



WELDING

WBHS students 1st, 2nd in surprise contest, [Page 9](#)



BASKETBALL

Girls chalk up first win with victory over Tigers, [Page 10](#)



BASKETBALL

Boys move to .500 season by beating Tipton, [Page 10](#)

WEST BRANCH TIMES

Established in 1875 • West Branch is the birthplace of President Herbert Hoover, the Great Humanitarian & Home of the Bears

Volume 147, No. 1

Thursday, January 5, 2023

\$1.00

Despite WB's 'no' vote, football rule advances

ISBE will discuss on Jan. 12 how to reclassify poor schools

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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West Branch voted against a proposed rule to reclassify football teams by counting children from poor families as six-tenths

of a student, but the measure still passed 211-52.

The proposed rule, aimed at trying to inject more equity into classifications, now moves from the Iowa High School Athletic Association mem-

ber schools to the Iowa State Board of Education for a final determination.

The proposal would reduce enrollment figures by 40 percent of the number of students who receive Free or Reduced-

price Lunches (FRL).

Superintendent Marty Jimmerson cast a "no" vote on behalf of West Branch Community Schools.

"It's not that we disagree with the measure in regard

Rule [Page 2](#)



Retired Rev. Richard Paulus reads to a group of kindergartners in February 2018. Paulus remained active in many groups and activities, though he stopped reading when the coronavirus pandemic reached this area.

Gregory R. Norfleet/West Branch Times/File photo

Town leader Rev. Paulus dies after impactful life

Public servant, minister, actor passes away at 84

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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West Branch's Rev. Richard Paulus, who made a name with his voice and his service to the community, died a day after Christmas.

He was 84. Paulus and wife Ellyn came to town in 1991 for Richard to serve as the last pastor who led both Springdale's and West Branch's United Methodist Churches at the same time.

He retired in 2000 though remaining "on-call" through 2012.

"I was shocked to get the news," former long-time WBUMC worship music leader Dale Thomas said, remembering the many times they laughed and joked together.

Thomas said Paulus often would remind him that Thomas was just a

couple of weeks older than the minister. Those interactions spoke to how personable Paulus was to just about anyone he would meet, he said.

Thomas said Paulus was one of the most active pastors he ever met, not just in church activities but in the extended community as well.

"He was always a huge supporter in the fine arts," West Branch High School Vocal Music Instructor Chris Reed said. "He would come to most if not all of our concerts and he was a huge proponent for getting us the new auditorium. That was one of his goals when he was on the school board and after."

Paulus spent 16 years serving on the West Branch Board of Education and started emceeing West Branch High School Marching Band perfor-

Paulus [Page 8](#)



A Booker Transportation trailer, pulled by a Graciela Gonzalez truck with Texas license plates, blocks the eastbound off-ramp from Interstate 80 in the afternoon of Dec. 22. Iowa State Patrol and a Highway Helper crew arrived on the scene to assist. At the time, the temperature stood at -5 degrees.

Gregory R. Norfleet/West Branch Times

I-80 looked like 'junkyard' during pre-Christmas storm

Despite dozens of crashes, no fatal injuries in WB area

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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Cars and trucks that slid off the road or into each other littered the east and west lanes and ditches of Interstate 80 starting in the early hours of Dec. 22.

Winter storm "Elliott" closed businesses, schools, the West Branch Public Library, and the Hoover Complex due to blizzard conditions that brought about four inches of snow, wind gusts of about 40 miles per hour, and wind chills of more than 30

below zero. Snow drifted quickly and some unplowed side roads collected about eight- to 10-inch piles interspersed with bare gravel.

One truck's trailer slipped off the Interstate 80 eastbound off-ramp while the truck remained on the ramp blocking traffic. Motorists trying to get to West Branch continued to the West Liberty exit before turning around.

"It looks like a junkyard out there," West Branch Fire Chief Kevin Stoolman said of I-80 after

the storm. West Branch Police Chief John Hanna said that only one vehicle crashed inside the city when leaving West Branch Village's mobile home court on Fourth Street.

He said no one was injured and the vehicle did not sustain any damage but got stuck on the west side of the road.

"I'm actually shocked we didn't have more, quite frankly," Hanna said. "At least people heeded the warnings."

The National Weather

Service's warning came out on Dec. 20, two days before the storm hit, and local cancellations started popping up within hours.

West Branch Community Schools announced it would close for the Christmas holiday a day earlier than planned, canceling classes for Dec. 22.

The City of West Branch issued a snow emergency just before noon on Dec. 21, six hours before it took effect, and that ran through noon on Dec. 23.

Snow [Page 2](#)

Rochester bridge set for \$12M redo

Engineer: Design for new bridge will make it more resistant to floods

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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The Rochester bridge could close within the next decade if Cedar County cannot get its hands on about \$12 million to replace it, the

county engineer said. Cedar County Engineer Robert Fangmann in late December said the county cannot cover that cost with its local budget, so it filed applications for federal and state grants that could cover most of

the expense. Cedar County and seven other counties combined to develop a list of bridge repair and replacement projects in order to "show need" for a U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal

Highway Administration Bridge Investment Program grant. "We're feeling good about our application," he said.

Fangman said that as a competitive grant, the BIP would, if

awarded, cover 75 percent of the project. That means about \$9 million for the Rochester bridge over the Cedar River.

Fangmann said the county will also pursue an Iowa Highway Bridge

Bridge [Page 8](#)

