



THE LAKES NEWS SHOPPER™

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026

VOL/53 NO/20

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Led By Nicole Stall, Dermatology Certified Nurse Practitioner



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- Improved skin tone & texture
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- Long lasting results on both the face & body
- Supports collagen for firmer, more youthful looking skin
- Prevents future aging by keeping skin healthier over time



- Targets active acne with gentle blue, yellow, and infrared light to calm inflammation and kill acne-causing bacteria
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DermatoLogySkinStudio.com | 3205 Zenith Ave, Unit 2 Spirit Lake, IA 51360 | Call Today: 712-339-4443



WOMEN'S RAFFLE!

FEBRUARY 28TH, 2026

DOORS OPEN
AT 4:00PM
FOOD SERVED
AT 5:30PM

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Come join us for an evening of fun, live and silent auction, games, and prizes!

Pheasant Forever mission is to conserve pheasant, quail, and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public access, education and conservation advocacy.



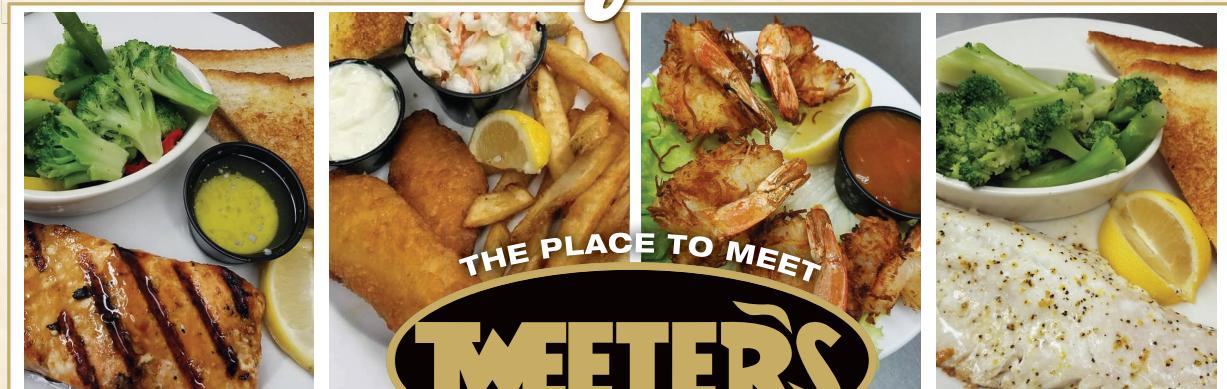
GUNS, GUNS,
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Use QR Code for Tickets

For more information contact:
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www.pheasantforever.org

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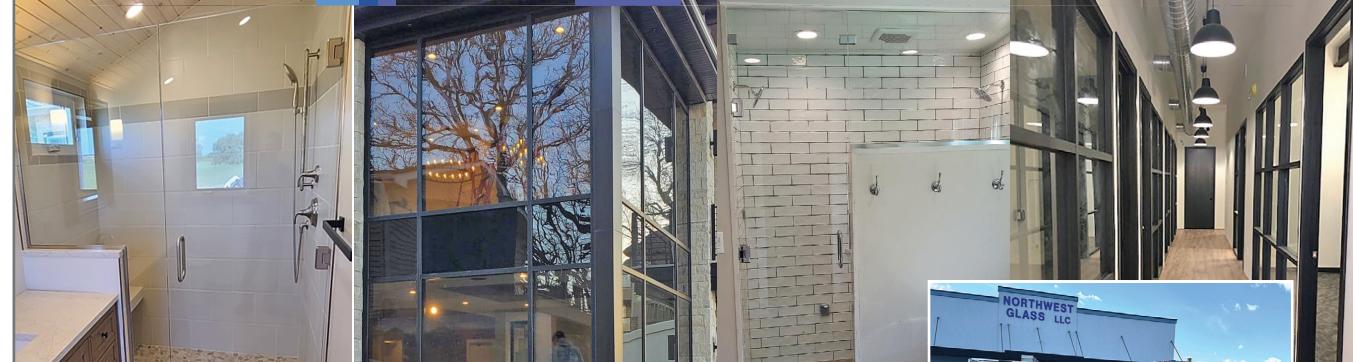
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The Okoboji Store is seeking a Front of House Manager to lead our service team and help create memorable guest experiences. This role combines leadership, hospitality, and hands-on management in a fun, fast-paced lakeside environment.

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- ✓ Oversee Daily Operations
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- ✓ Full-Time or Seasonal



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VISIT MAUCAREERS.COM TO VIEW ALL OPENINGS

PRESCHOOL & NEW FAMILY OPEN HOUSE



OKOBOJI
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

NEW FAMILIES in grades 1-4:
Don't miss the open enrollment
deadline of March 1st!

Preschool

All children that will be 4 on or before 9/15/26 are eligible for Preschool

We have full and half day options available for families!

New Families KG-4th Grade

All children that will be 5 on or before 9/15/26 are eligible for Kindergarten

All families that will be new to OES are welcome to attend!

WHY YOU SHOULD COME:

- Register your child for next year!
- Meet our PK and KG teachers and see our classrooms!
- Attend an optional presentation on our school, district, and PK program!
- Ask questions and get personalized answers for your family!
- A chance for us to meet your child and plan proper classroom placement!
- Learn what makes Okoboji a special place for your child's life journey!

WE HAVE A BRAND NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OPENING IN THE FALL OF 2027



EVENT DATE:

MARCH 10, 2026

AT OKOBOJI ELEMENTARY, 1205 7TH ST, MILFORD, IA 51351

www.okobojischools.org

712-338-2458

OPEN HOUSE FROM 5:00-6:30

ALL NEW FAMILIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THE OPTIONAL INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION FROM 5:30-6:00 IN THE LUNCHROOM

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Family Services Resource Guide

Dickinson County's Family Resource Guide is a comprehensive free resource for local residents to utilize when trying to locate services in and around the county. With a variety of services and help providers listed, the book is a one-stop-shop to locate local resources. To access the free guide online, visit <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/dickinson/county-resource-guide>. If you have services to add to the guide, contact Sue at 712-336-3488 or boettche@iastate.edu.



2022 E-Z-GO Valor EFI

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NEW and USED GOLF CARTS Sales and Service



Engagement Announcement

Rick and Lisa Croots of Urbandale, along with Mike and Brittany Vander Pol of Milford and TJ and Natalie Barthman of Brandon, South Dakota, are pleased to announce the engagement and upcoming wedding of their children, Megan Croots and Brett Barthman. Megan is a graduate of the University of Iowa and A.T. Still University (ATSU) in Kirksville, Missouri. Megan is currently serving as a Surgery Resident at St. Mary's KCU in Kansas City. Brett is a graduate of Iowa State University and is currently completing his final year of Medical School at ATSU. Brett will graduate this May. The couple will exchange vows on April 18 in Des Moines, where they will be joined by family and friends to celebrate their marriage.

The Lakes News Shopper Wants to Share Your Joy! Send your favorite engagement photo and announcement details to news@LNSprint.com. This service is offered complimentary.

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WE'RE GIVING SHOP LOCAL-MOTIVE A REFRESH!
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WAY TO SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES &
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OUR SPIRIT LAKE COMMUNITY SPECIAL.

FEBRUARY 1ST-28TH

GRAND PRIZE DRAWING: MARCH 2ND

PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES:
Allure & Co - Bedell Family YMCA - Bird Haven - Black Earth Java (Spirit Lake) - Boji Powersports - Burger & Company / The Revelry - Carpet One - Custom Creations - Consignment Corner - Dixon Family Chiropractic - Drip Okoboji - Essential Float - Fareway - Ferguson's Garden Center - Fisherman's Factory Outlet - Godfather's Pizza - Holland House - Interior Sewing by Lisa - Jennings Tow & Repair - Jimmy John's (Spirit Lake) - Kurio Kastle - Lagunappp Tea Room - Lakes Laser - Natural Family Chiropractic - Pizza Ranch - Pub 19 - Rooted Boutique - Scooter's Coffee - Shoreline Threads - Spirit Lake Silver & Gold - Sportsman's / The Venue - The Look Fashions - The Well - Timeless Consignments - Toast on Hill - Twetter's Interiors

3 STAMPS=1 ENTRY
6 STAMPS=3 ENTRIES
9 STAMPS=5 ENTRIES
12 STAMPS=7 ENTRIES
ALL STAMPS=10 ENTRIES

Share the Love this Valentine's Day
PRIZE DRAWINGS EACH WEEK DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY!

#1 PICK UP A CARD FROM A PARTICIPATING BUSINESS **#2 VISIT & MAKE A PURCHASE AT PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES** **#3 SUBMIT PRIZE ENTRIES AT PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES** **#4 BONUS: SHARE TO SOCIAL MEDIA**



Come on, We're OPEN

Pick up a card at any of the listed locations or at the Spirit Lake Chamber. (Participating Businesses List Above).

Visit the businesses listed on the card and enjoy a meal, beverage, shopping, or other experience. With any purchase, have your card stamped for a chance to win Chamber Bucks or Gift Cards from participating businesses!

Prize entries can be submitted at participating businesses throughout the week. The Spirit Lake Chamber will collect all entries each Monday, with the weekly drawing held afterward.

PRESENTING SPONSOR:

Walmart

WEEKLY SPONSORS:

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Share your purchase or experience on social media for extra entry. Be sure to tag the Spirit Lake Chamber of Commerce AND the business. (Story posts DO count).

3 STAMPS=1 ENTRY
6 STAMPS=3 ENTRIES
9 STAMPS=5 ENTRIES
12 STAMPS=7 ENTRIES
ALL STAMPS=10 ENTRIES

BUICK PRESIDENT'S DAY SALE!

H&N CHEVROLET BUICK IN SPENCER IS STILL HERE FOR EVERYTHING

SALE ENDS MARCH 2ND

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2025 Buick Envista Avenir.....MSRP \$31,585
Ocean Blue/Pebble Gray Leather.....H&N Discount -\$4,590
Stock #0771.....Sale Price \$26,995

2025 Buick Envista Avenir.....MSRP \$31,885
White Frost/Black Leather.....H&N Discount -\$4,590
Stock #7389.....Sale Price \$27,295

2026 Buick Encore GX Sport Touring AWD.....MSRP \$33,280
Brilliant Red/Black Leatherette.....H&N Discount -\$2,000
Stock #070585.....Sale Price \$31,280
Conquest Rebate -\$3,000
\$28,280*

2026 Buick Enclave Preferred AWD.....MSRP \$55,054
Cherry Red/Sandstone Leatherette.....H&N Discount -\$3,000
Stock #8110.....Bonus Cash -\$1,500
Customer Cash -\$500
\$50,054**

2026 Buick Enclave Preferred AWD.....MSRP \$54,904
Ocean Blue/Black Leatherette.....H&N Discount -\$3,000
Stock #8820.....Bonus Cash -\$1,500
Customer Cash -\$500
\$49,904**

2026 Buick Enclave Avenir AWD.....MSRP \$67,909
Cherry Red/Ebony Leather.....H&N Discount -\$3,000
Stock #9410.....Customer Cash -\$500
\$64,409**

2026 Buick Enclave Avenir AWD.....MSRP \$68,359
Iridescent White Tricoat/Ebony Leather.....H&N Discount -\$3,000
Stock #1605.....Customer Cash -\$500
\$64,859**

**PLUS OVER 15 2026 BUICK ENVISIONS IN TRANSIT!
EXPECTED TO HIT THE LOT MID TO LATE FEBRUARY**

*Must be a Current Owner of a 2012 or Newer Non-GM vehicle. **0.9% APR for 36 Months and No Monthly Payments for 120 Days for Well-Qualified Buyers when Financed with GM Financial. 1.9% APR for 48 Months, 3.3% AFR for 60 Months, 4.3% APR for 72 Months.



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Jack Dodson 515-720-5368
Brian Fassbender 712-363-0545
Dave Gruhlke 712-540-7036

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Iowa Lakes Community College Remembers Carter "Tater" Johnson

Iowa Lakes Community College is mourning the loss of Carter "Tater" Johnson, 19, of Rapid City, South Dakota, a first-year student and member of the Iowa Lakes baseball team. Johnson was killed in a bus crash on February 11th as his team was heading to Arkansas for a tournament.

Carter was a Criminal Justice Transfer major pursuing his associate in arts degree. In his first year at Iowa Lakes, he quickly became an integral part of the Laker community, respected in the classroom and deeply valued by his teammates and coaches.

A graduate of Rapid City Stevens High School, Carter brought with him a strong foundation as a competitive, multi-sport athlete. He earned recognition as a running back before transitioning his athletic talents to the Iowa Lakes baseball program as an outfielder. His ability to compete at a high level across sports reflected not only his versatility, but also his discipline, determination, and desire to grow.

Whether carrying the ball on the football field or tracking down a fly ball in the outfield, Carter's speed, instincts, and relentless work ethic consistently set him apart. He embraced every opportunity to improve and approached each practice and game with purpose.

Head Baseball Coach Chris Witzke reflected on the impact Carter made in his time at Iowa Lakes.

"Carter was one of the most bought-in players I've ever coached," Witzke said. "He wanted to be coached hard. He wanted to be great. He was willing to do whatever it took on his side to help the team win."

Witzke described Carter as one of the easiest players to coach, a young man who was often the first to arrive and the last to leave.

"If you have 45 players like Tater, you have a really great baseball team," Witzke said. "He checked every box — great athlete, great competitor, coachable, and always wanting to get better. He was a big part of our team's personality and



Carter represented the very best of Iowa Lakes," Stokes said. "He was driven, kind, committed to his teammates, and serious about his education. Our hearts are with his family, his teammates, and all who knew and loved him. As a college community, we grieve together."

Vice President of Student Services and Athletic Director Troy Larson shared similar sentiments.

"Carter embraced the opportunity to grow, as a student, as an athlete, and as a young man," Larson said. "He was committed to leaving no doubt about the kind of person and player he wanted to become. His loss is deeply felt across our athletic department and throughout our campuses."

The Iowa Lakes Board of Trustees also extended its condolences. Board President Arden Kinnander shared the following on behalf of the Board:

"The Board of Trustees extends its deepest sympathy to the Johnson family, the baseball team, and all of our students, faculty, and staff. While we do not serve on campus daily, we value every opportunity to connect with students during our meetings and hear their stories. Each student is important to us, and we are heartbroken when tragedy touches our college community."

Carter was one of our students. His loss is deeply felt.

You are in our hearts and prayers. The Board remains committed to supporting our faculty, staff, and students in whatever way is needed as we navigate this difficult time together."

Iowa Lakes Community College extends its deepest condolences to Carter's family, friends, teammates, and all who knew and loved him. The College community will continue to support one another and honor Carter's memory in meaningful ways.

Additional information regarding memorial services or campus tributes will be shared in coordination with the Johnson family.

identity. He was awesome to have, and we were lucky to know him. It hurts so bad that we won't have him here."

Carter came from a close-knit and supportive family who played an important role in shaping the young man he became. His father, a former Division I baseball player at South Dakota State University, shared with him a deep love for the game. His family's encouragement and unwavering support were evident in the way Carter carried himself — with pride, humility, and gratitude — both on and off the field.

Carter's faith was also central to who he was. His family shared that his heart was deeply rooted in Christ, and that he regularly spoke about his faith with teammates and friends. They reflected that his time at Iowa Lakes — particularly his involvement in Laker Life — was meaningful in his spiritual journey. According to his family, Carter's witness and example encouraged others in their own faith.

President Scott Stokes expressed the College's deep sorrow.

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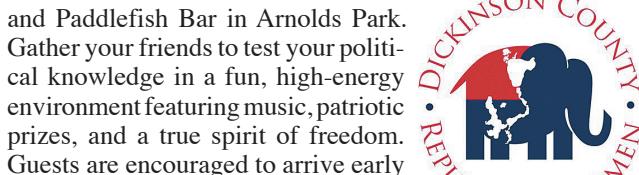
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Freedom Trivia Night

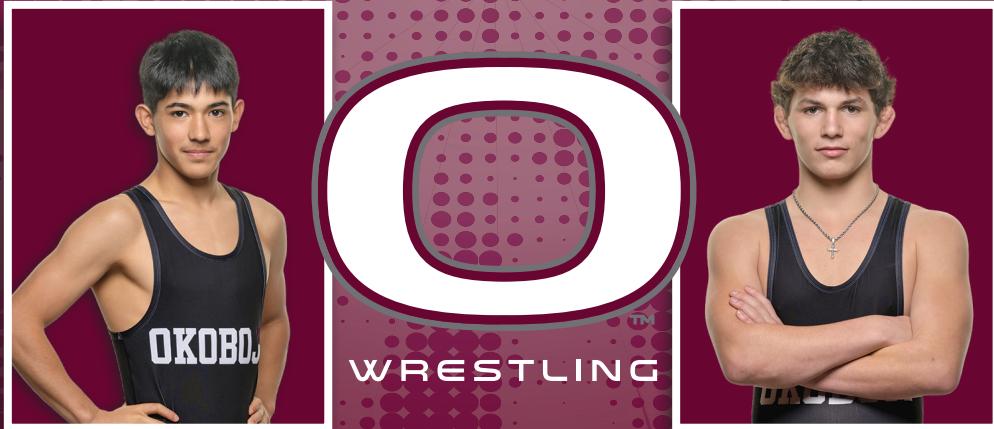
The Dickinson County Republican Women cordially invite you to Freedom Trivia Night on Thursday, February 19, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Lost Oar and Paddlefish Bar in Arnolds Park. Gather your friends to test your political knowledge in a fun, high-energy environment featuring music, patriotic prizes, and true spirit of freedom. Guests are encouraged to arrive early to guarantee a spot; you may bring a pre-arranged team of four or easily join a team upon your arrival. Your generous freewill offering will help the organization strengthen and grow as it works to make a meaningful impact in our community, state, and country. If you have any questions, please call or text Sandy at 712-320-5517.



CONGRATULATIONS Okoboji/HMS Wrestlers on Qualifying for the STATE WRESTLING MEET!



Noah Fairchild & Chase Franklin



Noah Fairchild- Freshman
106 lbs., 28-7 Overall Record
Wrestles 1st Round Thursday at 2:30pm

Chase Franklin- Sophomore
138 lbs., 22-1 Overall Record
1st Round Bye, Wrestles Thursday 2nd Round

STATE WRESTLING MEET

Wells Fargo Arena • Des Moines
Wednesday, February 18 to Saturday, February 21

Session #1 in class 2A starts Wednesday at 4:00 PM

FOLLOW THE RESULTS AT: <http://www.iahsaa.org/wrestling>

Head Coach, Nate Dau • Assistant Coaches: Ryan Pratt, Josh Pratt, Todd Gonneman, Ethan Johnson & Alex Spooner
Individual photo credit to Rocky Thompson • This ad proudly sponsored by the Okoboji Pioneer Booster Club & The Lakes News Shopper.

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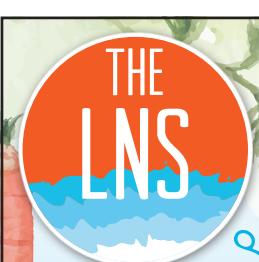
Single Person \$69/Month
2 Family Members \$99/Month
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THE LNS

Clip this recipe card to save

RECIPE CORNER

Grab all the ingredients and more for this delicious recipe at Carstensen's Meat and Grocery

712-832-3620 • 201 Market Street • Lake Park

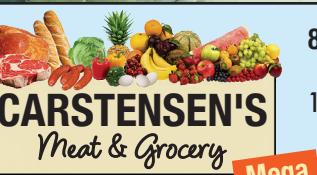
Chunky Butternut Squash Soup

Serves 4

1 small butternut squash
4 slices bacon, diced
1/4 cup chopped onion
1 medium clove garlic, crushed
1 can (16 oz.) whole tomatoes
2 1/2 cups water w/beef bouillon added OR 2 1/2 cups beef broth
1/4 c snipped parsley
1 bay leaf
1/4 tsp. dried basil
1/8 tsp. dried thyme
3 Tbsp. of sherry or white wine

Pare squash and remove seeds. Cut squash into 1/2 inch cubes (about 3 cups) set aside. Cook bacon until almost crisp in saucepan. Drain off fat; return 1 tablespoon to saucepan. Cook and stir in onion and garlic until tender. Stir in tomatoes, water, squash, parsley, bay leaf, basil and thyme; cover. Simmer until squash is tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove bay leaf; stir in sherry. Enjoy!

Recipe Courtesy of: Jan McDonald



CARSTENSEN'S
Meat & Grocery

80% Ground Beef 10-1lb. Pkgs \$39
Chicken Thighs Tray Pack 99¢ Per lb.
Chicken Breasts Boneless, Skinless \$1.99 Per lb.
Certified Angus Beef Whole Ribeye \$14.99 Per lb.

Mega MEAT Sale

712-832-3620
201 Market Street
Lake Park

CONGRATULATIONS OLIVER MILLER & RAY KAISER FOR COMPETING AT THE STATE SWIM MEET!

OLIVER MILLER

- 200 Yard Freestyle - 18th Place
- 500 Yard Freestyle - 14th Place
- 400 Yard Freestyle Relay - 21st Place
- Holds School Records in both 200 and 500 Yard Freestyle Races

RAY KAISER

- 100 Yard Backstroke - 24th Place
- 200 Yard Medley Relay - 16th Place
- 200 Yard Freestyle Relay - 24th Place
- 400 Yard Freestyle Relay - 21st Place

THERE IS JUST ONE CLASS IN SWIMMING & ONLY THE TOP 32 INDIVIDUAL SWIMMERS AND TOP 24 RELAYS ADVANCED TO STATE

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& ENJOY



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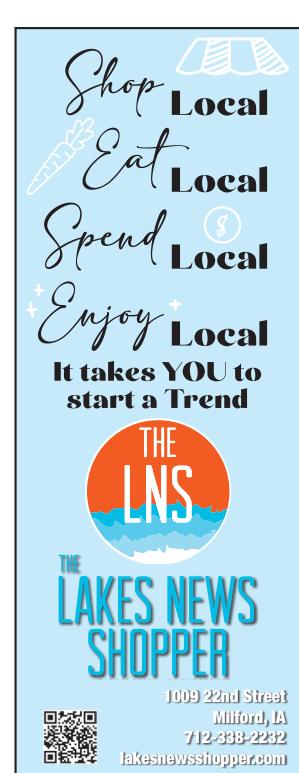


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Worship & Fellowship
Sunday at 9:00 am

Rev. Dr. Jennifer Hesebeck
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SUNDAY • 10:30 AM
Coffee & Fellowship
Before & After the Service

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SUNDAYS • 10:00 AM
TUESDAYS • 11:00 AM
The Reverend Carolyn Tuttle, Rector

Live Stream [f](#)
through our Facebook Page

Feb. 17: Shrove Tuesday - 11 am service
Pancakes 12 noon at Javis Grill, Lake St., Spirit Lake

Feb. 18: Ash Wednesday - 5 pm service

Email: office@stalbansepiscopalchurch.org
Website: stalbansepiscopalchurch.org

The Episcopal presence in the Iowa Great Lakes Area
23rd & Zenith Ave. • Spirit Lake • 712-336-1117



HARBOR OF JOY
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ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 6:15pm

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP EVERY
SUNDAY AT 9:30 AM
OR ONLINE AT HARBOROFJOY.COM

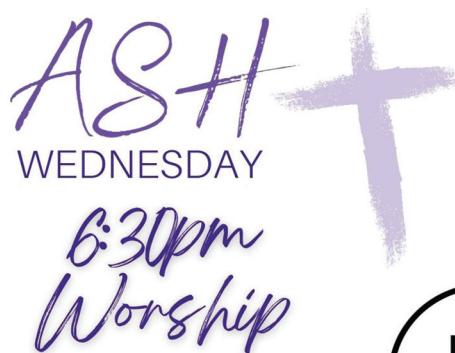
"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us
our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- John 1:9



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WALK-IN ASH
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11:30am - 12:30pm

Those unable to attend the
worship service are invited to
walk in for ash distribution and
blessing.

IS IT I? Lenten Series

Wednesdays
Feb 25th - March 25th
Worship @ 6:30pm

Lenten Soup
Suppers
5:30 - 6:15PM
Freewill Offering

Living Last Supper
April 1st & 2nd @ 6:30pm

All Services will be livestreamed
office@3cross.org 1525 Three Cross Rd, Milford 712-338-4514

LENTEN

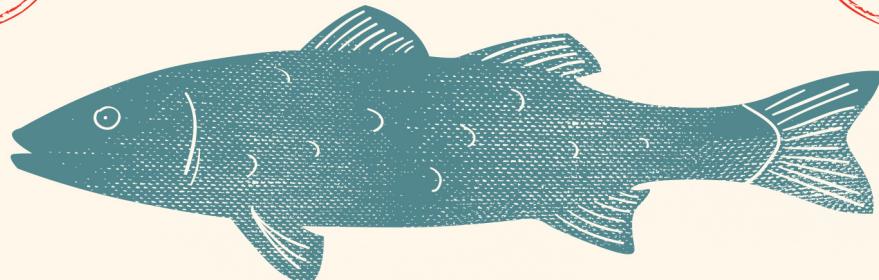
FISH FRY

Fundraiser

Children 5 & under eat FREE

\$12
ADULT

\$30
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SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, SPIRIT LAKE

FEB 20 FEB 27 MARCH 06

MARCH 20 + 27 - SAINT JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, MILFORD

5 PM - 7 PM

HAND BREADED FISH, SIDES, DESSERT, AND DRINK
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You're Invited to the 2026
Indian Athletic Booster Club Annual Gala
A Night of Fun, Food & Supporting Our Athletes

INDIAN

ATHLETIC BOOSTER CLUB

Friday, February 27th at 5:30pm
at The Waterfront Grille & Event Center



- Cash Bar Benefitting the Booster Club
- Casual Attire - Wear Your Sneakers & Spirit Lake Gear
- Silent Auction
- Guest Speaker - Jordan Bohannon

Scan Here



for Tickets

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Can't Attend?



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Give blood.

Every 2 seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood.

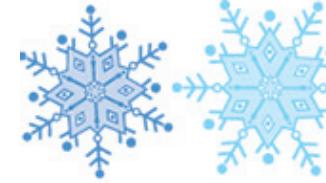
American Red Cross

Blood Drive
Spirit Lake

Lakes Area Senior Center Dining Area

Monday, February 23, 2026
12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: SPIRITLAKEIA to schedule an appointment.



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Vocal Jazz Friday, February 20 11:00AM-9:30PM

Show Choir Saturday, February 21 8:00AM-11:00PM

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SEE OUR 3 OUTSTANDING SPIRIT LAKE GROUPS IN EXHIBITION:

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SATURDAY: Middle School Spirit Rising at 11:30AM
Music Factory at 6:55PM

Join Us for a Day of Music, Dance, Energy & Excitement (& Lots of Good Food)!

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lakesart.org | 712.332.7029

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Winter Hours:

Tues-Sat: 10am-4pm | Thurs: 10am-9pm

PERFORMING ARTS

6/23 | The Papa's And Mama's
Mamas and Papas Tribute | 7:30 PM | \$40/\$50
MEMBERS ONLY PRESALE 2/17-2/23

6/30 | Linda Ronstadt Experience
Linda Ronstadt Tribute | 7:30 PM | \$40/\$50
MEMBERS ONLY PRESALE 2/24-3/2

7/7 | Commotion
USA's #1 CCR Tribute | 7:30 PM | \$40/\$50
MEMBERS ONLY PRESALE 3/3-3/9

EDUCATION CLASSES

HELLO STITCHES! With Sandie Smith
Saturday, March 28 | 9:30am-4pm | \$45/\$55
Intermediate, 18+ | Register by 3/21

In this session, you'll complete two practical kitchen projects including a Casserole Carrier and Hanging Kitchen Hand Towel. Whether you're brand new to sewing or want a refresher, this workshop will build your confidence and leave you with two useful items. Participants can bring their own sewing machine or reserve one of our limited sewing machines- first come, first serve. All fabric provided, we ask that you bring an iron, ironing pad, fabric scissors or rotary cutter.

MARCH YOUTH ART CLASSES:

Mini Michelangelo's | K-2nd
Thursdays | 4:00-4:45pm
Mar. 5, 12, 19: Wiggle Glaze! Bowl, Plate, & Cup Set
Art Club | 3rd-6th
Thursdays | 5-6pm
Mar. 5, 12, 19: Patterned Slab Vessels
Teen Art | 7-12th
Tuesdays | 4-5pm
Mar. 3, 10, 17: Mugs, Cups, & Containers!



Register online or call 712-332-7029

CULINARY CLASSES

Wine Class
With Jennifer Tittle-Oitzman of Okoboji Wines
Thursdays | 6pm | \$45/\$55
Registration required 2 days before each class.

Mar. 5: Blind Tasting: Cool Climate vs Warm
Apr. 2: Varietal Series: Cabernet Franc

A Vegetarian Voyage
With Sarah Page w/ So Good By Sarah Custom Catering
Wednesday, Mar. 18 | 12pm
\$50/\$60 | Register by Mar. 12

Struggling to incorporate more healthy vegetables into your daily diet or tired of delegating vegetables as just side dishes? Sarah is eager to demonstrate tasty vegetarian main dishes to build your confidence in exploring the wide world of plant-based cuisine! Enjoy several samplings and a glass of wine.

Date Night Cooking Class
With Marisa Sildes of Rissy's Dry Rubs and Seasonings
6pm | \$160/\$170 per Couple
Must register 3 days prior to each class.

A little flour, a little wine and a lot of love, the perfect date night with Marisa!
Friday, Mar. 13: A Night In Naples
Friday, Apr. 24: Summer Grilled Tri-Tip with Salsa Verde

Lakes Area Activity/Senior Center Schedule

Tuesday, February 17

12:00 - Dinner Date
12:30 - Speaker - Mary Prentice - her topic is Medicare Updates
12:30 - Bridge

Wednesday, February 18

9:00 - Exercise Class
12:00 - Dinner Date

Thursday, February 19

10:00 - Strummers

11:00 - Tai Chi

12:00 - Dinner Date

1:00 - 500 Cards

3:00 - Cribbage

4:00 - Zumba

Friday, February 20

9:00 - Exercise Class

9:50 - Chair Yoga

12:00 - Dinner Date

Saturday, February 21

Facility is available for rent

Sunday, February 22

9:00 - Church/Card Room

Monday, February 23

9:00 - Exercise

12:00 - Dinner Date

1:00 - Pinochle Club

Tuesday, February 24

8:30 - Kiwanis

12:00 - Dinner Date

12:00 - Blood Pressure Checks

12:30 - Speaker: TBD

12:30 - Bridge

Dinner Date meals are available every weekday. Call 712-336-5247 by 1:00pm on

Friday to reserve a meal for the next week. The pool table and

ping pong room is open every weekday. The card room closes from 12-12:30 for cleaning.

Books are available to borrow or read. Puzzles table ready for you to put a puzzle together.

Pop Tabs are being collected for Ronald McDonald House.

The facility is available to rent most weekends. The Lakes

Area Activity/Senior Center is located at 2101 Zenith Ave in

Spirit Lake.

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TURNER JENNESS FUNERAL HOME

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A Special Thanks to the Spirit Lake Community Schools, the Administration, Custodians & Angela Olsen; as well as Joslyn Michelle Photography & Design.

ADMISSION: All Day Pricing is \$15 for Adults, \$5 for Students & Free for Preschoolers.

More information at www.spirit-lake.k12.ia.us/shake-the-lakes/



MILFORD KIWANIS PRESENTS

FUN BINGO Nights

ZND AND 4TH THURSDAYS OF THE MONTH

Feb. 26th • BINGO 6-8
Card sales begin at 5:30

MEAL PROVIDED BY VFW AUXILIARY
FOR JUST \$7.00!
The VFW Canteen serves beverages & pizza at very reasonable prices.

Spirit Lake VFW • 914 Lake Street

BINGO profits support local scholarships & youth programs. Milford Kiwanis meets every Tues. at 7am at the Milford Community Center.

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Peanut Kernels \$1.55/LB

Many birds love this nutritional snack throughout the day.

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Carol Sporer, CPA
Rebecca Graves, CPA
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**Minnesota State Mankato
Announces Dean's List**

Congratulations to the following area students who were named to the Honor lists (Dean's lists) for the past fall semester at Minnesota State University, Mankato by Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs David Hood: Haylee Stokes of Estherville, Sierra Christians of Milford, Maci Higgins and Emmett Trosin of Spirit Lake.

To qualify for academic honors, undergraduate students must be enrolled for at least 12 credit hours for the semester.

Shape the Market's Future: Lakes Area Farmers Market Launches Public Survey

The Lakes Area Farmers Market is urging the public to respond to a survey designed to help the market's directors plan future events and expanded operations. The survey is posted on the market's websites, facebook.com/lakesareafarmersmarket-iowa and lakesareafarmersmarket.org or a printed copy can be picked up at the Iowa State Extension office in the Expo Center, Spirit Lake.

Among the new ideas being considered by the market directors are: developing children's fun learning activities to be featured at the Saturday market; food trucks and music for the Wednesday market; the possibility of an enclosed facility for providing a year around market; and fostering young vendors through 4-H and FFA clubs in Dickinson County.

The Lakes Area Farmers Market was one of the first non-urban farmers markets established in the state of Iowa, registered with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship in 1987. Since its inception the market has been located at the Dickinson County Fairgrounds, Spirit Lake, and has provided an outlet for local fruit and vegetable growers, bakers, and craft makers. It operates Saturdays 7:30-noon and Wednesdays 3-6 from late May to early October.



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Iowa Lakes Community College Announces Rescheduled 2026 Jazz Band Contest

The Iowa Lakes Community College Music Department is excited to announce the rescheduled dates for the 2026 Jazz Band Contest, which was postponed due to weather. The contest will now take place Thursday, February 19, and Friday, February 20, 2026, at the Janice K. Lund Performing Arts Center on the Iowa Lakes Estherville Campus.

The event is open to the public and free of charge. Designed as a purely educational experience, the festival provides participating bands with the opportunity to perform in a formal contest setting.

This is a judged contest in which participating bands will be ranked based on their performances. In addition to receiving ratings, each band will take part in an educational clinic, where judges provide constructive feedback to help students and directors continue to develop their musical and performance skills.

Judges for the 2026 contest are Kevin Linder and Rod Shedenhelm, both retired band directors who spent their entire teaching careers in Northwest Iowa. Their extensive experience in music education brings valuable perspective and insight to the evaluation and clinic process.

Festival Schedule

Thursday, February 19

1A Bands
Newell-Fonda
George-Little-Rock
2A Bands
Estherville Lincoln Central
Emmetsburg
Sioux Central
South Central Calhoun
Okoboji
Rock Valley
Awards: Class 1A & 2A

Friday, February 20

Class 3A
Spencer Jazz II
Spencer Jazz I
Le Mars
Storm Lake
Class 4A
Lewis Central Jazz II
Lewis Central Jazz I
Urbandale
Awards: Class 3A & 4A

Please visit the Iowa Lakes Music Department Facebook Page for the most up-to-date schedule, as last-minute changes may occur.

For more information, please contact Lincoln Larsen at llarsen@iowlakes.edu or 712-362-7962.



SHOP LOCAL



Anniversary Announcement

Jackie and Roger Mann are celebrating 60 years of marriage on Thursday, February 26, 2026. Family would like to honor them with a card shower. Please include a written memory to: Roger and Jackie Mann, 815 W. 7th Street, Spencer, Iowa, 51301.

VFW BREAKFAST

Sunday, Feb. 22
8:00 am to 12:30 pm

— PUBLIC WELCOME —

SERVING:
Pancakes • French Toast
Eggs • Sausage • Coffee • Juice

VFW Post 3159
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Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

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Please visit the Iowa Lakes Music Department Facebook Page for the most up-to-date schedule, as last-minute changes may occur.

For more information, please contact Lincoln Larsen at llarsen@iowlakes.edu or 712-362-7962.

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Boji Mammoths Hockey Raises Over \$9,000 During First Hockey Fights Cancer Weekend

The Boji Mammoths High School and Youth Hockey programs proudly raised more than \$9,000 for the American Cancer Society during their first-ever Hockey Fights Cancer weekend at Lakes Ice Arena.

The event brought together players, families, fans, and community members in support of those currently battling cancer, in remembrance of loved ones lost, and in hope of finding a cure. Funds were generated through the auction of 22 specialty Hockey Fights Cancer Mammoth jerseys, the sale of more than 100 apparel items, a 50/50 raffle, free-will donation lunch provided by Burger & Co., and the sale of baked goods.



The Boji Mammoths share, "This weekend was about far more than hockey, it was a meaningful demonstration of community support and commitment to making a real impact".

The Boji Mammoths extend sincere thanks to everyone who contributed, volunteered, and attended to help make the inaugural event a meaningful success. The Mammoths also thank the Windom Eagles, the Fairmont Cardinals and the Lincoln Jr. Stars hockey programs for their collaboration and participation in this year's event.



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Route 86 Music Announces January Student of the Month

Route 86 Music is pleased to announce the Student of the Month for January 2026: Veyda Jungers. Veyda just started taking guitar lessons this fall. Veyda has made huge strides this past month, and has been working on playing many new songs. Congratulations, Veyda!

Veyda is taught by Gár Lambert who is a 2025 Iowa Rock & Roll Music Association Hall of Fame inductee and teaches guitar and drum lessons in the region. With Gár you are getting a teacher with over 30 years experience in playing and over 20 years teaching music. Gár tailors lessons to the student's needs and uses music they already love to listen to in order to encourage continued growth and practice. You can start lessons anytime of year and pay per lesson, month, or semester. For more info, visit route86records.wixsite.com/music/lessons, check out Route 86 Records on Facebook, call/text 712-330-8843, or email route86records@gmail.com to sign up for your private or group lesson today!



Okoboji FFA Grilling

The Okoboji FFA will be celebrating National FFA Week and will be hosting their annual grilling with the students on Sunday, February 22nd. They will be serving hamburgers, chips, cookies and drink for \$8.

The grilling will take place at the Okoboji High School Lunchroom from 11:00 to 1:00. Everyone is welcome. The Okoboji FFA hopes to see you there!



Okoboji Foundation Invites Grant Applications for 2026

Capital projects that strengthen lake quality, arts and culture, and outdoor recreation encouraged to apply

The Okoboji Foundation has opened its 2026 grant application cycle, inviting nonprofit organizations serving the Iowa Great Lakes region to apply for funding support. Through its annual grant program, the Foundation invests in capital projects that create lasting community impact across the region.

Grant funding supports capital projects that are focused on the Foundation's primary areas of interest including Lake Quality and Environment, Arts and Culture, and Outdoor Experiences and Recreation, with an emphasis on projects that are visible, broadly accessible, and sustainable.

"Each year, we are inspired by the passion and creativity of organizations working to strengthen our communities," said Mindy Gress, President of the Okoboji Foundation. "No project is ever too small to be considered. What matters most is the vision behind it and the long-term benefit it brings to the Iowa Great Lakes region."

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and government entities. Organizations without nonprofit status may apply through a qualified fiscal sponsor. Grant funds are designated for capital projects and may not be used for operational expenses, marketing costs, school uniforms, or short-term programming.

In 2025, the Okoboji Foundation awarded \$378,000 in Leadership Grants to support major community projects throughout the region. When combined with Youth in Philanthropy grants, total funding distributed reached \$472,462. Since its founding in 1988, the Foundation has awarded more than \$5.8 million in discretionary grants to strengthen communities across the Iowa Great Lakes area.

Grant applications must be submitted online by March 1, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Organizations are strongly encouraged to review the grant guidelines available on the Foundation's website prior to applying. Foundation staff are available to answer questions, discuss project ideas, and help direct applicants through the application process.

Grant guidelines and application materials are available at okobojifoundation.org/grant-application. For additional information, contact the Okoboji Foundation at 712-332-7177 or info@okobojifoundation.org.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The publisher does not necessarily share the views/opinions stated in the "Letters to the Editor" published in The Lakes News Shopper.

To the Editor:

I keep hearing people shouting about the 'radical left', without evidence. Let's see who is radical.

The President trashes the Rule of Law and the Constitution. The President's private military attacks our cities and states. Detention and removal of people without due process and changing the rules of who is in the country legally. The pardoning of the January 6th criminals, drug kings, and pedophiles just to name a few. The idea that elections should be nationalized, taken over by the Republican Party but only in places where he cannot win. His acceptance of bribes to enrich himself, to give special treatment to those who pay. There is more. Pretty radical.

The legislature on the right has taken away food and health care to give tax breaks to the top earners. Our representatives on the right, are watching the trashing of our economy through Tariffs, (farm and manufacturing economy) and trade policies (Argentina 40 billion dollars to prop up their economy and importing beef). Not standing up against attacks on our allies and his extrajudicial bombing, without evidence, of boats in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific. The invasion or threat of invasion of other countries, (Venezuela, Cuba, Columbia, Iceland). There is more. Pretty Radical.

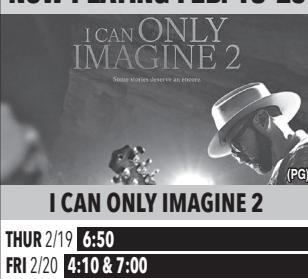
Meanwhile the left wants people to have food and health care as a right not a privilege. The left believes in respecting our neighbors no matter what their circumstances: religion, color, sexual orientation immigration status. Women should have the right to decide what to do with their body. The left believes that the rule of law does matter. The left believes in the Constitution. The left wants the US to thrive as a member of the world, not as a bully but as a friend and a partner making it a better place to live. Yes, there is more. Not very radical.

Cheri Shatto
Fostoria, Iowa

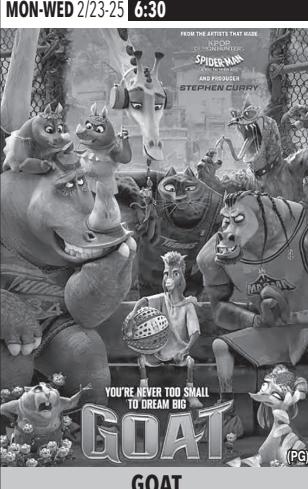
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Katie Nissen Joins RE/MAX Lakes Realty Team

Aaron Jones, Broker/Owner of RE/MAX Lakes Realty, is pleased to announce that Katie Nissen has joined the RE/MAX Lakes Realty team as a REALTOR® and Property Manager.

Katie brings years of experience in real estate and property management, along with a strong background in education and technology. Katie serves as a high school business teacher at Okoboji, where she provides leadership, guidance, and a passion for business.

Her coupled work experience allows her to take a thoughtful, organized, and low-pressure approach to working with buyers, sellers, and investors. Katie keeps her sales and property management clients informed and confident throughout the process. Her experience in education allows clients to feel advised, rather than sold, and that's been a huge advantage for Katie.

Katie is one of the few agents in the area performing property management. If you are looking for assistance or a change in your short term rental management such as Bridges Bay, make sure to reach out to Katie.

Outside of work, Katie enjoys spending time with her husband Todd, and two children, Kade and Rylee, and making the most of all the Iowa Great Lakes area has to offer. RE/MAX Lakes Realty is a leading real estate brokerage in the Iowa Great Lakes area and continues to grow with dedicated professionals like Katie. Please give Katie a call at 712.330.9057 or shoot her an email at katie@sellboji.com if you need any help buying or selling, or if you need assistance with any of your long-term or short term rentals.



Jones, IOM, Appointed to Winter Board of Regents of Institute for Organization Management

A Leadership Training Program Produced by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Institute for Organization Management, the professional development program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, has appointed Sheri Jones, IOM, President & CEO of the Spencer Chamber, to the Winter Board of Regents. As a member of this Board, Jones will implement the policies created by Institute's National Board of Trustees.

"A strong Board of Regents is essential to Institute's success," said Raymond P. Towle, IOM, CAE, Vice President of Institute for Organization Management at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "These volunteers drive site attendance, provide recommendations for program improvement, and serve as an on-site resource for Institute participants."

Since its commencement in 1921, the Institute program has been educating tens of thousands of association, chamber, and other nonprofit leaders on how to build stronger organizations, better serve their members, and become strong business advocates.

Institute's four Boards of Regents serve on behalf of the National Board of Trustees. Each Board of Regents is responsible for recruitment, retention, and marketing of the program nationwide. Each regent is an Institute graduate nominated by their peers.

Institute for Organization Management is the premier non-profit professional development program for association and chamber professionals, fostering individual growth through interactive learning and networking opportunities.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business organization representing companies of all sizes across every sector of the economy. Our members range from the small businesses and local chambers of commerce to leading industry associations and large corporations. [@IOMedicates](http://institute.uschamber.com)



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Spencer Hospital named a Top 100 Rural & Community Hospital For 11 Consecutive Years

Spencer Hospital has once again been named a 2026 Top 100 Rural & Community Hospital by The Chartis Center for Rural Health, marking an exceptional milestone of 11 consecutive years of national recognition and making us the only hospital in Iowa to achieve this distinction every year since the award's inception. Earning this honor year after year places Spencer Hospital among an elite group of rural hospitals across the country recognized for sustained excellence in performance, quality, and patient care.

The Top 100 Rural & Community Hospital Awards program honors outstanding rural hospitals annually based on the Chartis Rural Hospital Performance INDEX®, a comprehensive assessment of hospital performance across key operational and quality measures.

"Being recognized once is an honor, but earning this distinction 11 years in a row speaks volumes about our people," said Brenda Tiefenthaler, President of Spencer Hospital. "Our team shows up every day with skill, heart, and a shared commitment to doing what's best for our patients. This recognition reflects their dedication to providing high-quality care and keeping exceptional healthcare close to home for our region."

Amanda Bare, Chair of the Spencer Hospital Board of Trustees, emphasized the significance of the hospital's sustained success. "Consistency at this level doesn't happen by accident," Bare said. "This achievement is a direct reflection of the teamwork and commitment of Spencer Hospital's staff, physicians, and leaders. Their focus on delivering excellent, cost-effective care year after year is what makes milestones like this possible."

The Chartis Rural Hospital Performance INDEX is the industry's most comprehensive and objective measure of rural hospital performance. Using publicly available data, the INDEX is relied upon nationwide by rural hospitals, health systems, hospital associations, and state offices of rural health to evaluate and track performance across areas including quality, outcomes, patient experience, operations, and financial stability.

"The delivery of care within rural communities is perhaps more complex today than at any point in recent memory. This year's Top 100 Rural & Community Hospitals have emerged as true leaders – committed to their mission through a powerful combination of resilience, dedication and innovation," said Michael Topchik, Executive Director of The Chartis Center for Rural Health. "We're delighted to recognize this year's winners and celebrate their Top 100 status."

Spencer Hospital is a regional health care provider serving patients throughout northwest Iowa and southern Minnesota. Dedicated to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care, Spencer Hospital offers a full range of services through its full-service hospital and an expanding network of specialty care. These services include a comprehensive cancer treatment center, an inpatient behavioral health center, a multi-specialty surgical center, four primary care clinics, and two satellite dialysis centers located in Spencer and Spirit Lake. Through this integrated approach to care, Spencer Hospital is committed to meeting the health care needs of the region and improving the health and well-being of the communities it serves. For more information, visit SpencerHospital.org.



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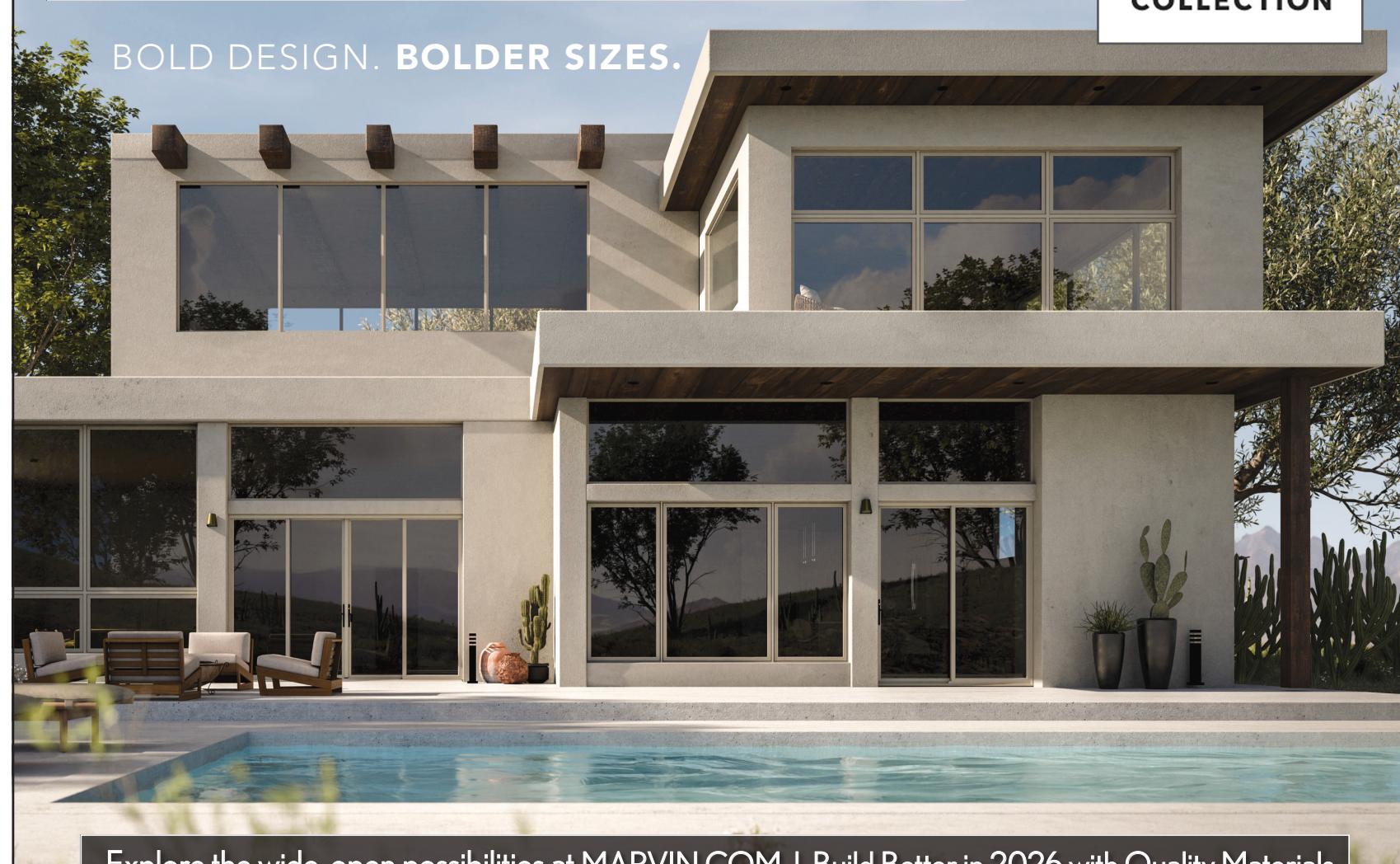
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Hamon Named Retail Manager at Northwest Bank in Arnolds Park & Milford

Northwest Bank is pleased to announce that Nikki Hamon has joined the organization as Retail Manager according to Nicole Evans, Bank President in Arnolds Park and Milford. In this role, Nikki will lead the retail team while promoting the bank's products and services and cultivating strong customer relationships.

Prior to joining Northwest Bank, Nikki served in a leadership role at Bellico Credit Union in Denver, Colorado, where she provided branch leadership, operational support, personal and business loan underwriting, and employee training.

A Colorado native, Nikki relocated to Iowa four years ago and now resides in Arnolds Park with her significant other, Justin, and son, Dostyn. They are also excited to welcome a new baby in May and are proud to call the Iowa Great Lakes area home. Nikki looks forward to becoming actively involved in the community. In her free time, she enjoys boating, reading, traveling, and spending time with family.

Reflecting on her new role, Nikki shared, "I truly enjoy building relationships with both my team and our customers. I'm excited for the opportunity to lead our team members and deliver first-class service to our customers."

Nicole Evans added, "Nikki's banking and leadership experience will enhance our team and the experience we deliver to our customers. Her commitment aligns perfectly with our mission statement, Building Relationships – Exceeding Expectations."

Northwest Bank is a \$2.9 billion community-focused financial institution providing a comprehensive range of services, including business, agricultural, mortgage, consumer deposit and lending solutions, as well as wealth management offerings. With locations across Iowa – Afton, Algona, Ames, Ankeny, Arnolds Park, Creston, Estherville, Fort Dodge, Humboldt, Le Mars, Milford, Shenandoah, Sioux Center, Sioux City, Spencer, Spirit Lake, and West Des Moines – and in Nebraska – Omaha and La Vista – Northwest Bank is dedicated to serving its communities. Member FDIC.



Okoboji High School and AIM Trap Team Receives Grant From MidwayUSA Foundation

The Okoboji AIM Trap Team and Okoboji High School Trap Team is the recipient of a cash grant from MidwayUSA Foundation. This grant assists the team with expenses, including ammo, targets, competition entry fees, travel, and more.

"With us receiving this grant from MidwayUSA we are able to keep our cost down for all the shooters on our team," says head coach Rick Kalsow.

Growing the MidwayUSA Foundation endowment is crucial to the future of the local youth shooting team. The endowment takes some of the burden off families that have youth interested in shooting sports and this funding is available forever. Every year the team is eligible to receive 5% of the endowment balance in the form of a cash grant. Those interested in supporting the local youth shooting team can make a tax-deductible donation to the team's MidwayUSA Foundation endowment, which will be matched by MidwayUSA Foundation's matching program. Every donation grows the annual cash grant.

Thanks to the generosity of Larry and Brenda Potterfield, The Foundation removes nothing for operating expenses, allowing 100% of your donation to benefit the team. The Okoboji AIM and High School Trap Team's endowment page, can be found here <https://www.midwayusafoundation.org/team-profile/?id=R1218> and you can be sure online donations are safe and secure, as MidwayUSA Foundation is a top-ranked charity.

Contact head coach Rick Kalsow at 712-330-7775 to learn more about becoming involved or supporting the Okoboji AIM Trap Team and Okoboji High School Trap Team.

The MidwayUSA Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity working to sustain youth shooting sports by providing long-term funding to youth shooting teams. Every donation made is tax-deductible and allows the Foundation to assist in expanding and enhancing the leadership skills, confidence, and discipline of today's youth through shooting sports activities. The Foundation supports all shooting disciplines. Learn more at midwayusafoundation.org.



View From The Bench by John Adams, Jr.

Big 12 Madness

It's only February 16th when I write this article, but I am as excited for the Big 12 Tournament and then March Madness as I can ever remember being since I last coached in the NCCA Tournament. This past week of college basketball, especially in the Big 12, showed that we are in store for one of the craziest, most unpredictable Big 12 and NCAA Men's Basketball Tournaments that we have ever seen. I truly believe there are 10-12 teams that can win a National Championship this year, with no clear-cut favorite to claim the overall coveted Number 1 seed.

Last week in the Big 12 Conference, which I believe is the best basketball conference in the nation, we saw Arizona lose their first game of the season at Kansas on Monday night, even though Kansas was playing without potential #1 NBA Draft Pick Darryn Peterson. On Tuesday night, we saw #5 Iowa State play uninspired basketball and lose at TCU, 62-55. TCU is not a terrible team, as they are on the NCAA bubble and have a pretty good chance to make the tournament, but Iowa State was mentally not in this game, as shown by their 2/8 free throw shooting, with two of those misses being front ends of one-and ones, as well as their 17 turnovers. Despite playing uninspired basketball, the Cyclones led 55-50 with just over 3:00 remaining, only to be outscored 12-0 to end the game. Fast-forward to Saturday and the streaking hot #9 Kansas Jayhawks came into Hilton Coliseum on an eight-game winning streak, that all started with their throttling of then #2 Iowa State 84-63 in Phog Allen Fieldhouse on January 14th. One would think this would be an epic battle between these two Top 10 teams, but it looked just like the first game, with the home team taking control in the first half and never giving up a double-digit lead after halftime, as the Cyclones rolled to a 74-56 victory in front of an electric Hilton Coliseum crowd. Iowa State led 37-27 at halftime and blew the game wide-open with a 20-7 run to start the second half, behind hot shooting from Milan Momcilovic, Tamin Lipsey and Jamarion Bateman. Later on Saturday in the Big 12, #1 Arizona had a chance to bounce back from their first loss of the season with a home game against #16 Texas Tech. I figured this would be a close game, but that Arizona would pull away at home for the win. Once again, I was wrong, as Texas Tech erased a late eight-point deficit to force overtime and then pulled out a very impressive 78-75 victory.

Iowa State's victory on Saturday was much needed, as that game started a brutal stretch where they will play five of six games vs. ranked teams, including three Top 10 teams. The Cyclones are now 22-3 and 9-3 in the rugged Big 12, which places them in a tie for third place with Kansas and Texas Tech. I honestly think that any of the top five teams in the Big 12 have a realistic chance of advancing to the Final Four. I would have placed BYU in this group as well, but the Cougars had a devastating blow on Saturday night when All-Big 12 guard Richie Saunders was lost for the season with an ACL injury in their overtime win vs. Colorado. I'm not going to jinx Iowa State by predicting them to make a run to the Final Four, as you need so many things to go your way, with the tournament draw, the health of your team, and how well you are playing at the end of the season. One thing is for sure with the Cyclones, we will all have a better idea of how far this team can advance in these next two weeks after going through their toughest stretch of the schedule, and for them to be successful they will need to play with the sense of urgency they showed on Saturday. Let the March Madness begin in February!!

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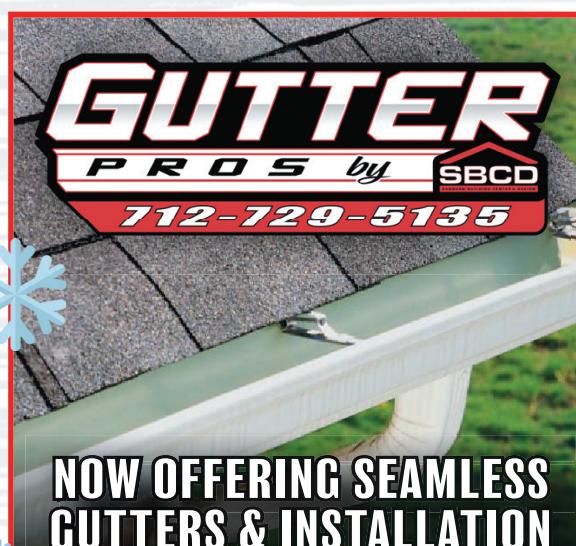
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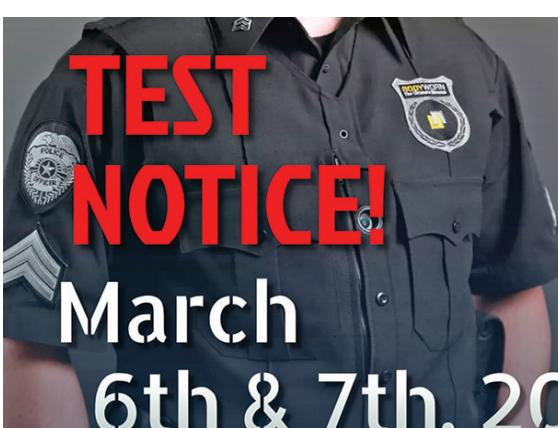
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The publisher does not necessarily share the views/opinions stated in the "Letters to the Editor" published in The Lakes News Shopper.

To Whom it May Concern:

Upon hearing of the required resignation effective immediately of Mr. Dalton Perrin as Head Coach for the Okoboji Pioneer Girls team, I was shocked. Historically, I have been to many games as a parent and as a friend. Currently, the games I have attended, I have sat directly behind the bench. I have been close enough to listen to time out discussion. I see the girls when they come from the locker room after halftime. By using the Spirit Lake game as an example, our girls were not playing up to par. During a time out, even some of our players were saying to their teammates they needed to get their head in the game. Not once did I hear Dalton use profanities at these girls, nor at any other game I have attended.

In the past, Dalton has been supportive, guiding his players as an assistant coach to a head coach from plays to providing advice from the sidelines. Above all, looking out for the players off and on the court in everyday life. When John Adams retired from coaching, he placed his faith in Dalton. I do not believe for a moment that John made this decision lightly, putting his players mental and physical health first and foremost above the game. One question that immediately came to my mind, was if John would have left his team in the hands of someone that fit the allegations being made. I can say with great certainty that John would not. He had faith in Dalton, and knew he would do his best for the students on and off the court.

From a personal perspective, Dalton and the rest of the coaching staff had provided my son with a chance. A chance that not many in our school have historically had done. These coaches, Dalton included, allowed him to be statistician, but more so, provided him with the confidence that he so greatly lacked throughout his entire Okoboji career. It was the team and coaches that were there with him when he had his signing day for Northwestern College, something as a parent I will never be able to thank them all enough for. After two years, Dalton will still ask how my son is doing, and remind me what an impact he had for him and for the team. Does someone who is being accused of these ugly allegations typically care and go out of their way to check on a student? To comment every single time how much he was appreciated?

Finally, I find myself questioning if due diligence was met in this situation. Have other coaches been questioned about the events in question and the verbiage utilized at the students? I would assume, as with any sport or employment in today's society, that if something to this magnitude had occurred, one or more of the assistant coaches would have stepped up and told Dalton to walk away from the situation for a moment and one of them would resume instruction. More importantly, I would assume they would come to the board or AD Clouse and make a report on what was occurring. I was curious as to what the assistant coach definition is. In addition to the field of play, it is defined: "Foster a positive, disciplined team culture..... promoting positive behavior and reinforcing the head coach's philosophy." Moreover, if Dalton was not providing a positive behavior nor having a positive philosophy, were the assistants supporting the students privately?

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer L. (Gottsch) Pernick,

Milford, Iowa

* A portion of this letter was paid for by the author.

ILUUF Welcomes Sky Dahstrom

The Iowa Lakes Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (ILUUF) invites the community to an engaging morning of reflection on Sunday, February 22, featuring guest speaker Sky Dahlstrom. As a wandering and wondering pilgrim who once prayed, Sky offers a unique opportunity for the spiritually diverse fellowship to share personal experiences with prayer. The program begins at 10:00 AM at the Lakes Area Activity Center, located at 2101 Zenith Ave in Spirit Lake, Iowa. For those who cannot attend in person, a virtual option is available via Zoom links found at www.UUOkoboji.com.

As a "come as you are" community, the ILUUF welcomes everyone regardless of whether they identify as religious, secular, or are simply searching for a meaningful connection. Attendees can expect an open-hearted environment defined by inclusive fellowship among a diverse group of people from all walks of life. The morning's program is designed to inspire and uplift through soulful music and engaging conversation that often dives deep into contemporary social issues.

Milford Memorial Library News

Join MML for our weekly Building Bookworms Storytime on Mondays at 10:30 a.m. Take a look below for our themes. All materials and services are provided by the library free to participants. All kids and their adults are welcome to stay after storytime and mingle. For more information, contact the library or check out our Facebook page.

- February 23, 10:30 a.m. – Underwear
- March 2, 10:30 a.m. – Vegetables
- March 9, 10:30 a.m. – Whales
- March 16, 10:30 a.m. – Xylophone

Saturday, February 28, is the last day of Milford Memorial Library's Blind Date with a Book. Take a chance on a book only from the genre and a few descriptive words. It could be a diamond in the rough or a complete dud. Simply return the book to MML, along with the provided bookmark. The completed bookmark will be placed into a prize drawing. The prize is a basket full of goodie. One basket for adults and one for children. Thank you to the Friends of the Milford Library for sponsoring Blind Date with a Book prizes.

New titles have been springing up at Milford Memorial Library. In children's fiction, we have new books from Daniel Tiger to Chicka Chicka Boom Boom Letters. Children's chapter book readers will enjoy the newest I Survived, Owl Diaries, and Dragon Masters. Graphic novels include Wing It, Sidekicks: Thick as Thieves, and Geronimo Stilton Reporter: Starting Geronimo. In Young Adult, try Rocket Arm, Better Than the Movies, 16 Forever, and My Favorite Color is: Your Something Blue. Adults, we haven't left you out. In adult fiction some titles we have added are The First Time I Saw Him, Where He Left Me, and The Merriest Crime of the Year. In adult non-fiction some titles MML has added are The Pioneer Woman Cooks: The Essential Recipes, The Gales of November: The Untold Story of the Edmund Fitzgerald, and Stop Letting Everything Affect You. Stop in, or check out these and other titles by calling 712-338-4643 or visiting milford.lib.ia.us.

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For more information, call 712-336-1649 or 712-330-1270.

Caregivers Support Group

Lakes Area Caregivers Support Group is available for help dealing with the stress of being a caregiver to someone with Alzheimers or other dementia disorders.

This community caregivers group meets at 10:00 every Wednesday morning at First Presbyterian Church in Spirit Lake. This is an opportunity to discuss with other caregivers stories and concerns in a comfortable and confidential manner.

A typical meeting might include a presentation on topics such as handling of legal issues, stress reduction, care facilities, positive coping language, and sharing personal methods of handling challenges faced every day by other caregivers.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all my family and friends for the wonderful wishes, cards, and gifts I received on my 92nd birthday. Your kind words and thoughtfulness made my day truly unforgettable.

With love, Mary Ellen Inbody

The family of Nicholas Pattison would like to thank everyone for all of the expressions of sympathy and acts of kindness shown to us at his passing. We appreciate it all so much.



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Spencer Municipal Utilities ("SMU") is a secure, well-financed municipally owned utility provider that has proudly met the electric and water needs of local Spencer, Iowa residents since 1942. Telecommunication service offerings were added to the service mix in 1997, and today SMU provides the residential and business community with a full range of voice, video, and data services.

SMU is actively seeking applicants for a full-time Water Operator. Reporting directly to the Water Manager, this position has complete responsibility for assisting the water utility operations in maintaining water treatment, processing, and testing equipment in a water treatment facility to treat water to meet permit and operational requirements. Perform routine and preventative operations and maintenance related items as assigned. Position requires a good relationship with the public and responds to customer questions and concerns regarding operational issues. Candidates must be able to plan and execute water main or treatment plant projects; basic water laboratory experience; safety training (confined space, respirators, fall protection, trenching and shoring, etc.) and good mechanical aptitude skills.

Our Requirements:

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Previous experience working in a water treatment plant along with water systems operations.

Underground water main and service excavation experience.

- Prefer candidates who currently possess Grade II water treatment and Grade II distribution certification as required by Iowa DNR or the ability to obtain within a specified timeframe.

- A strong set of communications and interpersonal skills that are equally effective with staff, management, and the Board of Trustees.

- Intermediate experience with Microsoft Office products including Word, Outlook, Excel, Teams, PowerPoint, is desired.

- Required to possess and maintain a valid Class "A" Commercial Driver's License (CDL) combination with air brakes and meet SMU insurability requirements within 18 months of hire or sooner.

- Residency requirement to reside within a 30-minute response time to the office.

- Position requires on-call responsibilities including an on-call rotation schedule with department employees.

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- A great career opportunity in an organization that believes in providing superior customer service.

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To apply candidates must complete an SMU application. Applications can be found on our website at [www.smunet.net](#) (click on careers in the 'About Us' tab). Applicants will have the opportunity to upload their cover letter, resume and salary requirements if desired. Please keep in mind that the submission of a resume in lieu of work history on your application or answering the supplemental questions is not sufficient.

SMU is an equal opportunity employer, offers a comprehensive wage and benefit package that includes health/dental/vision/short-long term disability/group life insurance, IPERS, 457(b) retirement plan, employee assistance plan along with paid time off for vacations and holidays. Successful completion of a pre-employment background check, physical examination (if applicable) and a post offer drug screen are required prior to employment with SMU.

Applications accepted through 2/20/2026. This recruitment will be open until filled.

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DNR to Recap Hunting Seasons, Discuss Possible Rule Changes

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting a series of town hall-style meetings where local staff provide updates on recently completed hunting seasons, discuss possible changes to hunting rules and regulations, and address other topics as requested.

Locally, the Iowa DNR will be at Maser Monarch Lodge,

22785 Nature Center Road, in Okoboji, on March 4. The meeting begins at 6 p.m.

"We want people to come out, listen to the hunting seasons reviews, ask questions and hear directly from our staff," said Todd Bishop, chief of the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Bureau. "Part of the meeting will be devoted to discussing potential rule changes and collecting feedback as we work through the rules process."

The meetings are open to the public. Comments collected from these public meetings will be considered along with other related comments received by the Iowa DNR prior to proposing changes to hunting rules and regulations. Proposed rules will be presented to the Natural Resource Commission during a regular public meeting for consideration and additional public comment.

Comments received during previous listening sessions have resulted in regulation changes, including modifying and removing areas closed to Canada goose hunting, establishing later goose season dates and increased bag limit, expanding the raccoon hunting and trapping season on private land, modifying Iowa's antlerless deer quotas in north central and western Iowa, and extending the regular trapping season through the end of February.

Any person attending the public meeting and has special requirements, such as those related to mobility or hearing impairments, should contact the Iowa DNR or ADA Coordinator at 515-725-8200, Relay Iowa TTY Service 800-735-7942, or [Webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov](#), and advise of specific needs.

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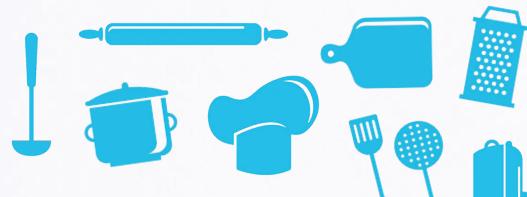
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Pudenz Returns As Palo Alto County RSVP Coordinator

The Northwest Iowa RSVP Program is pleased to announce the return of Kathy Pudenz as the coordinator for the Palo Alto County RSVP program. Having previously served in this role, Kathy brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to connecting seniors with meaningful service opportunities. Pudenz is located on the Emmetsburg Campus of Iowa Lakes Community College.

"I'm honored to rejoin RSVP as the Palo Alto County Coordinator, and I look forward to the privilege of supporting our incredible volunteers who give so generously of their time and talents. My commitment is to strengthen connections, identify local community needs, and expand our volunteer network to connect people with possibilities throughout Palo Alto County."

Pudenz brings a personal record of volunteer service and commitment to RSVP. She has past experience as a non-profit board member and advisory council member, Hospice volunteer, and extensive support and advocacy of individuals with disabilities and their parents.

Pudenz will also be responsible for coordinating current RSVP volunteers, recruiting new volunteers, and collaborating with partner volunteer host sites. One of Pudenz' first goals was to launch spring Pen Pal Programs with third-grade classes at Emmetsburg Catholic, Ruthven/Ayrshire Elementary, and West Bend/Mallard schools. The Pen Pal Program is one of RSVP's longest-running community contributions. Volunteers are matched with 3rd or 4th graders to exchange "pen pal" letters for a predetermined schedule. Adults and students know each other only by name and whatever they learn throughout the Pen Pal writing project.

RSVP is a national AmeriCorps Seniors program that matches volunteers with service opportunities to meet community needs. Although RSVP volunteers must be 55 or older, they serve people of all ages. RSVP has been sponsored in Northwest Iowa by Iowa Lakes Community College since 1977.

AmeriCorps brings people together to tackle the country's most pressing challenges through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps Senior volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to improving communities and helping make service to others a cornerstone of natural culture.



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SUPER BALL GAME CHALLENGE WINNERS

Dawn Kuemper, Mark Matuska, Lynn Neilson, Wally Brunsvoeld

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Inspiration for Our Day- "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground" ~ Psalms 143:10

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Spirit Lake K of C Crowns District Free Throw Champions

Area girls and boys ages 9 to 14 participated in the 2026 Knights of Columbus District Free Throw Championship February 15, and nine earned the right to compete at the Regional level. Iowa Great Lakes Council 5043 in Spirit Lake sponsored the District competition at the Bedell Family YMCA, drawing kids from Spirit Lake, Spencer and Okoboji.

For the boys, the 9-year-old winner was Jack Groen, the 10-year-old winner was Beckham Munden, the 11-year-old winner was Bennett Schmitz, and the 12-year-old winner was Henrik Grusy. On the girls' side the 9-year-old winner was Leah Reinking, the 10-year-old winner was Paisley Nissen, the 12-year-old winner was Ali Reinking, the 13-year-old winner was Norah Strouth, and the 14-year-old winner was Claire Kruger.

Each contestant attempted 25 free throws for the District level championship.

Every winner earned a unique District medal and is eligible to compete in the Regional competition March 8 at Gehlen High School in LeMars. That is followed by the State competition in Boone, and then International awards are presented. Spirit Lake's own Claire Kruger won an International Crystal Trophy two years ago by hitting 24 of 25 free throws!

Iowa Great Lakes Council 5043 is one of the most active in Iowa, in the past few years contributing more than \$30,000 to local community needs, including Hope Haven, Iowa Helping Hands Fund, American Wheelchair Mission, the Grotto of the Redemption, Cherish

House, Guatemala Mission, Women of the Well Project, Prison Ministries, as well as to local family, community, and parish needs. Local Knights sponsor annual youth events including the Free Throw Competition, high school scholarships, Coats for Kids, and the Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest. They also run the Tootsie Roll Drive for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities Labor Day weekend, benefiting Special Olympics and local organizations. They also host a Lenten fish fry February 20 and 27, and March 6.

In 1882, Blessed Michael McGivney, a young parish priest in New Haven, Connecticut, founded the Knights of Columbus to serve the needs of a largely immigrant Catholic community. What began as a small fraternal benefit society has since grown into one of the world's leading international charitable organizations, with more than 1.9 million members in over 16,000 local councils.

Last year, Knights around the world donated nearly 49 million service hours and about \$200 million for worthy causes in their communities. The Knights of Columbus also offers extensive life insurance products to members and their families, reflecting Blessed McGivney's devotion to helping the widowed and the orphaned. Examples of their work include distributing 8,891 wheelchairs, supporting more than 1,200 pregnancy resource centers and maternity homes, and giving nearly 181,000 coats to help warm children in need.