



Remodeling project at DAC complete

Open house set for Wednesday, December 18

Katie Erdman
Stevens County Times

The staff, board and clients at the Stevens County Developmental Achievement Center (DAC) are excited to open their doors to the public and share the results of a recent addition and remodel project. An open house at the DAC will be held on Dec. 18 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. and they hope the public will join them for tours, Christmas goodies and lots of smiling faces.

Talk about the remodel project began last winter when it was noticed that many of the 36 year old portions of the center were showing their age. The kitchen, originally designed to serve 25 people, was now putting out food for 75. The plumbing and heating was

also struggling to keep up with the growing number of clients. Staff members were cramped into narrow spaces and work areas were also getting crowded. Some hallways were too narrow for two wheelchairs to meet.

A plan was drawn up to add 4,000 square feet to the building while keeping a symmetrical design. Several portions of the original building would also get major upgrades along with plumbing, heating and electrical systems. The estimated cost was \$1.6 million. Donations began to come in as soon as word went out. Before the work began, \$1.2 million was collected from area donations. The remaining \$400,000 would come from the DAC reserve fund. Marcus Construction was

hired to do the work and Design Intent did the design, preserving the look and feel of the building.

Since nearly every portion of the building would be worked on, the entire program was picked up and moved to a site owned by Riley Bros. For the next six months, the DAC work was done from there and clients adjusted wonderfully. The site had less space and they worked elbow to elbow.

DAC director Charlie Oakes explained that the clients were wonderful throughout the entire process. "They were cheerful and supportive," he said. "They were so excited when we moved back and could not wait to see the finished product."

Oakes gave a brief synopsis of the work done at the building after the addition was complete. He explained that the back workshop area

was fitted with sound proofing on the ceiling to help with the noise there. The fluorescent lights were replaced with LED lights which are more soothing to the clients. The entire building now has eight furnaces instead of one boiler system allowing for adjustments according to each area.

The kitchen received a major upgrade with extra prep space, larger appliances and stainless steel equipment. This will bring the kitchen up to code. The plumbing in the old building also did not meet code so this was replaced and brought up to proper standards. An upgraded laundry space was added along with additional bathrooms.

One of the most exciting things for clients were the large new lockers. Each one was able to select their own locker and who they wanted to be next too. The staff was



DAC client, DaNan S., proudly shows her artwork that she created at the DAC.

also happy with the larger and additional offices added to the building.

Work was completed just before Thanksgiving and on Nov. 27 the University of

Minnesota, Morris baseball team along with a crew from Riverview Dairy and other volunteers, helped move them back in. Everything

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Morris city council approves budget/levy

Katie Erdman
Stevens County Times

The annual budget meeting for the City of Morris was lightly attended. In fact, other than the council members, media and staff, no one was there to question the budget or levy. This is despite the fact that the city council approved an increase in the levy of 3 percent.

For most taxpayers, if they saw an increase in taxes, it was due to a raise in the value of their property, not because of the levy increase. The overall value of property in Morris went up about 3.5 percent, but individual property value changes are due to the market factors and sales comparison. Each property owner got an estimated tax statement from the county for next year and can

see what happened for them.

City Manager Blaine Hill went through the budget with the city council members at their meeting on Dec. 10. The 2019 tax levy, for collection in 2020, is \$1,608,986. This is three percent higher than the 2018 levy. It is exactly the same as what was proposed in the Preliminary Levy in September. This levy increase includes a final payment on the street department loader and reductions in bond levies for several of the debt service bonds. The loader levy will go away next year, but the city may be adding another levy for new equipment purchases.

Hill added that the city will be getting about 2.3 percent more in Local Government

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Tiling for Midwest Irrigation approved

Katie Erdman
Stevens County Times

Water problems in the lot where Midwest Irrigation Company plans to build in Hancock has put the project on hold, but after a productive meeting last month, this issue may just be resolved. City Clerk Jodi Bedel told the Hancock City Council at their meeting on Dec. 9, that representatives of Midwest Irrigation, along with John Ver Steeg from the truck wash, engineers, and employees for the city met, looked at maps, and figured out the best way for Midwest to tile and hook up to an outlet.

This tiling would need to run to the east through the truck wash parking lot and there connect with a tile to the outlet. The county did clean up the outlet this fall which helped the flow somewhat. The state was initially concerned about excess flow but there should not be any more water than is currently going that way. Midwest Irrigation may

also look at putting in a holding tank for excess water which will then release the overflow slowly.

"I felt it was a very productive meeting," stated Bedel. "Everyone was just unsure where to go and what to do with the water. As a city we need to resolve this for any future development." The city will also need to look into making the pipe larger to the outlet.

West Central Initiative presentation

Samantha VanWechel-Meyer, Development Specialist from West Central Initiative, presented a report to the Hancock City Council. She stated that about \$75,000 in grants and loans have come to the City of Hancock over the year. The majority of this is through the Hancock School Foundation which WCI manages for the school.

She added that in the future they will be focusing on three shortages in the area - child

care, housing and work force. She stated there is anyone interested in opening a daycare, they should contact them. City Clerk Jodi Bedel will pass that information on to the group from Hancock looking at opening a daycare center.

WCI is also working on a housing pilot program to add multi-family housing in the area. They are also doing some on-line marketing to encourage people to choose to work in this area.

Fire Chief Justin Flaten told the council members that Hancock will be hosting a Firefight 1 class starting just before Christmas. This is the first time Hancock has hosted one of these classes. Two new Hancock firemen will be attending the class along with others from around the county.

The next city council meeting will be held on Monday, January 13 starting at 7 p.m.



Evelyn Koehl shares the joy of eating cookies during the Morris ECCE Holiday Crafts, Cards and Cookies night. See more photos from this event on Page B10.

County board butts head over Ditch 18

by Nick Ripperger
Chokio Review

It took awhile, but the attorney representing Stevens County in a potential legal battle with the Isaac Walton League convinced a majority of the board - just barely - to try to diffuse a potential confrontation that one commissioner characterized as "bullying" on the League's part. The Isaac Walton League describes itself as "a national conservation organization dedicated to conserving, restoring, and promoting the sustainable use and enjoyment of America's natural resources." There are more than a dozen chapters in Minnesota, the nearest being

in New London.

The League decided that major improvements to County Ditch 18 in Scott and Baker townships will not meet its standards, and filed a petition this past fall calling for either a mandatory or voluntary Environmental Assessment Worksheet before work proceeds. It was the first petition of its kind in the state.

Among other things the League contended that the project will have a negative impact on some wetlands and will increase sediment buildup in the ditch system. The county board, acting as the Ditch Authority, was compelled to respond to the petition, and during an Oct.

29 special meeting, determined that an EAW is not necessary.

The petition was denied in large part because the commissioners concluded that the League had not done its homework and did not realize that environmental benefits have already been engineered into the improvements to the century-old ditch system. The improvements will actually reduce erosion and sediment buildup rather than increasing them, according to the engineer.

Once explained, that knowledge apparently mollified some of the League's members but not all of them, attorney Kale Van Bruggen

told the commissioners during their Dec. 3 meeting. Van Bruggen related that the League's attorney told him that some members wanted to pursue an appeal of the board's decision, but as a compromise with members who did not, they came up with a counter-proposal.

They asked the county to co-sponsor and promote an "educational field day" presented by members of the League as well as from the local Soil and Water Conservation District. The League further asked that the county spend some money to promote the event. In return, it

County Board Continued on A9



Joseph Wolking

Joseph Anthony ("Joe") Wolking, 85, passed away on December 6, 2019 at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center (Nashville, TN) following a brief illness.

A Celebration of Life Mass will be held in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Burial will follow at a later date at the St. Roch Catholic Church, Mentz, Texas.

Born May 7, 1934 in Donnelly, Minnesota, the youngest son of Lawrence and Tecla (Loegering) Wolking, Joe graduated from St. John's Preparatory School and Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota and attended Fordham University, New York, and the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. He majored in journalism and started his career with the New York Times.

He met his beloved wife of over 60 years, Kathleen Poehling, St. Paul, at the Newman Center while both were attending the University of Minnesota. Joe work for Ojibway Press (now Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) in Duluth, MN from 1957 – 1969. The Wolking family moved to Tulsa in 1969 where Joe joined Petroleum Publishing Company, predecessor company of PennWell Corporation (Now Clarion Events/Endeavor Business Media). From 1990 until his retirement in 2000, he served as President and CEO of PennWell.

During his career, he served as a director on many business, civic and educational boards including American Business Press, New York, the Newman Center at the University of Tulsa, Friends of Finance, University of Tulsa, Bishop Kelley High School, and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Eastern Oklahoma. In 1993 he was elected to the Bishop Kelley Hall of Fame. Following his retirement, he became an avid Master Gardener, and greatly enjoyed his role in "Tulsa Blooms", designing, planting and cultivating the beautiful flower planters in Tulsa's Brookside neighborhood. During his retirement, he enjoyed spending time with his family and traveling to Europe. He loved telling stories including the story of his international flight diverted to Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay on 9/11.

In addition to his wife, Kathleen, Joe is survived by son Christopher (Gail), of Evansville, IN, daughter Beth (John) Huddleston of Bowling Green, KY, son Greg (Robbin) of Nashville, TN, daughter Rebecca (James) Edmiston of Alleyton, TX and son Eric (Jessica) of McLean, VA. In addition, Joe is survived by twelve grandchildren of whom he was exceptionally proud. He is also survived by one sister, Dorothy Wolking of Minnesota and was preceded in death by his sister Dona Agosti and brother Lawrence.

Joe leaves behind a legacy of professional and outstanding service to his Church, country and community. More importantly, he leaves behind a family who will forever appreciate their time with him as a husband, father, grandfather and role model. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Newman Center at the University of Tulsa or a charity of choice.



Darkness and Light

Hege Herfindahl

View From A Prairie Home



I love seasons. The change and the anticipation. You would think, I was an old pro at the changing of the seasons, having been around for decades upon decades. But it never ceases to impress and excite me. The subtle changing of the days: from gray to green, from green to yellow to gray. And then to white. Pure white. The color of innocence and purity.

I think it is very fitting that snow falls during advent. The time when we are awaiting the arrival of the Christ child. The innocent lamb that came into this world to save us from our many sins. And I love how the snow falls and covers up the grayness of late autumn. For some reason, probably understandable to most people, but not to me, snow falls at night. When I wake up in the morning, after a first snow, it feels like a miracle. It reminds me of my favorite poem as a young girl. "Et under hendte stilt i natt, vi sov og det har snødd." (A miracle happened quietly last night; we slept and it snowed)

The snow covers everything in our yard. The dead roses, stark and bare against the dead grass. The pond, which sparkled last summer, but was filled with ice and dead leaves. The big pile of mud from an unsuccessful attempt to dig down to fix a water pipe. Now, it is all covered with snow, the pure whiteness sparkling in the pale winter sun.

Once in a while, the Good Lord will treat me to the sight of snow falling. It seems like the air is filled with flakes fluttering to the ground. It is such a peaceful sight. I will sit and just gaze out the window, my mind filled with joy and

peace. The snow brightens up the formerly dull landscape and makes it come alive in its winter wonder. As I listen to Christmas music this advent season, I notice how many of the songs tell about the glittering snow and wishing it would stay for Christmas. I feel lucky living here in the north where a white Christmas is a common occurrence.

But it isn't only snow that brightens up our world here close to the prairie. Many people, just like my sweet husband, like to put up Christmas lights on their houses and on trees. During the cold, bleak days of late fall, Grant climbed ladders to fasten lights to the house, the garage and the gazebo. Now, during the long winter nights, I am comforted by the sight of tiny lights illuminating the snowy landscape. Through the bare trees, the gazebo is lit up, reminding me of the joys of eating there in the summer and gazing at the outside magical world in the winter.

As morning comes, I walk through the house, plugging in the many small Christmas trees decorating some of the rooms in our old farmhouse. Outside the squirrels chase each other causing snow to swirl from the branches as they scurry and leap from tree to tree. The birds peck at suet outside the porch door. I brew coffee and stick my foot in my warm slippers as I find my favorite chair on the porch where I sip my coffee and gaze at the winter world outside. As the sun casts pink shimmers on the white snow, I am reminded of how the light came into the world. The light that the darkness could not overcome.

DAC remodel

Continued from A1

was completed in one day and, by the next week, they were up and running as if nothing happened. Now they are excited to share the new building with the public. Whether you are a regular visitor to the DAC or have never been there before, please join them in celebrating their bright new facility on Dec. 18 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. They are located on Green River Road just below the hill from the high school and next to the tennis courts.



Holiday Route Changes

Due to the Christmas holiday, recycling in Hancock and Donnelly will be done on Friday, Dec. 20 and garbage pick-up for Cyrus and rural Cyrus customers will be done one day early on Tuesday, Dec. 24. The Morris East side Wednesday residential route will also be one day early on Tuesday, December 24. **We will be closed Christmas Day.** For the New Year's holiday, Cyrus and rural Cyrus customers will be picked up one day early on Tuesday, Dec. 31. The Morris East side Wednesday residential route will also be one day early on Tuesday, Dec. 31. **We will be closed New Year's Day.**



December 13-24



MORRIS

Apostolic Christian North
418 Birch Avenue
(320) 589-0053
10:15 a.m. & 12:30 p.m. Sunday Worship

St. Mary's Catholic
401 4th St. West
(320) 324-2680
www.stmaryschokio.org
8:30 a.m. Sunday Mass

CORRELL

Bethel Evangelical Lutheran (CLC)
22 Brook Street
(320) 589-4755
10 a.m. Sunday Worship

Artichoke Seventh-Day Adventist
34000 600th Ave.
artichokemn.adventistchurch.org
11 a.m. Saturday Worship

CYRUS

Church of the Assumption of Mary
207 East 3rd Street
(320) 589-3003
assumptionofmorris.org
5:30 p.m. Saturday Mass
7:30 p.m. Misa en Espanol
9 a.m. Sunday Mass

Trinity Lutheran
200 East Main Street
(320) 795-2569
www.tlccyrus.com
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

DONNELLY

Evangelical Free
901 Scotts Avenue
(320) 589-2808
www.mefc.net
8:15 & 10:45 Sunday Worship,
5 p.m. Spanish Service

St. John's & Kongsvinger (ELCA)
201 Edinborough Avenue
(320) 246-3318
11970 County Road 9
(320) 246-3454
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship (St. John's)
8 p.m. Christmas Eve Candle-light Service (St. John's)

HANCOCK

Faith Lutheran (ELCA)
108 West 8th Street
(320) 589-2970
faithlutheranmorris.com
8:30 & 10:45 Sunday Worship

Apostolic Christian Church
47461 290th Street
(320) 392-5930
10:15 a.m. & 12:30 p.m. Worship

The Federated Church (United Church of Christ / United Methodist Church)
200 South Columbia Avenue
(320) 589-1153
morrisfederated.org
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

Christian Reformed
954 5th Street
(320) 392-5223
www.hancockcrc.org
10 a.m. Sunday Worship

First Baptist
601 Lyndale Avenue
(320) 589-4163
www.morrisfbc.org
10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

First Congregational Church (UCC)
751 5th Street
(320) 392-5391
10 a.m. Sunday Worship

First Lutheran (ELCA)
200 East 5th Street
(320) 589-3242
www.flcmorris.org
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

Our Redeemer's Lutheran (ELCA)
858 5th Street
(320) 392-5295
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

Good Shepherd Lutheran (LCMC)
20490 480th Avenue
(320) 287-3218
www.gslnorris.com
9 a.m. Sunday Worship

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran (WELS)
859 5th Street
(320) 392-5313
10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

Hosanna Worship Center
46303 State Hwy 28
(320) 589-8807
hucmorris.org
10 a.m. Sunday Worship

East & West Zion Lutheran (ELCA)
28745 Cty Road 10, Starbuck
29050 357th Ave., Hancock
(320) 239-2430
11 a.m. (West) Sunday Worship
4 p.m. (East) Christmas Eve Service; 5:30 p.m. Service (SOTH)

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran (Wisc. Synod)
301 West 5th Street
(320) 589-1840
9 a.m. Sunday Worship

HOFFMAN
Messiah Lutheran (ELCA)
502 Kentucky Avenue
(320) 986-2024
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

Zion Lutheran (Missouri Synod)
315 South Columbia Avenue
(320) 589-2744
www.zion-morris.org
9 a.m. Sunday Worship

STARBUCK
Immanuel Lutheran (ELCA)
34241 County Road 18
(320) 239-2989
8:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

ALBERTA
Trinity Lutheran (ELCA)
101 Main Street
(320) 324-2652
10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

St. John's Lutheran (LCMC)
17852 350th Avenue
(320) 239-2764
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

CHOKIO
Our Savior's Lutheran (ELCA)
400 2nd Street East
(320) 324-2656
www.oursaviorschokio.com
9 a.m. Sunday Worship

Shalom Community Lutheran (LCMC)
Starbuck Community Center
(320) 239-3418
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

The Stevens County Times will be CLOSED Tuesday, December 24 & Wednesday, December 25.

OUR BIGGEST SALE OF THE YEAR!
Sale Ends Tuesday, December 31
Holiday Piano & Guitar
CLEARANCE SALE
OVER 100 PIANOS & KEYBOARDS 20-60% OFF
OVER 200 GUITARS 30-60% OFF!
Gift headquarters for the music lover! Music stands, harmonicas, strings, books, gift certificates and much more!
Carlson Music Center
901 Broadway, Downtown Alexandria • 320-763-4011
All Major Credit Cards Accepted. Delivery and Financing available. Trade-ins Welcome. Complete service by experts before & after the sale!

THE OFFICES OF STEVENS COUNTY WILL BE CLOSING AT 12:00 PM TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 AND RE-OPENING WEDNESDAY, DEC. 26 AT 8:30 AM
THEY WILL ALSO BE CLOSED JANUARY 1 AND REOPENING AT 8:30AM JANUARY 2.