other events.

Gaudio agreed that isolation is a concern among all age groups and said he thinks the skate park is a good thing, not just for skaters, but for the entire community.

"There's a lot of isolation that happens in rural towns just like Rhineland, and there's a very tight knit community here, but [other towns] don't always have these safe spaces and these mediums to connect with each other, and

I think when you don't have those, you see a lot of people face mental health issues, communication issues. We don't always get the connection in our community that we want to see," he said. "But we just

keep pushing on." After input from the community, a design will be finalized, and then fundraising will begin. It's anticipated the cost for the skate park will be upwards of \$1 million dollars.

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Dec. 21	10:51AM	3:45AM	10:32PM	4:05PM
Dec. 22	11:06AM	4:25AM	---	4:45PM
Dec. 23	11:35PM	5:04AM	11:21AM	5:23PM
Dec. 24	12:39AM	5:43AM	11:37AM	6:03PM
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**Ask the PASTOR**

Readers are invited to submit questions about God, the Bible, and religion. I shall try to answer them for you, using the Bible as my final authority.

Last week we looked at God's gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, who gives to us the opportunity to know and fellowship with God. Our choice to believe is more than a choice that concerns the destiny of our eternal soul, it is much more than that.

In John 10:10, Jesus said He came *that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

In the Bible, the word *life* can be about physical *life*, or it can be about a *relationship with the Creator*. According to the Bible, God is the source of life (Genesis 2:7, John 1:1-4), and it is this relationship with God that gives *abundant life*. People without God may be alive, but there is no future for them, they are dead while they are alive. Jesus came to *give them abundant life*.

In the New Testament, this relationship with the Creator is also called *eternal/everlasting life*. In John 17:3, Jesus defines *eternal life as knowing God the Father and God the Son*; it is to have a relationship with the Creator who is eternal. In 1 John 5:9-12 we are told that this *life* (with the Creator) begins when we first believe on Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

In John 11:25,26 Jesus said He is *the resurrection and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die*. The idea is that Jesus is the source of life; as the Creator He has power to give life (John 1:1-4), and will restore life to all for the judgment (John 5:26-29). Jesus also makes the promise that all who believed in Him and are dead will live again (resurrection), and those who are alive and believe on Him will never die – their relationship to the Creator (*eternal life*) will continue throughout eternity.

In John 5:24, Jesus said that those who accept what He said and believed God, have *eternal life* and shall not face God's judgment – they are passed from *death unto life*. This *life* is the *life* Jesus said He would give *more abundantly* (John 10:10). Let me compare this *more abundant life* to another picture Jesus gives of our relationship to Him.

In John 15:10, Jesus told His disciples, *If you keep my commandments, you shall live in my love*. The idea is that we will be experiencing God's love as we obey Christ; the love of God we will experience is the guidance of God's wisdom embodied in His commandments. By the same token, the more abundant life is the life guided by the wisdom of God embodied in His commands, which are the laws God established for us to live by when He created. *Abundant life is a life that satisfies because it follows the Creator's design.*

**Pastor Charles Scheele**  
**Berean Baptist Church, Tomahawk**  
**bereanbaptisttomahawk@gmail.com**

42495





**Kinship Christmas Party**

Kinship of Tomahawk held its annual Christmas Party at Inshalla Country Club on Sunday, Dec. 8. More than 100 Kinskids, mentors, staff and others were in attendance. "Thanks to Inshalla Country Club for hosting the event, to all those who donated gifts, cut out cookies, wrapping paper and supplies, and items for the 'Kinship,'" Kinship stated. "Great fun was had by all."

Photos courtesy of Kinship of Tomahawk

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**"Pastor's Corner"**

Proving our identity is a part of our lives these days. We have to show our Driver's License, give our birthdate or documents with our address to prove who we are. I had the unfortunate experience of not having my identification when traveling. How would I prove that I was who I said I was? All of the sudden I felt like nobody. It was a humbling experience.

Jesus was considered a nobody by the people who mattered in his day. People didn't think much of peasant from a small Galilean town who had neither money nor power. But it was being a nobody that gave Jesus the ability to connect with people that were labeled as nobodies too. They recognized that Jesus did have God's power to make their lives whole. They saw God's love and grace in Jesus' actions, and they felt like somebody in his presence.

There are many people who feel like a nobody in our world today. People who have been ignored, excluded, put down or pushed around. People who are struggling to find their purpose or their identity. Each of us can remember the gift of Jesus at Christmas that we are loved. We can notice people around us and help them to know that they have an identity in Jesus too- a beloved child of God. All of us are somebodies in Jesus' eyes!



Christmas Blessings,  
Pastor Julie Sinkula  
Grace Tomahawk

**Lincoln County's Ben Sosnovske recognized by WFBF's 35 Under 35 award program**

**FOR THE TOMAHAWK LEADER**

WISCONSIN – A Lincoln County resident was among 35 finalists for the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation (WFBF)'s 35 Under 35 award program.

The award is presented by WFBF's Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) program, in partnership with Insight FS, according to a release from WFBF.

"The 35 Under 35 program recognizes the creativity and innovation of young farmers and agriculturists who are preserving agriculture through leadership in environmental, social and economic activities," WFBF stated. "This is the third year of the program."

Applications were evaluated for their involvement in one of five categories: Sustainable Future, Sustainable Environment, Sustainable Service, Sustainable Storytelling and Sustainable Self.

WFBF said five individuals were ultimately selected to receive top



Photo courtesy of WFBF

honors in the program.

The 35 finalists were recognized at WFBF's Annual Meeting and YFA Conference in Wisconsin Dells on Saturday, Dec. 7. Each finalist received a \$100.00 cash prize and apparel item. The top individual in each category received a \$500.00 cash prize.

Sosnovske was recognized in the Sustainable Environment category, which recognizes individuals who are good stewards of the land and their resources. William Walleser of Vernon County was ultimately selected as the top individual in the category. Other category finalists included individuals from Door, She-

boygan and Trempealeau counties.

"This year's cohort exemplifies the diverse meanings of sustainability – encompassing personal growth, community service and environmental stewardship," said WFBF YFA Chair Kat Peper. "Their commitment to advancing agriculture while promoting sustainable practices is a testament to the bright future of our industry."

"The 35 Under 35 Program from WFBF continues to showcase the best and the brightest the agriculture industry has to offer," said Ben Huber, General Manager of Insight FS. "Now more than ever, the conversation around sustainability is at the forefront of farmers and the agriculture industry. Insight FS continues to be a proud sponsor of this program and offers sincere congratulations to all of the nominees and category winners. You are the best and brightest representing sustainability initiatives in Wisconsin Agriculture."

# Leader Sports & Nature

## Hatchet wrestling team previews 2024 season

### COURTESY OF THE TOMAHAWK HATCHET WRESTLING TEAM

TOMAHAWK – This year is off to an exciting start for that Tomahawk Hatchet wrestling team. There is a large number of student-athletes signed up and ready to go this year.

On the boys' side, there is an amazing number of 36 signed up for the season. On the girls' side, there was a huge jump from last year with 30 signed up this year.

With numbers like that, it looks like Tomahawk wrestling has a bright future on its horizon.

This year, the boys are

led by three returning seniors. Jack Derleth, Blake Younker and Drew Tollefson will look to help bring the Hatchets back into the Great Northern Conference title contention this year. The team will be bolstered by returning regional champion Brayden Ristau. The team is filled with a roughneck crew of boys that are hungry to remind people of the tradition that Tomahawk wrestling represents.

"We are bringing back a nice mix of experience and youth," said coach Bob Garrou. "The kids are as determined as I've seen over the

last several years to make an impact in the sport and represent their community with pride."

On the girls' side, the team is led by four returning seniors. Grace Waring, Alli Palmer, Reese Molitor and Kaylynn Sandry have done an amazing job as ambassadors of the sport, helping to recruit an incredible number of girls to the team this year. The girls will be anchored by returning state qualifier Elise Gibeault. The girls are eager to show that they are ready to make a name for themselves in the world of Wisconsin girls' wrestling.

There is a lot of excitement about their future.

"We were shocked to see the numbers this year for the girls," Garrou stated. "That shows that the girls for last year had a great experience and want to share that with their friends. We are really excited to see their impact this year."

This year the team will be helmed by George Martin Hall of Fame head coach Bob Garrou. The staff will be returning Dane Borchart, Ted Towle, Nate Mickelson and John Repinski.

This year's staff will have some exciting addi-

tions. Six-time national team member and two-time world medalist Alyssa Lampe will be home to help coach the team. Fargo national champion Sarah Kouba will be here to coach as well. Returning to Tomahawk wrestling this year is coach Jon Arnott. They will be getting coaching assistance from Bryce Bishop and Maddie List this year as well.

"This feels like a dream team for coaching wrestling," Garrou said. "I am so excited to be able to have this kind of experience come back to help, and work with these kids this

year. With these kids and these coaches, it's hard not to be excited not only for this year, but the future of the program. I also want to thank everyone for all the support for the team. Our Alumni Club has been valuable in helping us get things that we need. School budgets are insanely tight these days, and the club has really stepped up. The community has been amazing supporters of the program since its start. Also, thanks to the school for the support in everything, especially Activities Director Ryan Flynn."

## Tomahawk swimmers gearing up for sectional tournament

### FOR THE TOMAHAWK LEADER

TOMAHAWK – The Tomahawk Hatchet boys' swimmers began the season with their coach traveling to Europe, but the team had the great advantage of having two great volunteer coaches in Megan Backes and Kurt DeKiep to keep practices going. In addition, manager Lauren Hansmann knows the ropes when it comes to setting up all the databases.

The team started off the first week of eligibility with three meets in one week.

"We have four brand new swimmers to the sport," said coach Theresa L'Esperance. "Normally newbies don't start swimming right away, but these four guys challenged themselves to swim at the first meet. We started off with two wins over Antigo and Medford. We saw great swims by the captains, Jack

Amelse, Sam Zastrow and Zach Germano. All three of these swimmers are at near personal bests. This shouldn't happen this early in the season, except for when a team comes into the season ready to swim."

L'Esperance noted that Dane KeKiep has also added some nice pre-tournament times for the year, junior Bruce Peetz is showing some nice sprinting times, considering he has focused

most of his swimming career on distance events, and Toby Scott has also improved greatly.

On Saturday, Dec. 7, the team traveled to the Wisconsin Rapids Invite. Germano and DeKiep placed first in the breaststroke and backstroke, a first for the team. In addition, all six relays scored points, another first.

"Newcomers Max Amelse and Connor Ger-

mano are the leaders for our B Relays," L'Esperance stated. "This is highly unusual from the past 15 years. Adding in new freshmen Brock Fischer, Aidan Sigl and Michael Lucas to the team allows the team to have two relays for all our meets. We have one new swimmer, senior Nathan Rosenmeier, (AKA Rosey), who leaped into swimming. He has expressed how hard swimming is compared to

other sports, something only past and active swimmers know."

L'Esperance explained that with the Holidays coming, we will be short some athletes to vacation.

"We will do our best to keep up the winning pace," she said. "But once the holiday season is over, we will focus on the sectional tournament, the most important meet of all."

## Fishing Report: Hoping for colder temps before snow

### BY GEORGE LANGLEY

NORTHERN WISCONSIN – Our ice conditions are getting better with cold weather, but we could still do without any more snow for a bit. We need to grow some ice and freeze up those swamps for snowmobiles before we get a big snowfall.

What we had as of last week was anywhere from zero to six inches of ice on area lakes. Some of the big lakes were still basically wide open, but there's plenty of ice to be had elsewhere. Wouldn't it be fantastic if the cold days and nights would stick around for more than a few days at a time, and get us all prepped for a real winter? Despite some recent warmer temps, we're still on track for a nice season up here for all who enjoy being out in it. Let's all keep our collective fingers crossed!

Walleye fishing is decent now, with the usual pattern of good evening tip-up fishing near the drop-off edges and the weed edges, where the fish are moving to in those evenings to feed. We're still not seeing anglers able to move around the way they would like to on many bodies of water because the ice conditions are still iffy, but it's been a good start. Medium shiners or medium sucker minnows are

the preferred bait under those tip-ups. This action can last for several hours after dark for those brave enough to stay out there.

Northerns are hitting in the weeds and can be a good addition to an afternoon of pan fishing, but we're still not able to get as deep as we'd like on many bodies of water. They are hitting larger shiners under tip-ups in the weed areas. If you know how to fillet those "Y bones" out of them, they are delicious. The fish in the size of 24 to 28 inches are very tasty! Put out several tip-ups, and then do some bluegill fishing or perch fishing in those weeds with your jigging rod.

Crappies are just a little time away, as they are in deeper holes for the winter. As the ice gets thicker, we'll see a lot of anglers out over those holes.

Be safe out there. It is best to take a spud (and a buddy) along and check thickness as you go, especially if you are going to new spots. While it keeps the off-road recovery folks busy, it's not time for machines on the ice up here yet, so enjoy the quiet while you can. Hopefully we'll be able to report on crappie in the deep holes soon.

Good luck and good fishin'!

## TOMAHAWK SPORTS TRIVIA: WEEK 213

The Tomahawk Leader will feature one local sports trivia question per week, provided by Bob Skubal, retired coach, historian, and author of "History of Tomahawk Sports." Email leadernews@mmlocal.com if you know the answer!

The first person to tell us the correct answer each week will have their name published in the paper if they wish, along with their

correct answer to the question.

Week 212 question: Bruce Nelson was an assistant wrestling and track coach at THS. Where was he from: Maple Northwestern, Ashland or Superior?

Week 212 answer: Bruce Nelson was from Maple Northwestern. In 1982, he won state title in the pole vault with a height of 14 feet.

Congrats to Patricia Feind for being the first to correctly answer last week's question!

Week 213 question: Even though Robbie Lee broke his leg in football and missed his entire senior year of wrestling because of the injury, he did go on to wrestle in college. Where did he go: UW-Stevens Point, UW-Whitewater or UW-Oshkosh?



The Wisconsin Invasive Species Council is accepting nominations for the 21st annual Invasive Species Action Awards.

Photo courtesy of Wisconsin DNR

## Nominations for 21st annual Invasive Species Action Awards now open

### FOR THE TOMAHAWK LEADER

WISCONSIN – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced that the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council is accepting nominations for the 21st annual Invasive Species Action Awards.

Nominations will be open through Sunday, Feb. 16.

"Invasive species are nonnative plants and ani-

mals that cause ecological or economic harm, and some can affect human health," DNR stated in a release. "Once an invasive species is established in an area, it can be challenging to control."

Award recipients are Wisconsin residents and organizations that have made significant contributions to preventing, controlling or eradicating invasive species that harm Wisconsin's native wildlife,

wetlands, forests, prairies, lakes and rivers.

DNR said nominees can be individuals, groups or organizations that have "demonstrated exemplary efforts to address issues surrounding terrestrial and aquatic invasive species."

The Wisconsin Invasive Species Council, an advisory council to the DNR, presents Invasive Species Action Awards for both volunteer and professional

categories. A panel of judges selected by the council will review the nomination materials and select the award winners.

All nominators and winners will be notified in April, followed by an award recognition ceremony in June to celebrate Invasive Species Action Month.

To submit a nomination, download and fill out the form available on the

**Awards**  
CONTINUES ON PAGE 15

# New DNR initiative seeks to conserve Wisconsin's brook trout populations

## FOR THE TOMAHAWK LEADER

WISCONSIN – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) last week announced the implementation of the Brook Trout Reserves program, a new initiative to protect Wisconsin's native brook trout populations from changing environmental conditions.

In a release, DNR said cold water streams provide the ideal habitat for native brook trout.

"Wisconsin has an estimated 22,000 miles of cold water stream habitat suitable for brook trout to call home," DNR stated. "However, with warming stream temperatures, it's projected that in 30 years, two out of every three miles of this habitat will become too warm to support brook trout."

To help combat this problem, DNR fisheries biologists have used survey and environmental data to identify cold water streams in 205 subwatersheds that are the most likely to persist in the face of climate change.

DNR said each subwatershed within the Brook Trout Reserves contains:

- Self-sustaining brook trout populations.



The Brook Trout Reserves program aims to help protect Wisconsin's native brook trout populations from changing conditions.

- Above-average brook trout abundance, exceeding that of nonnative trout and salmon.

- Limited or no brown trout stocking.
- More than two stream miles of brook trout habitat are projected to remain by 2050.

To learn more about the Brook Trout Reserves, visit the DNR's StoryMap ([www.tinyurl.com/28c8rxxe](http://www.tinyurl.com/28c8rxxe)) and the Brook Trout Reserves webpage ([www.tinyurl.com/29k45dc7](http://www.tinyurl.com/29k45dc7)).

### How to get involved

There are many ways to get involved in this program, whether you're a landowner, angler or outdoor enthusiast, according to DNR.

Members of the public can help protect brook trout populations by:

- Enrolling your property in the DNR's Streambank Easement Program.

- Volunteering to help resource managers with forest and fish habitat management projects.

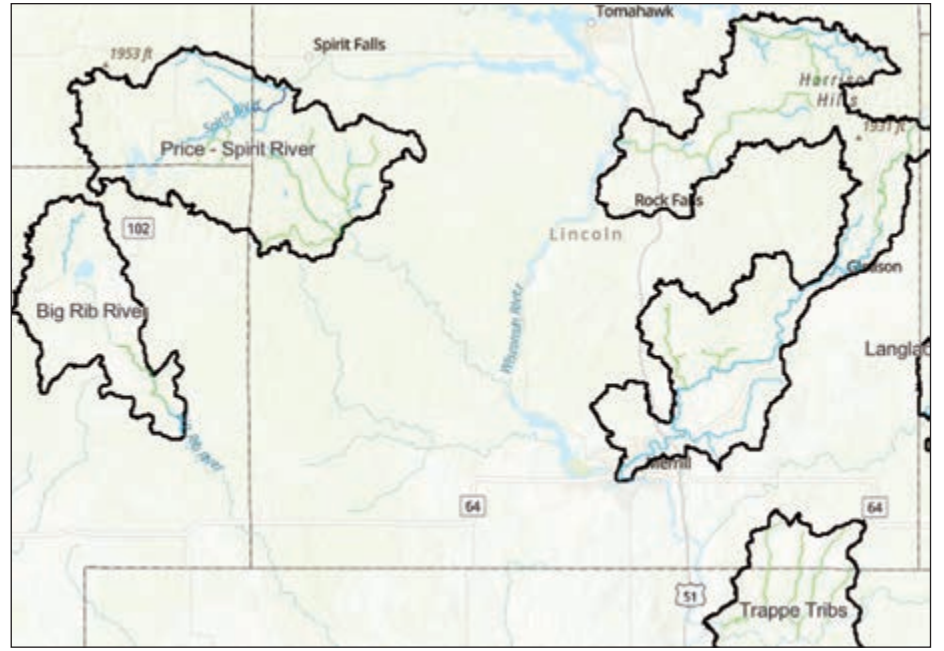
- Planting trees along stream corridors to restore shade and keep streams cold.

- Implementing healthy land use practices in these watersheds.

- Identifying and fixing stream crossing impairments associated with roads.

- Joining local conservation or watershed groups.

To become involved in brook trout habitat projects in your area, contact your local fisheries biologist [www.tinyurl.com/bdtk-scm6](http://www.tinyurl.com/bdtk-scm6).



Numerous Tomahawk-area subwatersheds are included in the Brook Trout Reserves.



Photos courtesy of Wisconsin DNR

# Applications sought for grant program aiming to grow number of anglers in Wisconsin

## FOR THE TOMAHAWK LEADER

WISCONSIN – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is now accepting applications for the Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (Angler R3) grant program.

Funding from the grant program is used to help grow the number of anglers in Wisconsin and expand angling activities, according to a release from DNR.

Past recipients have used this grant to support in-depth angler education programs at schools, fly fishing classes for women and veterans, training for people promoting accessible fishing and to expand fishing programs at camps for children.

"Community and recreation centers also are good fits for these programs," DNR said. "Programs for adults who never learned how to fish as well as youth programs that go beyond one-day events will also be considered."

Grant cycles are for two years, and funding will become available to the recipient once a grant agreement is signed by all parties, approximately one year after the application is submitted.

As a reimbursement grant, only expenses incurred after the grant agreement is signed will be covered. A total of \$30,000.00 is available for projects, with individual grant awards up

to \$5,000.00.

This grant is supported by the federal Sport Fish Restoration fund, which is generated by an excise tax on fishing equipment and motorboat fuel.

Application materials are available for download through the DNR's Angler R3 Grant Program webpage at [www.dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/angler.html](http://www.dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/angler.html).

The deadline to submit grant applications is 11:59 p.m. CST on Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2025.

Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the guidance document ([www.tinyurl.com/2vz2h958](http://www.tinyurl.com/2vz2h958)) to submit a successful grant application.

## AWARDS FROM PAGE 14

Wisconsin Invasive Species Council's webpage at [www.dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/invasives/InvasiveSpecies-Council](http://www.dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/invasives/InvasiveSpecies-Council).

DNR said isconsinites are encouraged to protect native plants and wildlife from invasive species by avoiding moving them or the materials that might harbor them to new places.

To learn more about preventing the spread, visit the DNR's Invasive Species Prevention webpage at [www.dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/prevention](http://www.dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/prevention).

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# FIRST BABY of 2025




## Contest Rules:

1. One of the baby's parents must be a resident of Lincoln County.
2. The winner will be the first baby born in the new year.
3. Parents may enter by informing the Foto News within 72 hours of the baby's birth, (715) 536-7121.
4. In case of a tie, a drawing will be held to determine the winner.
5. By entering this contest, the winner grants permission for their and their baby's names and likenesses to appear in the Foto News & Tomahawk Leader.

The Foto Merrill News and Townhawk Leader, along with the following Lincoln County merchants, will present the following prizes to the first baby born in the year 2025.



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