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Sanford Health and Marshfield Clinic Health System complete merger

FOR CITY TIMES

MARSHFIELD--Sanford Health, headquartered in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Marshfield Clinic Health System, have completed their merger and are now one nonprofit integrated health system operating as Sanford Health, marking the beginning of a new chapter for the future of rural health care.

"Today's historic milestone paves the way for us to advance world-class care across the rural Midwest and accelerate vital investments in the communities we have the privilege of serving," said Bill Gassen, president and CEO of Sanford Health. "Together, we will reimagine the future of local, patient-centered nonprofit health care by expanding services, enhancing access and harnessing innovative technologies to improve the health of our communities. We are thrilled to welcome 13,000 new employees from Marshfield Clinic Health System to our Sanford family and look forward to embracing all of the new possibilities that lie ahead."

The Marshfield Clinic region is a new health services delivery region of Sanford Health that will continue to serve communities in Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Additionally, each organization's respective health plans, Sanford Health Plan and Security Health Plan, will continue current operations under a common management reporting and governance structure.

"Our partnership brings together two organizations deeply committed to advancing health care for the people and communities we serve in rural America," said Brian Hoerneman, M.D., who previously served as interim CEO of Marshfield Clinic Health System and has now

transitioned to the role of President and CEO of the Marshfield Clinic region of Sanford Health. "I am excited about the opportunities ahead as our teams learn from each other and combine our complementary strengths, cultures and missions. Together, we will build on our shared legacy, creating a future where every person, regardless of zip code, has access to the best possible care."

The combined system will serve patients and communities across the upper Midwest, including South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wyoming, Iowa, Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan. The organization includes nearly 56,000 employees, 56 hospitals, 4,500 providers, two fully integrated health plans, specialty pharmacies and nationally recognized research institutions. Sanford Health Plan and Security Health Plan will serve more than 425,000 members.

Additionally:

Dr. Brian Hoerneman will continue to lead the newly established region in his new role as regional president and CEO. He is a native of Marshfield, Wisconsin, and a practicing emergency medicine physician.

Sanford Health Plan and Security Health Plan

See **MERGER** page 5

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Marshfield Clinic Research Institute led lab testing for investigation into the largest known U.S. blastomycosis outbreak at paper mill

FOR CITY TIMES

MARSHFIELD – Marshfield Clinic Research Institute tested nearly 500 environmental samples during the multi-state, multi-agency investigation into the largest known blastomycosis outbreak in the United States, which sickened workers at an Escanaba, Michigan paper mill and resulted in one death.

In March 2023, a cluster of atypical pneumonia cases, many of which were attributed to mill workers at the Billerud paper mill in Escanaba, was reported to the local health department. Investigators from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), working with public health partners, facilitated blastomycosis case-finding through a medical survey and conducted an environmental assessment. A survey of 645 mill workers showed that 162 people (25%) were identified with blastomycosis between Nov. 1, 2022, and May 15, 2023, according to a study published online Dec. 30 in the CDC's weekly Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Overall, an estimated 20% of workers at the paper mill in Michigan tested positive for blastomycosis.

Blastomycosis is a rare infectious disease caused by inhalation of Blastomyces fungal spores from the environment. Blastomyces is found in moist soil or decaying wood and leaves, often near rivers and lakes. Blastomycosis incubates over a two-week to three-month period and pulmonary illness is most common, ranging from mild, respiratory symptoms to severe, potentially fatal pneumonia.

Blastomycosis is an endemic and reportable disease

in Michigan with 186 cases reported between 2007-2017. Blastomycosis does not spread from person to person.

Jennifer Meece, Ph.D., is the executive director of Marshfield Clinic Research Institute and has researched blastomycosis for more than 20 years, investigating outbreaks throughout the Midwest. She said it's critical to launch a comprehensive investigation as soon as possible when clusters of potential blastomycosis cases are reported.

"Blastomycosis is difficult to diagnose because its symptoms often mimic other respiratory illnesses, like pneumonia, making it hard to distinguish clinically," Meece said. "Diagnosis requires seeing the fungus in tissue samples through a culture or microscope. It's important for patients to begin treatment with antifungal medication as soon as possible, and to attempt to find the source of the exposure to prevent others from inhaling the spores."

Digging into the cause of the outbreak

In addition to being the largest blastomycosis outbreak ever reported in the U.S., this was the first associated with a paper mill or other industrial worksite. The mill's location along a riverway in a wooded environment is consistent with Blastomyces habitat. Blastomyces typically does not propagate indoors; the spores potentially entered the building through unfiltered ventilation systems, open doors, and caused the exposure over several months.

Meece and her team of researchers were asked to join the Escanaba outbreak investigation based on their past experience researching public health outbreaks. Their previous blastomycosis work included looking at people who have certain racial and ethnic backgrounds and may

need more aggressive treatment and closer monitoring.

Marshfield Clinic Research Institute and the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene analyzed environmental samples for Blastomyces by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and culture for identification. Environmental samples collected included soil, wood chips, indoor surface dust, and water, dust, duct lining and filters from HVAC systems. Among 533 indoor and outdoor samples analyzed, no Blastomyces was detected and the specific environmental factors in or around the mill that led to this outbreak remain unknown.

"This was not an unexpected outcome as Blastomyces is an elusive organism," Meece said. "It is rare, if not unheard of, that the exact source of a blastomycosis outbreak has ever been detected in the environment."

More education can lead to quicker public health response

While many people who recreate in areas where blastomycosis is endemic are aware of the disease, this first-time outbreak at an industrial business opens new potential risks for exposure. Health care providers and public health authorities should consider work-related exposure to Blastomyces to detect future outbreaks and implement public health interventions quickly. Industries with workers who routinely work outdoors in the midwestern and southeastern United States should consider providing worker training and education to enhance awareness of Blastomyces.

For more information on fungal diseases, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/index.html>.

Wisconsin FFA alumni and supporters association celebrates 45th annual convention

FOR CITY TIMES

MARSHFIELD – The Wisconsin FFA Alumni and Supporters Association will be holding their 45th Annual Convention, Feb. 7 and 8, 2025 at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center in Stevens Point, WI. During this convention,

attendees can expect to engage in workshops and hear from speakers engineered to transform them into stronger leaders and advocates.

As a leader in advocacy and philanthropy, the mission of Wisconsin FFA Alumni Association is to strive to be Wisconsin's premier agriculture education advocate.

This year's convention has a packed schedule of workshops and general sessions.

Attending will be Eric Hansotia, Chairmen, President, and CEO of AGCO Corp. AGCO is a global leader in design, manufacture and distribution of agricultural machinery and precision technology — and the only one focused solely on the agricultural industry. AGCO and Mr. Hansotia continue to be committed to FFA and Agriculture Education. Mr. Hansotia now from Athens, GA started his FFA roots in

Marshfield, WI and is now a lifetime member of the Marshfield WI FFA Alumni & Supporters Association.

In addition to Eric Hansotia, the convention welcomes speakers from multiple Wisconsin businesses including – Wysocki Family Farms, Wisconsin Cranberry Growers Association, Hougum Law Firm and more.

Attendees of convention will have the opportunity to participate in hands on



Mason Gukenberger

activities, business and register for the 45th industry tours, bid on Annual Convention at auctions, and vote at the WisconsinAgEd.org. Registration closes Jan. 10, 2025.

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Sen. Testin to chair Agriculture and Revenue Committee

FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY – Senate leadership has announced committee assignments for the upcoming legislative session, and Sen. Patrick Testin (R-Stevens Point) has been selected to be the chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Revenue.

“The agriculture industry, which is a significant driver of our state’s economy, employs nearly 12 percent of our workers and generates an annual economic impact of more than \$100 billion,” Sen. Testin said. “I am eager to advance bills that help our farmers strengthen the agriculture sector while also protecting our natural resources and the health of our residents. As for the revenue aspect of the committee, I expect to move forward legislation that cuts taxes for all Wisconsinites and makes our state more competitive for future opportunities.”

During the 2025-26 legislative session, Sen. Testin will also serve as vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Health. In addition, Sen. Testin will be the co-chair of the Joint Survey Committee on Tax Exemptions and a member of the Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage and



the Joint Committee on Information Policy and Technology.

Earlier this month, Sen. Testin was also named the Senate vice-chair of the budget-writing Joint Finance Committee.

Gov. Evers, WHEDA award \$2 Million for Housing Assistance to Wisconsin’s most vulnerable populations

FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY-Gov. Tony Evers, with the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), announced that 52 organizations will receive \$2 million in grants from the WHEDA Foundation to improve emergency shelter, transitional residences, and extremely low-income housing.

“Expanding access to affordable housing statewide continues to be one of our top priorities, and we’re working to make sure folks have a safe, warm place to stay and a roof over their heads at night, including folks who are facing difficult circumstances,” said Gov. Evers. “These grants provide critical resources to those who need them and will help foster safer spaces for Wisconsinites who are unhoused, unsafe, and working to overcome challenges to help them get back on their feet.”

Administered by WHEDA, the WHEDA Foundation grants improve housing for community members with complex needs, including individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, people experiencing intimate partner violence, individuals with incomes at or below 30 percent of the area median income,

youth experiencing homelessness, and people with mental and behavioral health conditions.

This year, the Foundation’s 2024 Housing Grant Program is funded by \$2 million from WHEDA reserves. Providers in 29 counties received awards ranging from \$6,826 to \$50,000, the maximum award available. Projects involve installing security features, increasing energy efficiency measures, and making existing facilities more accessible for those with mobility challenges. Many projects also fund large improvements, including roof replacements and overhauling heating and cooling systems. According to WHEDA, this year’s grants will create or improve 1,674 beds and housing units across the state. The investments at the community level also support economic development by creating valued construction jobs and ensuring folks have the housing supports they need to be well.

Wood County WHEDA grant recipients include Marshfield’s Personal Development Center, Inc., given \$50,000 to upgrade the installation of a security system. Also in Wood County, the Hannah Center, Inc. in Wisconsin Rapids will receive \$14,650 to install a new steel roof and replace gutters on the building.

Stay ahead of Respiratory Virus Season

FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY-Respiratory virus season presents added risks for everyone, but individuals with diabetes face significantly greater risks. Diabetes weakens the immune system and disrupts blood sugar regulation, making it harder to fight infections.

“People with diabetes are at higher risk of more frequent or severe infections, including common respiratory viruses like influenza, COVID-19, and RSV,” says Alex Trecartin, MD, a family medicine physician with Aspirus Health.

The Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC) reports that people with diabetes—even those whose diabetes is well-managed—are three times more likely to die and six times more likely to be hospitalized due to flu-related complications than those without diabetes.

Dr. Trecartin explains that infections can complicate diabetes management. “Our body’s metabolism changes during illness, and blood glucose control can be harder to maintain,” he explains. “It’s important to monitor blood sugar

See VIRUS page 8

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ATTENTION

Residents of the Townships of CAMERON, LINCOLN, MARSHFIELD, MCMILLAN, RICHFIELD and ROCK

Recycling and Garbage Collection Services for these Townships will be handled by Waste Management in 2025. You have been provided with two carts: one for Recycling and one for Garbage. Please place items in the correct cart. When placing carts at roadside, be sure the opening side of the cover is facing the roadside. There is an arrow on the cover to help you in placement. The cart should be placed roadside or as close as practicable to collection vehicle routes. **NOTE: The lids on all carts must close completely.** If you have any questions concerning Garbage Collection or Recycle Collection, call **WASTE MANAGEMENT** at: 888.960.0008

RECYCLE COLLECTION GUIDELINES 2025

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NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES: RULE 2: The following electronics are BANNED from landfill or incinerator disposal: Computers, computer monitors, mice, keyboards, speakers, printers, televisions, VCR, DVR, DVD players, fax machines, cell phones. WASTE MANAGEMENT is one of many sites that will take these items for a fee and recycle them. Contact WASTE MANAGEMENT should you want this service from them.

PLASTIC BAGS/FILM/WRAP: RULE 3: Plastic bags, film and wrap should NOT be placed in your Recycling Cart that WASTE MANAGEMENT picks up. Clean and dry plastic bags and film can be dropped off in Marshfield at: *Pick N Save, Festival Foods, Wal-Mart, or Target.* Look for the recycling containers at these stores.

TIRES: The annual Tire Collection will be **April 26, 2025** (last Sat in April) from **8:00am to NOON.** Drop off site will be at Pankratz Trucking. No Rims. No Commercial. There is absolutely NO early drop offs

NOTICE: NO LARGE TRUCK or TRACTOR TIRES will be accepted at this collection event. Dropping off tires at any time other than scheduled collection is considered littering. This Tire Recycling Service is only provided for Residents of the Townships of: Cameron, Marshfield, McMillan, Lincoln, Richfield, and Rock. Residents must present their RED Identification Cards and/or confirm residency by presenting their driver's license. Only 8 auto/truck tires will be allowed for drop off at no fee. Tires in excess of the 8 tires allowed will be charged a fee of \$8.00 for each tire under 10:00 x 22.5. Fees are payable at time of drop off.

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OBITUARIES



JOYCE BLYTON

Joyce Marie Blyton, a constant source of love and guidance, at 67, passed away on December 3, 2024 at her home in the Village of Spencer. Born to Harvey and Rose (Bauer) Blyton on January 26, 1957, in Wausau, Wisconsin, Joyce's life was a testament to her loving, independent, and curious nature. Her radiant spirit and unwavering determination touched many people, especially her coworkers and the children she worked so hard to

help.

She was a proud graduate of Wittenberg-Birnawood High School. Her passion for learning, teaching and helping others led her to UW-Marathon County and then to UW-Stevens Point, where she earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees. Joyce's calling as a Speech and Language Pathologist allowed her to make a significant impact on countless lives.

For nearly five decades, she dedicated herself to the well-being of others, especially those with special needs through her work with Wausau Hospital Neuro-Developmental Clinic, Marathon County Special Education, and Spencer Public Schools. She had a unique ability to help kids make improvements and reach goals due to her lifelong love of play. She was successful because she was always a big kid at heart.

Joyce's love for her community was matched only by her love of her family. She was married to John Gunderson, and from this albeit short lived union, they were blessed with a son, Aaron Gunderson of Spencer, who will forever hold his mother's memory in his heart. She is also survived by many cousins who she would speak of as if they were her siblings. Joyce's parents, Harvey and Rose Blyton, preceded her in death.

Joyce's zest for life was apparent in her many interests. She had a special place in her heart for children, always striving to make things better and guiding those around her with wisdom and persistence. Her gardening was a place where she found tranquility and joy passed down to her from her mother and reflecting her own nurturing soul. Joyce found comfort in the simple pleasures of watching movies and discussing them and the companionship of animals, which brought her immeasurable happiness. Oreo probably misses her most of all.

As we bid farewell to Joyce, we are reminded of the profound impact one person can have on the world. Her legacy of love, service, and dogged determination will continue to inspire those who were fortunate enough to have known her. In our lives we all strive to find our purpose and know that in her life Joyce found hers and knew what she was put on this earth to do and gave it everything she had every single opportunity.

Joyce's arrangements are entrusted to Life Tributes Funeral Home-Spencer. Memorial Services to celebrate her extraordinary life will be held in Spencer and in Birnamwood, where she spent the first half of her life, by her family after the first day of spring near the end of March, with final details to be announced. To share a memory or offer condolences, please visit www.lifetributesfuneralhome.com.

Joyce's memory will live on in the hearts of all who loved her, and her spirit will continue to guide us, just as it did throughout her remarkable life. She touched many lives but was the mother to only one...and she is sorely missed.

This quotation was found on her desk, and it feels like a final message from her. "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you, and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - Jeremiah 29:11



DAVID B. SMITH

On December 23, 2024, we lost a true renaissance man, David B. Smith. Dave passed away peacefully after strokes, dementia, and a traumatic brain injury finally caught up with him. An avid reader of all subjects and genres, there was no topic Dave couldn't talk about and no person - no matter the age - that he couldn't talk to. This talent served him well as his search for his dream job took many twists and turns: a bachelor's degree and two

masters degrees; employment with county, state, and federal agencies; and 2 stints in North Dakota before settling down in Marshfield. Hired as the school district's first social worker (affectionally known to the elementary students for his puppet, Duso the Dolphin) Dave then became the assistant principal for the "new" Grant School, and finally his dream job - teaching social studies courses to high school students, especially criminal justice and economics. Most importantly to him, he became the head varsity boys tennis coach. Dave put his travels and employment experiences to good use mesmerizing students with true renditions of interactions with clients as both a state and federal probation officer. He made the book pages come alive. His ready smile, infectious laughter, sense of humor, and twinkle in his eye made him a favorite of many of his students.

Born on January 3, 1951, in Ashland, WI, Dave was the only child of Basil and Margaret (Wallender) Smith. Football, sailing and downhill skiing were favorite activities for Dave, but tennis was by far the biggest part of Dave's life in Ashland, especially promoting and teaching it to all age groups. This continued throughout his life. The star tennis player for Ashland High School, Dave early on strung and sold rackets to individuals of all ages, then becoming their teacher, advocate, and mentor in life. Dave brought that same enthusiasm to Marshfield, achieving his 100th WIAA Boys Tennis win in April 2003. He was a United States Professional Tennis Association Professional Level 1 (USPTA) for over 45 years, a certified United States Racket Stringers Association member for over 30 years. Many summers were filled with giving lessons, mostly on his private tennis court - another dream come true. He stated many times his greatest achievement in tennis was teaching his son, Chris, the love of the game, using it as a motivating factor in Chris overcoming cancer, teaching him that infamous kick serve, and coaching him for 4 years of high school tennis, culminating in a trip to the State tournament in doubles.

In addition to watching and photographing trains, and reading and collecting books, he collected pens, pipes, embossed beer bottles, beer mugs, Steuben glass, John Deere tractors, and he closely followed the stock market. He was a member of Marshfield Elks Lodge #665, the Masonic Ancient Landmark Lodge #0210 in Ashland, Scottish Rite of Freemasonry and Aad Shriners of Duluth.

Dave is survived by his wife, Charlotte, whom he married on June 10, 1978; his son, Chris; and dog, Elf. Also, brothers-in-law, Kenneth, Gary, and Norman (Regina) Pollard; sister-in-law, Maxine Pollard; several nieces and nephews; and cousins. Dave is predeceased by his parents; parents-in-law, Harold B. and Genevieve E. Pollard; daughter-in-law, Jenny Smith; brothers-in-law, Ronald and Donald Pollard; sisters-in-law, Megan, Carol and Cindy Pollard; and special dog, Larry.

As per his wishes, there will be no services. A celebration of life is being planned for the summer of 2025 at Boson Tennis Courts. Contributions to Tennis Now through the Marshfield Area Community Foundation in Dave's name would be greatly appreciated.

Rest in peace Oracle of Marshfield. You are loved and admired by many. The Hansen-Schilling Funeral Home & Cremation Center assisted the family.



PATRICIA LEINWANDER

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of our beloved Patricia Jean (Krause) Leinwander, who left us peacefully on Friday December 13th 2024, at Three Oaks Health Services. Patricia was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, nurse, neighbor, and friend whose kindness and compassion touched all who knew her.

Born on April 28th, 1931 in Antigo WI to the late Anton and Caroline Krause, Patricia was known for her unwavering dedication to her family and her selfless care for others. As a nurse, she spent 42 years at St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield caring for her patients with a tenderness and skill that earned her the admiration of her colleagues and the gratitude of countless families. She approached her work with empathy and a fierce commitment to making others feel seen and supported, both in the hospital and beyond, retiring in 1996, but still stayed on for a few years as casual just to keep up with her hospital family and sharing jokes.

At the heart of her life was her family. As a loving wife to John "Hans" Leinwander, she shared 63 years of love, partnership, and cherished memories before John's passing in 2015. As a mother, she and John raised 5 children with patience, wisdom, and unconditional love. Patricia was also a proud grandmother, deeply devoted to her grandchildren, whom she showered with affection and guidance.

Outside of her professional life and family duties, Patricia was a passionate lover of animals. Whether it was caring for her own pets or supporting animal welfare, she was a tireless advocate for the well-being of all creatures. Her compassion for animals was just one more reflection of her generous spirit. Patricia loved growing a vegetable and flower garden with John, feeding the birds, and taking the dogs for long walks.

Patricia was a cherished friend to many. Her warmth, laughter, and unwavering support brightened the lives of those fortunate enough to know her. She was a constant source of encouragement, offering a listening ear or a helping hand when needed, and her friendship will be dearly missed.

She is survived by her children, Nancy Leinwander (Brion Kasza) Milwaukee, Jean Leinwander Wisconsin Rapids, Mark (Penny) Leinwander, Lake Almanor CA. Gary Leinwander, Marshfield,

Sue (Eric) Fehrenbach, Marshfield, daughter in-law Lisa Leinwander. 5 grandchildren, Danielle Leinwander, Jared (Rylie) Leinwander, Aaron (Alexis) Leinwander, Ellie (Eric) Seehafer and Emalee Fehrenbach, 4 Great Grandchildren, Levi and Mason Leinwander, Eve Seehafer, Grayson Leinwander, and a sister Helen "Chuckie" Drexler, and a host of extended family and friends. She was predeceased by her parents, husband John, sister, Georgian (Victor) Resch, brothers Philip (Joanne) Krause and Roderick (Peg) Krause. A service is not planned at this time. In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations to Copper Paws Rescue, Inc. or an animal shelter of your choice in Patricia's name.

Though we mourn the loss of Patricia, we take comfort in the many lives she touched with her love and compassion. Her legacy of care, kindness, and love will live on in all who knew her.

The family would like to extend a heart felt thank you to the employees of Stoney River Assisted Living, Three Oaks Health Service and Heartland Hospice for their companionate care of Patricia.



JANET E. JOHNSON

Janet E. Johnson, age 90, of Marshfield, passed away surrounded by her family in the morning hours on Monday, December 23, 2024, at House of the Dove in Marshfield under the care of Compassus Hospice.

A private memorial service will be held by family.

Janet was born on June 25, 1934 to Stanley and Helen (Sturdecki) Zawacki in Clark County, Wisconsin. She was a graduate of Thorp High

School. On August 30, 1952, she was united in marriage to Russell Johnson, Jr in Marshfield. She was employed at the hospital in the food service department. Janet was also employed at Figi's during the holiday season and at Burger Chef and Jimmy's Restaurant in downtown Marshfield.

She was a member of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Marshfield.

Janet loved to spend time looking for bargains at local garage sales, tending to her flowers and vegetables in her gardens, spending time getting ready for holidays, especially Easter and Christmas. She enjoyed snowmobiling, watching the Green Bay Packers play, attending her grandson's sporting events and spending time at the cabin in Park Falls.

Her memory will forever be cherished by her loving husband, Russell; her children, Ken (Carolyn) Johnson, Daniel (Coni) Johnson, Terry Johnson, and Mark (Julie) Johnson, all of Marshfield and Janell (Jeff) Fischer of Stratford; her grandchildren, Krista (Chris) Wilcott, Ben (Jess) Johnson, Jaren Fischer and Jaden Fischer; her great-grandson, Vinnie Johnson and her sister, Julie Dorsch along with many other relatives and friends.

Preceding Janet in death were her parents, Stanley and Helen Zawacki; a sister, Anna in infancy; her brothers, Frank and Joe Zawacki.

If desired, memorials in Janet's name can be directed to House of the Dove in Marshfield.

Janet's arrangements are under the care of Life Tributes Funeral Home-Spencer. To share a memory or offer condolences, please visit www.lifetributesfuneralhome.com

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Here's A Bright Idea. **RECYCLE**

FROM THE EDITOR:

Welcoming Danielle Snedeker, new reporter

BY DANIELLE SNEDEKER

WOOD COUNTY—Danielle Snedeker is a reporter who brings a blend of experience, curiosity, and creativity to her work. Originally from Plover, Wisconsin—Danielle's vast upbringing within a tight-knit community has inspired her to tell impactful and rich stories.

Danielle earned a BFA in English with a writing, publishing, and editing intent from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, performing at the top of her class, and earning a place on the Dean's List. While she expands her education in Chicago with an MA in Publishing and Writing from DePaul University. She is actively honing her craft through publishing courses and fiction workshops.

Her professional experience spans from grant writing at UWSP to publishing and copy editing at DePaul. Outside of writing, Danielle has worked as a dental assistant at a local Wisconsin non-profit; Noble Community Clinics. This provided her with incredible insights into the lives and challenges of her hometown community. Her education, paired with her small-town experiences, has shaped an all-encapsulating foundation for her writing.

Beyond her reporting, Danielle is a passionate storyteller. She aspires to evoke deep emotions through her writing,



inspired by the novels she cherished growing up. A horror novelist in the making, Danielle blends her creative ambitions with a desire to connect with readers, creating stories that inspire, and resonate across boundaries.

An adventurer at heart, Danielle has completed the iconic Tour du Mont Blanc and is thrilled to place her hiking boots back in the mountains this summer, in Scotland. Sharing nature with her friends is one of the driving forces behind her writing and being a paddler participant is just to name a few. When she's not writing, reading, or exploring, she enjoys running and spending time with her cat, Nebula.

Jensen honored on the Chadron State College Dean's List

FOR CITY TIMES

MARSHFIELD--Chadron State College has announced the students on the Fall 2024 President's and Dean's Lists. The President's List consists of students with a 4.0 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale. Students met the requirements for the Dean's List by earning at least a

3.5 cumulative grade point average. To qualify for either list, students must be enrolled in 12 credit hours of coursework, be seeking their first bachelor's degree, and have no incomplete grades during the semester.

Myles Jensen of Marshfield has been honored on the Dean's List.

MERGER from page 1

will continue current operations under common management reporting and governance structures. The health plans will be led by Dr. Tommy Ibrahim, executive vice president and president and CEO of Sanford Health Plan. Krista Hoglund serves as regional president and CEO of Security Health Plan and reports to Dr. Ibrahim. Physicians will continue to have a critical voice in the direction of the combined organization through Sanford Health's robust physician governance structure. Like all of Sanford Health's regions, the new Marshfield Clinic region has a Physician Executive Council, which will feature Marshfield Clinic physician leaders. Three members of the Physician Executive Council will serve on the system's Council of Governors (COG). These physicians are Jay Vedre, M.D., MPH, Kent Ray, DO, MSc, and Matt Thomas, M.D.

Marshfield Clinic Health System (MCHS) will become a region of Sanford Health. The Marshfield brand will continue to be predominant within the Marshfield Clinic region. Three Marshfield Clinic

Health System Board members have now joined the Sanford Health Board of Trustees. These new Trustees are Dr. George Brown, Thomas Wenzel and Dr. Maureen McCausland.

A regional board of community leaders is being established to govern the operations and strategy of the Marshfield Clinic region.

An integration process is underway to create a unified organization. Patients will continue to receive care from the same trusted providers at the same locations, with no immediate changes. Moving forward together under

the Sanford Health parent organization will bring more resources, expertise and innovation to patient care in communities across the rural Midwest.

Marshfield Clinic Health System, now Marshfield Clinic region of Sanford Health, is an integrated health system whose mission is to enrich lives through accessible, affordable compassionate health care. The health system serves Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula with more than 1,400 providers comprising 170 specialties, health plan, and research and education programs. Primary

operations include more than 60 Marshfield Clinic locations, 11 hospitals, Marshfield Children's Hospital, Marshfield Clinic Research Institute, Security Health Plan and Marshfield Clinic Health System Foundation.

PUBLISHER'S LETTER

Finding The Perfect Someone

Dear Reader,

Life's treasures aren't measured in material possessions like a sleek car or a spacious mansion. You could have all of these things, but without someone to share them with, what do they really mean? Isn't life truly about finding that perfect someone—a person who turns the ordinary into extraordinary?

We long for someone who is more than just a partner; someone who is witty, who lights up the room with a smile, and who can turn even the dullest moments into something unforgettable. This is the person who finishes your sentences, who has your back without question, who loves you with a fierce loyalty that never wavers.

Together, you become more than just individuals; you are a team, a unit that



others see as one. Friends and family expect to see you together, and even children instinctively ask for the other when only one is present.

But what happens when that magical connection is suddenly severed? How do you navigate life without the person who

brought joy to your every day, who was your constant in a world full of change? How do you move forward knowing that no one will ever quite match what they brought to your life?

Finding the perfect person means everything. It's a rare and beautiful gift that, once lost, leaves a void nothing else can fill.

PATRICK J. WOOD

Publisher

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

Winning \$109,000 Badger 5 ticket sold in Wisconsin Rapids

FOR CITY TIMES

WISCONSIN RAPIDS -- 2025 is off to a great start for a Wisconsin Lottery player. A winning \$109,000 Badger 5 jackpot ticket was sold at Shree Ashapuri Inc., 3553 8th St. South, in Wisconsin Rapids, for the Wednesday, Jan. 1 drawing. The winning numbers were 2-6-7-11-22.

Big Badger 5 jackpot wins may be a continuing trend entering the new year. It is the third time in less than a month that a winning Badger 5

jackpot ticket of \$100,000 or more has been sold in Wisconsin.

Winning Badger 5 jackpot tickets of \$100,000 or more, sold in Dec. 2024 include:

Dec. 11, \$222,000 Badger 5 jackpot split between winning tickets sold at a Kwik Trip in New Berlin and Bailey's 57 in Bailey's Harbor.

Dec. 19, winning \$165,000

Badger 5 jackpot ticket sold at Menasha Gas Inc., in Menasha.

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- Smoked Boneless Ham pepper coated, frozen.....\$1.39/lb
- Bratwurst fully cooked, frozen, 19.2 oz.....\$2.39
- Ripe Pitted Broken Olives 5.75 oz.....\$0.79

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Wisconsin Rapids Family Center receives \$4,290 through Holiday Funds



FOR CITY TIMES

WISCONSIN RAPIDS--Wisconsin Rapids' Family Center received \$4,290 this holiday season through Prevail Bank's Holiday Matching Funds campaign to assist those families and individuals affected by domestic violence and abuse. Prevail Bank Branch Manager, Taylor Doescher (far left), along with seven other Prevail Bank professionals presented the big check to Tricia, Wisconsin Rapids' Family Center Director (adjacent to Doescher). Other Family Center professionals pictured were Heather, Family Center Finance and Operations Manager (fifth person from the left), and Amy, Family Center Administrative Development Volunteer Coordinator (second from the right). Bank-wide, a remarkable \$20,885 was gifted between the public and Prevail Bank, supporting nine nonprofit organizations.

Every branch chose a different nonprofit to champion, matching public donations up to \$1,000. The benefiting nonprofits were: Sauk County Children's Giving Tree \$2,070, Eau Claire County Department of Human Services' Children's Giving Tree received 149 gifts totaling approximately \$2,160, Marshfield Rotary \$4,506 in support of the meals they make for the Ronald McDonald House, Taylor County Supportive Housing homeless shelter \$482, Owen-Withee Food Pantry \$3,095 with a special acknowledgement going to the Owen-Withee Lions Club that contributed \$1,000, Loggers United Booster Club (Phillips) \$1,020, Operation Bootstrap \$842 to support the Portage County Holiday Basket Project, Children's Wisconsin Child Advocacy Center (Wausau) \$2,420, and the Wisconsin Rapids Family Center \$4,290.

MCPL Spencer Branch to hold monthly cribbage games

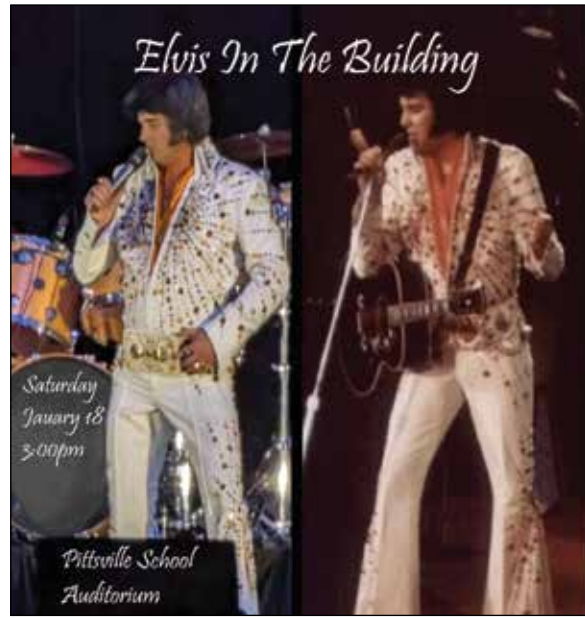
FOR CITY TIMES

SPENCER – If you want to learn how to play cribbage, or if you're already a fan of the game, join the Marathon County Public Library's Spencer Branch (105 S. Park St., Spencer) for their monthly cribbage event. Cribbage is held on the second Tuesday of the month from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. with the first session of 2025 being on Jan. 14. Decks of cards and cribbage boards will be available for patrons to use, or players are welcome to bring their own. From novice to expert, everyone is welcome. This event is free and open to the public



with no registration required. For more information, call 715-659-3996 or visit <https://mcpl.us/event/spencer-cribbage-at-the-library/2025-01-14/>

Elvis is in the building

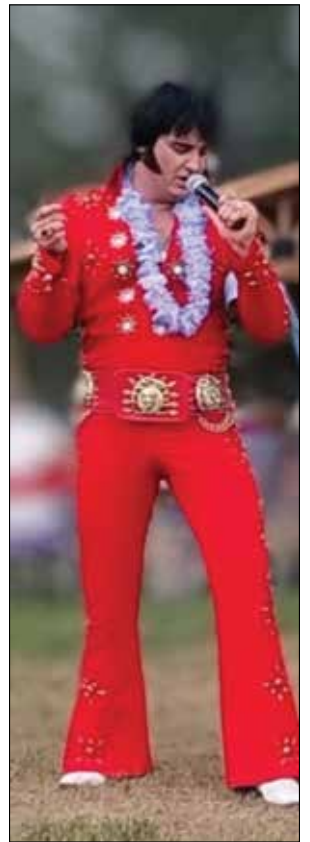


FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY--For some, it seems like just yesterday. Elvis Presley was a phenom in the 1960s through 1980s that the immortal announcement, "Elvis has left the building," sounding loud over the speakers to relieve security details, sank the hearts of shrieking young gals and diminished the flames of wild fans wanting a glimpse, a whiff, much less an autograph of he

who had become the king. Although a shy kid, teased as a mama's boy in school, his nervous habit of shaking his leg became his signature as he melded his background of church gospel music, hillbilly style, country ballads, and the back beat of rhythm and blues. Then, Elvis brought the guitar to the forefront and, boom: rock and roll was born. From very humble beginnings in Mississippi, Elvis became a star like no other, adored by fans, and consumed by fame.

Singer, Dakota Pongratz, sings and shakes a tribute to the various stages of Elvis's career, from his teen start to the Vegas years, complete with mannerisms, movements, costumes and vocals in a tribute that does exceptional justice to the beloved talent. This show



will take you back to those glory years and introduce younger generations to the eras of Elvis; performances that shocked TV censors and thrilled audiences. Don't miss **ELVIS IN THE BUILDING** on Saturday, Jan. 18 at the Pittsville school auditorium. Show time is 3:00pm. General admission tickets will be available at the door, or can be picked up in advance at the downtown Pittsville office of Wisconsin Farm Business/Ortner Accounting during regular business hours: starting at \$12, Seniors \$10, students only \$1. Online: Eventbrite.

Local students named to Dean's List at UW-Superior

FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY--To be named to the Dean's List, students must have completed 12 degree-seeking semester credits and achieved at least a 3.50 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale). Founded in 1893 as a teacher's college, UW-Superior has more than 50 program offerings, select online and graduate programs, Division III athletics programs, continuing education, research and scholarship

programs that support the community and region. The following students have been named to the Dean's List at the University of Wisconsin-Superior for academic achievement during the Fall 2024 semester. From Abbotsford, WI, Lillian Graun. From Colby, WI, Hanna Meier. From Neillsville, WI, Mackenzie Person. From Arpin, WI, Brook SeEVERS.

AUCTION

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 2025 • 9:30 A.M.
LUNCH BY OUR MAKER'S ACRES

Located inside the Jr. Activities building at the Central Wisconsin Fairgrounds, 513 East 17th St., Marshfield, WI

Tim Schindler Auctions & Estate specialists of Central WI is proud to present the second auction of the estate of Kenneth & Ardyce Heiting. This is a live in person auction, if you cannot attend, please feel free to contact Mitch or Tim for absentee bidding options. **There will be an open house to preview items on Friday, Jan. 17 from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. Doors will be open on Sat. at 8:00 a.m.**

FURNITURE: oak lawyer's stacking bookcases; rare Globe Wernicke oak drop front desk w/bookcase; oak drop front desks; primitive pie & jelly cupboards w/old paint; primitive benches; oak & mahogany parlor tables; oak telephone chair; butternut 3 dr. wash stands; early immigrants trunk; walnut Eastlake style parlor table; Victorian parlor chairs; Victorian oval marble top parlor table; Victorian parlor sofa & settee; rare schoolhouse pull down maps w/ oak cabinet; oak printer's cabinet;

LAMPS: several leaded stained glass & slag glass lamps; French style torchiere pole lamps; Victorian cast iron pull down hanging oil lamps; cast iron oil lamp brackets & reflectors; & many others;

POTTERY & MISC ANTIQUES: RW 3 & 4 gal. churns; RW crocks & jugs; McCoy & Weller pottery; Victorian glass & cracker jars; Spode china; Wallace sterling silver flatware; .999 silver one oz. bars; several blue & white swirl graniteware pieces; Jadite tea & coffee canisters; lg. wooden dough bowl; primitive wooden bowls; lg. 2 wheel General Store coffee grinder; vintage quilts & rugs; German beer steins; 1932 WI hunting license button; wooden duck decoys; Marshfield Brewery crate; tramp art boxes; German feather tree; vintage Christmas items; costume jewelry; antique oil paintings & early lithograph pictures; 1905 Frederic Remington print; JFK assassination papers; Victorian wicker stroller; Marshfield State Bank notary stamp; Victorian picture frames; primitive boxes; woven wicker baskets; cast iron bookends, stained glass window, Texas Longhorn mount; Griswold cast iron pieces; wall mount coffee grinder; antique kitchen items; Bus Stop metal sign; wicker fishing creels; Victorian photo album & tin types; WWI history books, old toys & marbles; mantle clocks; Native American prints & So much more!!

COINS: Walking Liberty & Franklin half dollars; Washington quarters; Roosevelt & mercury dimes; wheat pennies.

Kenneth & Ardyce Heiting Estate

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AUCTION

SATURDAY, JAN. 11, 2025 • 9:30 A.M.
LUNCH AVAILABLE

Located inside the Old School Owen, WI (101 W. 3rd St.)

Note: This is a partial listing, see website for full list & photos

Antiques & Collectibles: Mills slot machines, Caille Bros. slot machine; brass National cash register, slag glass lamp; Aladdin lamps & heater; prism lamps & candleholders, framed theater playbills, Victrola phonograph, antique German symphonion music box w/several metal discs; 36 string Irish made harp; Zenith radio, misc. clocks, Norwegian ship's compass, Fenton coin dot glassware; other misc. glassware; Coca Cola items; Buster Brown shoe store mannequins, store displays, misc. old metal signs; adv. matches, milk & cream bottles, oil lamps, green & white porcelain service station lights (some new old stock); Muskie lures; beer trays, signs & mirrors, Marshfield Lager beer glassware; Western RR portable telephone; model steam engines, lg. steam gauge; lightning rods & balls, trap tags; marbles; cast iron fry pans; pewter & silverplate, vintage toy airplanes including Marx wind up; vintage Pyrex; coffee grinders; adv. tins;

Over 50 pieces of RW & Other Stoneware: RW cherry band pitchers w/adv.; RW 10 gal. birch leaf ice water cooler; RW 5 gal. water cooler w/lid; RW 25 gal. squatty crock; RW 15 gal. water cooler crock; RW birch leaf crocks (15, 10, 4, 3, & 2 gal.); RW crocks (15, 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, 5, 3, & 2 gal.); RW 3, 4 & 5 gal. jugs; RW Ko-Rec feeder; 3 gal. salt glaze beehive crock; WI & Rowe pottery; RW adv. bowls; asst. of Watt's pottery (apple); lots of asst. other jugs, crocks & bowls.

Furniture, Outdoor Items & Misc.: mid century modern table & chairs, mid century modern stylist chair, mid century modern pole lamps, 4 chairs w/rush seats; brass towel rack; wood school desks; recurve bows; tackle box w/tackle; Crosely tabletop jukebox; 7.5 h.p. Evinrude Fleetwin outboard motor,

Firearm & Ammunition: 1917 Savage .32 cal. semi-auto. pistol w/10 round clip; new rifle scope, asst. boxes of misc. amm. (various calibers).

Tim Schindler
Auctioneer LLC

Terms: Positive ID required. All purchases must be settled for on sale day, cash or check. (Credit Card accepted with a 3% service fee) 5 1/2 % sales tax charged. NO BUYERS FEE

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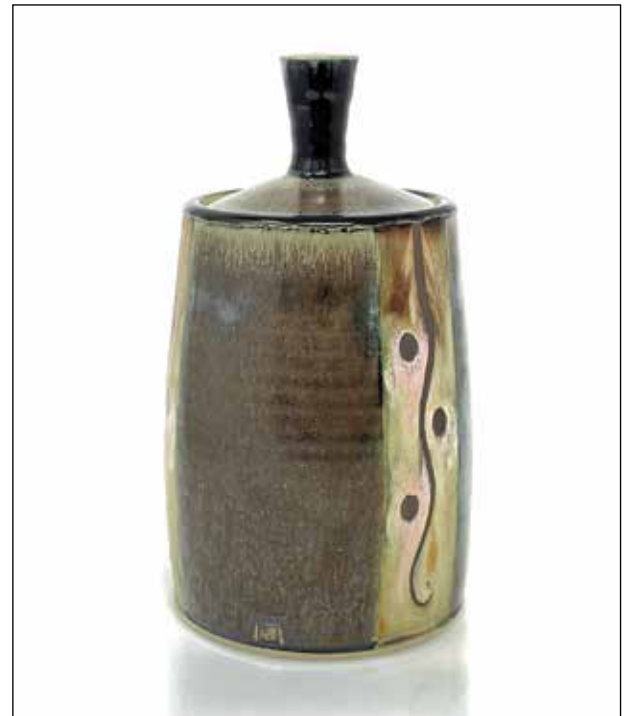
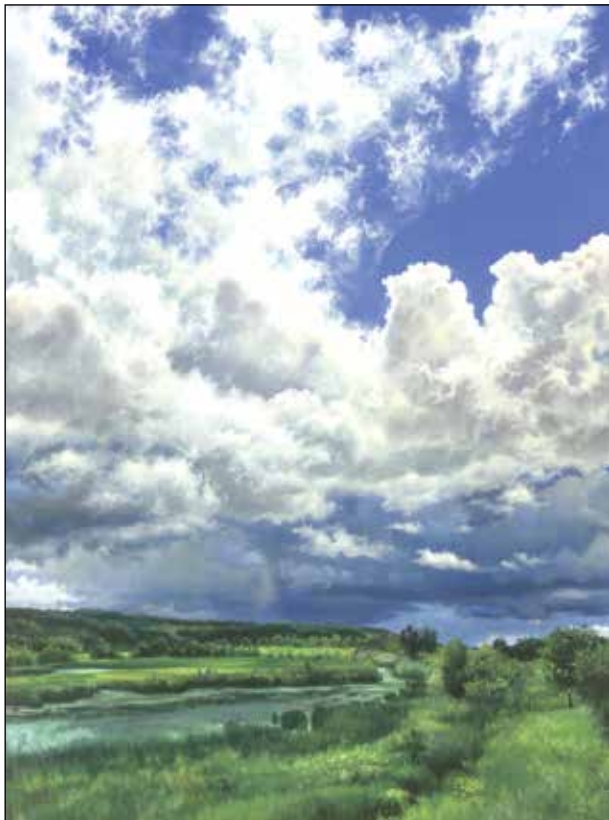
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Celebrate the new year with art at The Alexander House



FOR CITY TIMES

WISCONSIN RAPIDS-- The Alexander House will be holding an Opening Reception on Friday, Jan. 10, 2025, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. featuring exhibits such as "Holy Ground": Paintings by Anne Horjus, Baraboo, Wisconsin with "Cultivation: Vessels for Gathering": Ceramics by Kyle Hendrix, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Meet the artists in person as they share stories about their work and creative journeys.

Anne Horjus is a Dutch artist from Friesland, near the Wadden Sea. He studied classical singing at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague while also developing his skills in visual arts. His work includes portraits,

landscapes, murals, art installations, theater sets, woodcarvings, puppet making, and writing.

Anne's illustrations have been featured at venues such as the Royal Concert Hall in Amsterdam and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. He has illustrated several children's picture books in the Netherlands, Belgium, and the U.S.

His puppets have appeared in productions at theaters like the Marcus Center in Milwaukee, the Orpheum in Madison, the Pablo Center in Eau Claire, and the Stephanie H. Weill Center in Sheboygan.

For 16 years, Anne worked as a children's library program coordinator, contributing

to the nationally distributed Collaborative Summer Library Program Manual and creating craft projects for World Book. He also runs literacy and art workshops for library systems and schools.

Kyle Hendrix received his MFA in studio arts at the University of Missouri, and his BFA in ceramics and art education from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. He has completed Artist In Residence programs at C.R.E.T.A. in Rome,

IT. Lillstreet Arts Center in Chicago, IL. and the Cub Creek Foundation in Appomattox, VA. Currently he is a full-time studio potter located in Milwaukee, WI.

During the Reception enjoy live music performed by members of the Lincoln High School Orchestra. They will play pieces inspired by the book "Sleep", illustrations by Anne Horjus. The book will be available for purchase. Refreshments will be provided.

The exhibition runs until Feb. 18, 2025, with gallery hours on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 1:00-4:00 p.m., or by appointment.

Discover more at alexanderhouseonline.org or on Facebook at Alexander House Center for Art and History.

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AARP Foundation offering tax-aid program

FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY--AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers will be providing free in-person tax preparation to area residents, with a focus on taxpayers who are over 50 years old and those who have low to moderate income. You do not need to be an AARP member to use this service.

This free program is funded by AARP Foundation and the Internal Revenue Service and supported locally by Marshfield Parks and Recreation Department, Marshfield Area United Way, and 211 of South Wood and Adams Counties. Local volunteers, who are trained and IRS-certified, will prepare and then electronically file Federal, Wisconsin and Homestead Credit tax returns.

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers can not prepare complex tax returns. These include Married Filing Separately,

bankruptcy or divorce in 2024, residential rental income/depreciation, farm income, business income with employees, inventory or depreciation, cancellation of debt (except for a personal credit card), virtual currencies, most K1 schedules and other complex returns.

Appointments will be scheduled in Marshfield every Monday from noon until 5PM and Wednesdays from 9AM till 2PM starting Feb. 10 and ending April 9. After Jan. 2, you can schedule an appointment in Marshfield by calling 2-1-1 or 1-877-947-2211. After you make an appointment, a reminder card will be mailed to the address you provide, with a list of documents to bring to the appointment. Expect the appointment to take about 90 minutes. Walk-in appointments will not be accepted.

Aspirus Health announces top baby names of 2024

FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY – Aspirus Health announced the top baby names of 2024 as chosen by families across its health system (excluding Aspirus St. Luke's). This year, the names Henry and Evelyn topped the list for boys and girls. Out of a total of 2,911 live births at Aspirus facilities during the 2024 calendar year, 1,427 were baby girls.

Top Boys' Names of 2024:

- Henry – 47
- Oliver – 29
- Liam – 28

Top Girls' Names of 2024:

- Evelyn – 23
- Charlotte – 21
- Violet – 19

Inland trout early catch and release season opened Jan. 4



Wisconsin's early catch and release season for inland trout opened Jan. 4, 2025

Photo by Wisconsin DNR.

FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY--The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources reminds anglers that they will be able to target any of Wisconsin's inland trout species using artificial lures only starting Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025, through May 2, 2025, on designated early season trout streams.

Any trout caught during this time will need to be immediately released. All anglers are encouraged to continue to practice responsible catch and release and reduce their reel and handling time with the fish as much as possible. Tips on how to release your catch responsibly can be found on the DNR's Responsible Release webpage.

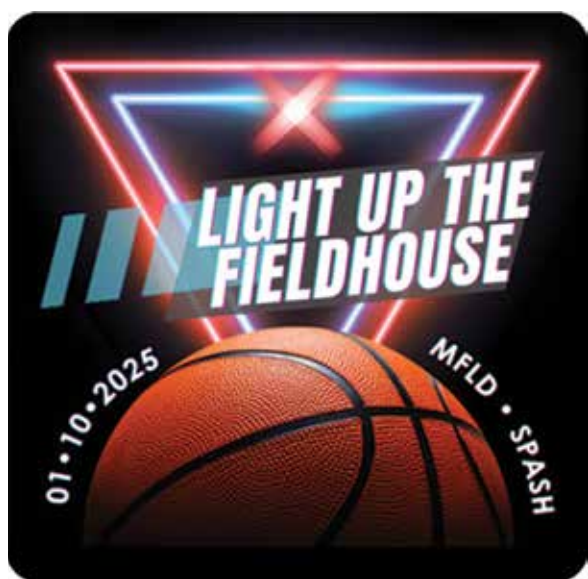
Anglers will be able to keep the trout

they catch once the general hook and line season opens on May 3, 2025, provided bag limits and length requirements are met. Check the Guide to Wisconsin's Trout Fishing Regulations for specifics.

Anyone wishing to participate in the season will need a 2024-2025 fishing license and an inland trout stamp, which are both good until March 31, 2025, and can be purchased online through Go Wild or at one of many license sales locations throughout the state. After April 1, 2025, anglers will need a 2025-2026 fishing license and inland trout stamp.

For a look at trout streams across the state, access the T.R.O.U.T. tool and additional trout fishing information on the DNR's Inland Trout Fishing webpage.

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VIRUS from page 3



Alex Trecartin, MD

levels more often and communicate with your health care provider about adjustments to your treatment plan.”

To protect themselves during respiratory season, Aspirus Health encourages individuals with diabetes to take the following proactive steps:

Stay Current on Vaccines: Immunizations for flu, COVID-19, and RSV significantly lower the risk of infection and reduce the severity of symptoms if illness occurs.

Maintain Good Glucose Control: Keeping blood sugar levels within a healthy range helps reduce the likelihood of complications from infections.

Practice Good Hygiene: “Washing your hands frequently is perhaps the most important thing you can do to lower your risk of respiratory infection,” advises Dr. Trecartin.

Taking these precautions will help individuals with diabetes reduce their risks and navigate respiratory virus season more confidently.

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Rural homelessness and the fight to do 'more with less'



Eric Zieroth unlocks the back gate of the apartment where he's staying as his dog, Bella, runs after him before driving to his storage unit with his daughter, Christina Hubbell, on Dec. 3.

JOE TIMMERMAN / WISCONSIN WATCH PHOTOS



Christina Hubbell runs the laundromat's hot water to melt her frozen laundry detergent after picking up her winter clothes from a storage unit she shares with her father, Eric.

BY HALLIE CLAFLIN
WISCONSIN WATCH

NORTHERN WISCONSIN – Last winter, Eric Zieroth learned that multiple layers and a down blanket were the best way to keep warm while living in his car in far northwestern Wisconsin.

For over a year, he and his then-20-year-old daughter Christina Hubbell regularly parked in a corner spot at a public boat landing a mile outside Shell Lake, where they had spent most of their lives.

Now, because they are homeless, they have been ostracized for showering, parking and sleeping in public places.

Washburn County has no homeless shelters. Hubbell's job at a dollar store keeps them from relocating to a shelter in another county.

They are on a waitlist for a low-income housing unit. Zieroth is awaiting a surgery that will allow him to get back to work.

If it weren't for his daughter, the former mechanic said he might consider committing a crime and getting booked into jail instead of spending another winter in the vehicle.

"There's no way I could do it again," Zieroth said. "I had to figure out something else this year."

In rural Wisconsin, homelessness is often hidden behind a veil of individuals and families who are couch surfing and sleeping in their vehicles.

Resources are few and far between, shelters are always full, and funding can be a significant challenge.

After falling for years, the state's estimated homeless population has been rising since 2021, surpassing 5,000 in 2024 for the first time since 2017.

In the 69 counties outside Milwaukee, Dane and Racine, the homeless population increased from 2,938 individuals in 2023 to 3,201 in 2024 — and that's likely an undercount.

Those living in cars are often missed, and those sleeping on couches don't count because they're "housed," said Jenny Fasula, executive director of Wisconsin's Foundation for Rural Housing.

Despite accounting for over 60% of the state's homeless population in 2023, these mostly rural counties collectively contain just 23% of the state's supportive housing units, according to the Wisconsin Policy Forum.

Experts say such long-term housing support with on-site services is the best way to address chronic homelessness. But providing the option is an expensive, labor-intensive task for small, rural providers with limited funding.

Rural shelter providers across the state identified several solutions to the problem: Cutting out county governments as the middleman for state reimbursements, increasing the availability of new rental units, consolidating

multiple definitions of homelessness, more consistent and proportional state funding and assistance with case management are just a few.

Federal funding and HUD

Since 2009, HUD — the main federal agency that handles homelessness — has targeted permanent supportive housing programs with long-term, sustainable services like case management for federal funding.

The national shift from temporary housing programs reflects a widely adopted "housing first" approach — that the security of a permanent shelter is the first, necessary step before people can address the root causes of their homelessness.

While permanent housing programs effectively lowered Wisconsin's homeless population in both rural and urban areas before the pandemic, the shift hasn't been easy for rural shelters that are strapped for resources.

"As a shelter, when you have 50 people, it's impossible to have the funding to hire case managers that are really involved and able to really assist people," said Michael Hall, a former Waupaca County shelter worker and director of Impact Wisconsin — a nonprofit providing housing and recovery services in a six-county rural region.

Restrictions on federal funding and multiple definitions of homelessness are another barrier for rural homeless providers, said Millie Rounsville, CEO of Northwest Wisconsin Community Services Agency.

The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homelessness specifically for youth as minor children who "lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."

But HUD defines homelessness in multiple categories including: 1) an individual or family who is immediately homeless and without shelter and 2) those at imminent risk of homelessness.

Homeless children and families in the rural region surrounding Superior tend to be doubled up in some kind of housing, Rounsville said.

While they often meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless, they are considered category two homeless under HUD's definitions.

But in order to qualify for HUD-funded Rapid Rehousing programs, individuals must fall under category one.

"The funding needs to be flexible," Rounsville said. "We can't assume that every community across the country has the same need."

It's a housing issue

Rural Wisconsin is lacking affordable, habitable homes. Providers in Rusk County, Taylor County, Bayfield

How to find help

If you or someone you know is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing homelessness, please consider the following resources:

Wisconsin Foundation for Rural Housing

One-time emergency assistance. Visit www.wisconsinruralhousing.org.

The Wisconsin Community Action Network

Identify the agency that serves your county. Visit wiscap.org/find-an-agency-2.

Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care

Identify your county to locate services. Visit www.wiboscoc.org/find-services.html.

County and Waupaca County said without low-income options, they often can't get people into permanent housing.

"As fast as units open up, they get filled," said Kimberly Fitzgerald, interim director of the Rusk County Lighthouse shelter. "In Ladysmith specifically, there are next to no rental units. So even if somebody did get approved for the housing program, where are we going to put them?"

Rural areas are also home to the state's aging housing stock, which can mean higher energy bills.

"People stereotype them to think 'Oh, we have these programs because people don't know how to manage their money.' It's not that," Fasula said. "These are folks that come in that just have a crisis. ... They don't have anything to fall back on. Any little hiccup is a big impact for them financially."

While working to eventually afford an apartment in Shell Lake, Hubbell is making \$13.50 an hour at the Dollar General, but only scheduled to work 20 hours a week. The living wage calculation for one adult in Washburn County is \$19.45 an hour working 40 hours a week, according to the MIT living wage calculator.

State funding

In the state's 2023-25 biennial budget, the Legislature rejected Gov. Tony Evers' recommendations to spend some \$24 million on emergency shelter and housing grants, homeless case management services and rental assistance for unhoused veterans.

The Legislature also nixed \$250 million Evers proposed for affordable workforce housing and home rehabilitation grants.

The state funds two main grants for homeless shelters and housing annually.

The State Shelter Subsidy Grant (SSSG) receives around \$1.6 million per year, and the Housing Assistance Program receives \$900,000.

But for small shelters like Taylor House — the only homeless shelter in rural Taylor County — the funding is "pennies," said Adam Schnabel, the shelter's vice president.

See HOMELESS page 11



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HOMELESS from page 10

The facility has a continuous waitlist. The north central Wisconsin shelter with a 17-person capacity received \$10,000 from SSSG this year, Schnabel said.

That's around \$588 per person. But four emergency shelters in Milwaukee with a combined capacity of around 392 received \$400,000 from the \$1.6 million grant total — \$1,020 per person.

The state's Recovery Voucher Grant Program awarded \$760,000 to grantees in 2024 to provide housing to those experiencing homelessness and struggling with opioid use disorders.

Half of these funds went to three providers in Dane, Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

Another state resource is the Homeless Case Management Services (HCMS) grant program, which distributes up to 10 \$50,000 grants per year to shelters and programs that meet eligibility requirements.

While helpful, these pots of money quickly run out, and many of them don't cover operating costs or wages.

Small shelters face county-level hurdles

Some shelter workers and advocates say in rural Wisconsin, homelessness is addressed only to the extent that their local governments and administrations are willing to acknowledge the issue and get involved.

Providers in several rural counties noted that there aren't any shelters that are owned or operated by local governments.

Washburn County Social Services can only direct homeless residents to the Lakeland Family Resource Center.

Hall and Schnabel said local governments need to be more involved in their work, whether that be providing a county employee to serve as a shelter director, or simply making better use of their limited resources.

Schnabel added that small shelters often cannot pay their directors a decent wage, resulting in frequent staff turnover.

Taylor House has had four directors in the last 18 months, he said. The inconsistency leaves "a bad taste" in the mouth of those reviewing their grant applications.

Some counties are much more willing than others to utilize Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) — a state program aimed at addressing substance abuse and mental health needs.

The program allows counties to contract employees

and case managers who provide services such as skills development and peer support.

The county can bill those expenses back to the state through BadgerCare.

But some county officials are unwilling to engage in the program, Hall said.

He added that allowing local shelters that serve those covered under BadgerCare to bill the state directly for these services instead of relying on the county to initiate it "would solve the problem tomorrow."

Hall also noted that county governments can use their opioid settlement funds to provide housing and shelter to those with eligible needs, yet some have instead spent it on other things.

Waupaca County, for example, told Wisconsin Watch it has spent nearly \$100,000 in opioid settlement funds on awareness campaigns, training, a counselor position and equipment that helps local police quickly identify narcotics.

Another challenge is that some small communities reject homeless shelters, assuming they will bring negative footprints.

The small city of Clintonville approved an ordinance last winter enforcing a 60-day limit on local hotel stays in a six-month period, citing drug concerns, disorderly conduct and disturbances.

Many homeless individuals in the area are put up in those hotels.

"We're trying to figure out, what are we going to do with those 50 people this winter when the police departments come through and say they have to get out," Hall said.

Shunned by their community

While still homeless, Zieroth and Hubbell were fortunate enough to find a temporary place to stay as the weather gets colder — a small room in the unfinished basement of an acquaintance who didn't want to see them living out of their car.

They insist on paying the homeowners \$50 a week — all they can afford — for letting them stay in the basement.

Zieroth uses his skills as a mechanic to fix things around the property, and Hubbell picks items up for them at the Dollar General whenever she can.

Once healed, he wants to get back to work and acquire a property of his own, but his first priority is his daughter.

After getting on her feet, Hubbell hopes to go to cosmetology school in Rice Lake.

"She has her whole life ahead of her and experience has taught me that some real bad beginnings get really good endings, and she deserves a good one," Zieroth said.

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Welcome to Columbus Catholic Schools! To learn more, or if you have any questions, please reach out to Angie Loucks, Director of Marketing and Admissions, at 715-387-1177 ext. 3318 or loucks.angela@columbusdons.org; or visit our website at www.columbuscatholicsschools.org.

Columbus Catholic Schools (CCS) System

Every year Columbus Catholic Schools participates in the MACCI (Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry) Leadership Marshfield Education Day. This year's Education Day fell on November 21st and this year was special for us, as we were able to give a tour of our Fieldhouse.

The MACCI Leadership Marshfield Class is an eight-month program that identifies current and potential leaders in the community and provides participants with a training program that enhances their ability to function as more effective leaders. Each month the class focuses on a subject for an entire day including Business and Economic Development, Commerce, Community Engagement, Education, Health Care, Local Government, and Public Safety. During Education Day, participants learn about the different education opportunities available in Marshfield, including MSTC, UWSP, and public and private schools.

We always look forward to opening our doors to the Leadership Marshfield participants so community members can catch a glimpse of what it's like to be a Columbus student. This year was different as we incorporated our fieldhouse project into the program. We kicked off with a quick Q&A (fueled by some snacks created by our Family And Consumer Education Class). This was followed by a tour of our high school and middle school pointing out our Tech Ed Department, Science Wing, and recent improvements including new front doors, windows and lockers. Our Student Ambassadors were on

hand to answer questions and give perspectives from a student point of view.

Then finally, participants grabbed a hard hat and entered the construction zone. There, participants got an update on progress and learned the impact it will have on our students and the community – including the ability to host more sporting events, which bring visitors into Marshfield. Our current gym is booked solid from early in the morning until late at night, making it difficult for our students to practice at a convenient time – cutting into supper and homework time, and arriving home late at night.

St. John the Baptist Primary School (SJBP)

At Columbus Catholic Schools, we know that small student-to-teacher ratios are key when it comes to student success. That is why our classes have an average of around 13 students. Increased enrollment does not just mean more students. It also means more teachers as we add staff to accommodate this growth and maintain our 1:13 ratio.

At SJBP, we have classes from preschool (for 3- and 4-year-olds) to second grade, including full-day 4-year-old kindergarten, which is the only program of its kind in Marshfield. Once a year, we open the doors to SJBP so community members can visit the classrooms and ask our teachers any questions they may have. We also have staff available to answer questions about admissions and finance options, including scholarships, grants, a referral program and the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP). Through the WPCP it is possible for families who qualify to receive a free private education. This year, enrollment for the WPCP is from February 3 to April 17, 2025.

Our Open House this year will be January 29, 2025 from 4:00pm - 6:00pm. SJBP is located at 307 N. Walnut Ave., Marshfield. For more information about our Open House, call 715-387-1177, email admissions@

columbusdons.org or visit our website at www.columbuscatholicsschools.org.

Our Lady of Peace Intermediate School (OLPI)

On November 14, 2024 (after a special Veteran's Day Mass at Our Lady of Peace Church), there was a Flag Retirement Ceremony with VFW members, Columbus alumni / OLP parishioners who are veterans, and our third graders at Our Lady of Peace Intermediate School. Then, the third graders hosted a social in the church basement, where the students were able to ask questions, learn about their experiences and thank them for their service!

Columbus Catholic High / Middle School (CCHS/CCMS)

On November 11, 2024 our Columbus Catholic High and Middle School also held a Veterans Day Program for alumni and student family members who are veterans. The main speaker was Mrs. Janice Altmann (a 1980 graduate of CCHS). Janice is the mother of Staff Sgt. Joseph Altmann, who was also a student at CCHS and graduated in 2003. Joe bravely volunteered to serve our country and gave the ultimate sacrifice on Christmas Day in 2016 in Afghanistan. Janice spoke about the great pride of having a son serve in the military, and the sacrifice soldiers and their family members endure.

The program also included:

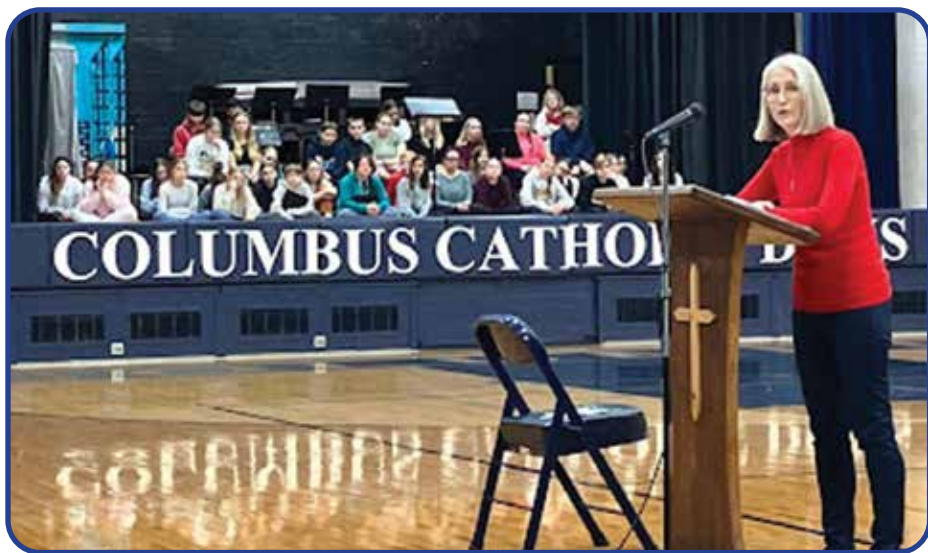
Challenge Academy Cadets who "Presented and Retired the Colors"

Performances from the Columbus Concert Choir and Columbus Concert Band

Flag folding demonstration from members of the VFW

Student reflections from three students whose parents are in the military or are veterans

Moment of silence and the playing of Taps



Janice Altmann speaks about her son Joseph's sacrifice during the Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11, 2024 at Columbus Catholic High / Middle School. Challenge Academy Cadets "Retire the Colors" at the conclusion of the ceremony.

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COLUMBUS CATHOLIC AREA SCHOOLS SCHOOL NEWS



After the Flag Retirement Ceremony, veterans were invited to the Our Lady of Peace Church cafeteria for a reception with the third graders.



Charlie B., a 4K student in Ms. Anatole's class at St. John the Baptist Primary School, loves all the activities that make learning fun. Pictured here, he is sorting the colors of his cereal onto a turkey worksheet; the cereal also doubled as a yummy snack afterwards!



David Eaton, President of Columbus Catholic Schools, gives a tour of the fieldhouse to MACCI Leadership Marshfield participants on November 21, 2024.



Left: A member of the VFW assists with the Flag Retirement Ceremony on November 14, 2024 while third graders from Our Lady of Peace Intermediate watch.



Student Ambassadors (from left) Jack K., Gracie W. and Mac K. give their perspectives on how the new Fieldhouse will make an impact on students.

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Preventing slip and fall injuries in the winter

FOR CITY TIMES WOOD COUNTY--As winter sets in, snow and ice can turn sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots into hazardous zones. Slip and fall injuries are among the most common winter-related accidents, often leading to serious consequences such as fractures, sprains, and head injuries.



Jennifer Clark

patches of ice, especially in shaded or low-traffic areas.

Eichman encourages a cautious approach when walking on potentially slippery surfaces and to think... "walk like a penguin."

Kaitlin Eichman, a physical therapist with Aspirus Health, says with a little foresight and some practical measures, these incidents can be significantly reduced.

"You want to make sure you have some quality footwear with good traction so that when you're making contact with the ground, starting from your feet down, you've got good tread, non-slip soles, something that's stable and secure on your feet," says Eichman.

The first line of defense against slips and falls is keeping pathways clear of snow and ice. Shovel walkways promptly after snowfall to prevent buildup and ice formation. For added safety, apply ice-melting products such as rock salt or sand to improve traction. Homeowners and businesses should routinely inspect their property for hidden

"We encourage people to make your base of support a little wider, turn your feet outward a little bit and take short steps," says Eichman. "You don't necessarily need to slide your feet when you're walking, but take shorter, smaller steps and slow down your speed so that you have that wider base of support you can keep yourself upright a lot easier."

Slopes and stairs can be particularly dangerous for individuals with limited mobility.

"Older adults and individuals with disabilities are particularly concerned about falls due to slippery surfaces like ice and snow," adds Jennifer

Clark, Community Health Educator with the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Central Wisconsin. "It's important to take your time and not be in a rush, use handrails and keep your hands free as much as possible," said Clark.

Winter hazards don't stop at the doorstep. Melted snow and water tracked indoors can create slippery floors. Place absorbent mats at entrances and encourage the use of boot trays to catch excess water. Regularly mop up wet areas and use "wet floor" signs to warn others of potential hazards.

Even with precautions, accidents can happen. Carry a cellphone or alert others if you are venturing into areas with known hazards. Learning basic fall prevention techniques and maintaining good physical health, such as improving balance and flexibility, can also reduce the risk of serious injuries.

By taking proactive measures and staying vigilant, individuals and organizations can significantly reduce the risks of winter slip and fall injuries. A little preparation goes a long way in keeping yourself and others safe during the colder months.

Stay safe and smart with over-the-counter medications



Stetson Potrykus, Aspirus Pharmacy Resident

FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY--Over-the-counter (OTC) medications are a convenient solution for managing common ailments like coughs, colds, and congestion. However, improper use can lead to unintended side effects—or even harm. Aspirus Health encourages patients to approach OTC medications with caution and informed decision-making.

"Patients may not know what the active ingredients are in each medication," says Stetson Potrykus, Aspirus Pharmacy Resident. "This can lead to taking multiple products with overlapping ingredients, which increases the risk of side effects by raising the overall dose."

Many OTC medications are combination products designed to target multiple symptoms. While helpful, these products require careful label reading to ensure safe use.

"The key is to narrow down the symptoms you have and select a medication that addresses those symptoms specifically," Potrykus adds. "That approach reduces the risk of taking unnecessary ingredients and minimizes side effects."

To get the most benefit from OTC medications while minimizing risks, Potrykus recommends:

Identify your symptoms: Select a medication designed for your specific needs.

Check the labels: Avoid products with duplicate active ingredients to reduce the risk of overuse.

Use combination products carefully: Ensure they align with your symptoms and avoid taking unnecessary ingredients.

While OTC medications are effective for short-term relief, they aren't always the solution. Potrykus advises contacting a health care provider if:

Symptoms persist for more than a week. Symptoms worsen despite OTC treatments.

You're unsure which medication is safe, particularly if you have underlying conditions or take prescription medications.

Taking these precautions can significantly reduce complications and ensure effective symptom management. For personalized advice, consult your health care provider.

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Hip replacement surgery: is age really a limiting factor?

FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY--Maintaining mobility and a comfortable quality of life becomes increasingly important as we age. For many older adults, joint replacement surgery offers a path to greater independence, pain relief, and improved functionality.

Joe Mueller, DO, an orthopedic surgeon with Aspirus Health, explains that there is no age too young or too old for joint replacement, whether it be a hip, knee, or shoulder procedure. The decision to undergo surgery is more about the individual's life expectations and the severity of their condition rather than age.

"At Aspirus Health, our goal with joint replacement surgery is twofold: pain relief and improving mobility," Dr. Mueller shares. "Especially as we age, having a new joint can be life-changing. It might mean the difference between staying independent and being able to live alone versus requiring constant assistance."

The decision to move forward with surgery is not made lightly. Dr. Mueller notes that several factors are considered when determining if someone is a good candidate for joint replacement, including the level of pain, the severity of the joint damage (as seen through X-rays), and the individual's overall physical health. "The goal is to ensure that the patient is in good enough health to handle a major surgery and that it will improve their quality of life," he explains.

For older patients, one of the biggest concerns is their ability to take care of



Joe Mueller, DO, an orthopedic surgeon with Aspirus Health

themselves post-surgery.

"We often recommend a bit of help around the house in the first few days after surgery to prevent falls, especially since balance can become more challenging with age," Dr. Mueller advises. However, he emphasizes that joint replacement surgery in older adults is typically very safe, provided the patient has appropriate support and follows recovery guidelines.

Joint replacement surgery, whether in younger or older individuals, aims to restore quality of life by reducing pain and increasing mobility. For those considering the procedure, it's essential to discuss with a healthcare provider to assess whether it's the right option based on individual needs and health. As Dr. Mueller points out, "The primary goal is to give patients the ability to live their lives comfortably and safely, no matter their age."

Grand Theater recognized again as a top theatre venue worldwide



FOR CITY TIMES

MARSHFIELD--The Grand Theater caps off a record-breaking year with a spot in the 2024 Top 200 Theatre Venues Worldwide as compiled by Pollstar. The publication's Year End Edition ranked The Grand 105th in the world based on 75,620 tickets sold – the Grand Theater's highest-ever position on Pollstar's list. The Grand has appeared in Pollstar's Top 150 rankings since 2017.

In addition to finishing in the Top 150 overall, The Grand again shined in comparison with similar markets and venues, ranking second in terms of market size and fourth for theaters under 1,300 seats. The Grand consistently has been among the top five venues of its size since 2017, and in the top two for market size since 2018.

The public response to shows at The Grand in 2024 – 75,620 tickets sold for \$3,472,020 in revenue – marks the third consecutive year of record numbers. This year, The Grand served more than double the number of patrons it did eight years ago.

"It has been another record-setting year at The Grand and to be recognized in Pollstar's Top 150 worldwide for the eighth consecutive year is a tribute to the hard work done by our entire team," says Sean Wright, Executive Director. "To once again have one of the highest finishes

of similarly-sized markets is especially gratifying, because it demonstrates just how incredibly supportive our amazing community is of our 97-year-old historic theater."

The Grand ranks 17th in the world this year for all venues 97 years or older, regardless of size or market. The Grand Theater is operated by the Performing Arts Foundation (PAF), a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization created to realize the community-supported restoration of the theater in the 1980s, and that continues to rely on local support and

charitable contributions to bring worldclass performing artists to Wausau every year.

Pollstar is the international trade publication for the concert and performing arts industry. The Grand has been ranked alongside world-renowned theaters such as Radio City Music Hall (New York, NY), Ryman Auditorium (Nashville, TN), and Royal Albert Hall (London, UK).

"We couldn't do it without our outstanding patrons, from our loyal season subscribers to new patrons experiencing The Grand for the first time," Wright says. "It's great to be recognized with some of the elite venues in the world, and it motivates us to continue to present the best in the performing arts for our audiences to enjoy."

Snowmobilers prepare for upcoming season



Prepare for a safe snowmobile season now by taking a safety education class. Stock Photo

FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY--The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages snowmobilers eager to take advantage of winter's snow to keep safety at the forefront of their preparations. This includes staying alert to the rapidly changing ice conditions commonly found in the early and later parts of winter.

"The biggest thing we want folks to remember is that no ice is completely safe," said Lt. Jacob Holsclaw, DNR off-highway vehicle administrator. "On a sunny day, ice that may have been thick enough to drive

on in the morning may be unsafe by the afternoon, especially during the early part of the season."

This rule also applies to ATVs and UTVs. Last season, several ATVs and UTVs went through the ice, with two resulting in fatalities. Local fishing clubs, outfitters and bait shops are the best sources for current ice conditions.

The DNR also encourages all snowmobilers to take a safety education class. According to Wisconsin law, anybody at least 12 years of age and born after Jan. 1, 1985 must have a valid safety education certificate to operate a snowmobile. Sign up now for a spot, as classes fill up fast.

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Wisconsin DMV served nearly 2.3 million customers in person in 2024



FOR CITY TIMES

WOOD COUNTY--The Wisconsin Division of Motor Vehicles conducted nearly 2.3 million transactions at its 80 DMV Customer Service Centers across the state in 2024 and millions more completed their DMV tasks conveniently online.

In addition, DMV provided: 922,374 vehicle registrations/titles, 928,163 driver licenses and IDs (new, renewals, replacements, etc.), 288,340 Knowledge Tests to new drivers, 110,746 Skills Tests with DMV driving examiners, and 240,970 answers to customer emails.

With all Wisconsin DMV tasks available online, 30,421

renewed their driver license online and 35,655 requested a copy of their driver record.

"As a state agency, it's our responsibility to meet the diverse needs of our customers. We've added many innovative and self-service options that are convenient and easy to use," DMV Administrator Tommy Winkler said. "Behind this customer-service focus is the work of our DMV team members across the state. Their dedication allows us to deliver timely, accurate and professional assistance that sets an industry standard for DMV service."

Wisconsin DMV's new services this year include:

Allocating \$6 million to provide free driver training courses to nearly 10,000 low-income students through Wisconsin's new Driver Education Grant Program.

Delivering new EV/hybrid stickers to nearly 168,000 electric and hybrid vehicles as required by a new law. Lost stickers can be easily replaced online at

wisconsinDMV.gov/sticker.

Adding emergency contact information to 50,000+ residents' records so law enforcement can contact a family member or other loved one more quickly in the event of an emergency. Residents can add their information online at wisconsinDMV.gov/emergencycontact.

Other, new features in 2024 included:

Three new special license plates, Spay and Neuter, Suicide Prevention, and the Crane Foundation, plates join DMV's current offering of 63 specialty plates.

Two new, centralized emissions testing facilities opened in Milwaukee. A self-serve option using kiosks were also added through the Vehicle Inspection Maintenance Program at these sites.

One new Motorists' Handbook has been updated to deliver driver information that is clear, understandable and easy to read.

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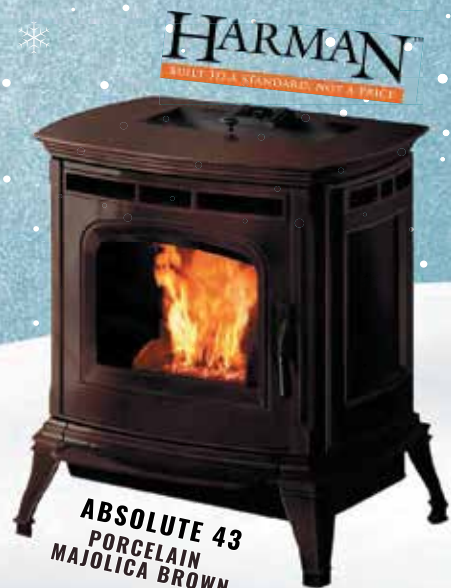
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