

18 PAGES
NUMBER 5
VOLUME 139

LYON COUNTY REPORT

\$1.00
FEB. 1, 2023
WEDNESDAY

www.ncnpub.com



GRAPPLING into history

Above: Emerson Kelderman of Central Lyon/George-Little Rock gets a big congratulatory hug from head coach Jeff Jager following her win in the 105-pound semifinals at the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union Super Regional 1 qualifier in Sioux City. The top four place-winners in each weight class advanced to state, so the win in the semifinals made Kelderman the first Lion to advance to the first ever Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union state wrestling tournament in Coralville. (Photo/Nathan Broek)

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Central Lyon/George-Little Rock wrestlers Emerson Kelderman and Louise Meyer not only punched their tickets to the first

ever sanctioned high school girls' state wrestling tournament in Iowa, they cemented their names in history books at Central Lyon and in the state.

Meyer was the champion at the Iowa Girls' High School Ath-

letic Union Super Regional 1 Wrestling Qualifier in Sioux City Friday, Jan. 27, while Kelderman finished in second place in her respective weight class. The girls' wrestling state tournament will be Feb. 2-3 in Coralville.

Pictured left: Central Lyon/George-Little Rock's Louise Meyer receives congratulations from head coach Jeff Jager with her teammates looking on following her win in the championship match of the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union Super Regional 1 qualifying tournament Friday, Jan. 27. Meyer advanced to the first ever sanctioned high school girls' state wrestling tournament Feb. 2-3. (Photo/Jessica Jensen)



First-year success in middle school robotics

Central Lyon LEGO League teams qualify for state

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There is a first time for everything, and 2023 marks the first time Central Lyon has sent teams to compete in a First LEGO League competition. First LEGO League is a precursor to high school robotics, giving kids a head start in pursuing their STEM-related interests by creating robots from LEGOs and programming them.

On Saturday, Jan. 21, the Central Lyon Middle School First LEGO League teams competed at the regional competition in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Central Lyon's three teams included 22 students from fifth through eighth grade. They competed against 15 other teams at the regional competition. This year's First LEGO League challenge is Energize, during which teams reimagine the future of sustainable energy and explore where energy comes from and

how it is stored, distributed and used.

All three of Central Lyon's teams qualified for the state competition at Augustana University in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Saturday, March 4. Central Lyon's Mighty Lions team received an award for their Innovation Project, which explored how geothermal energy could power a neighborhood. The teams ranked fourth, 13th and 17th in the robot race results, but Eric Arnold, Central Lyon fifth- and sixth-grade computer sciences teacher and First LEGO League advisor, said the rankings aren't the most important thing the teams take away from the regional competition.

"I told the kids I don't really hold these results very high. This is supposed to be about kids building robots. The kids are supposed learn to manage the project and put it all together. It's not about the results as much as it is about the experience. All of our teams are first-year teams. That's

MIGHTY LIONS PREP FOR BATTLE

Members of the Central Lyon robotics team #54908 Mighty Lions collaborate before the LEGO League competition Saturday, Jan. 21. (Photo/Teri Marken)

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NEWS BRIEFS

Mini-Grant Applications

The Lyon County Riverboat Foundation is currently accepting applications for the 2023 mini-grant program. Details and application can be found on the Foundation's website at www.lyoncountyriverboatfoundation.org. Applications are due March 29 and grants will be awarded on April 24.

Soup and Pie Supper

Christian Reformed Church of Rock Rapids will host a soup and pie supper Wednesday, Feb. 1 from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. to eat in, to go or for delivery for a free-will donation. Pre-orders for to-go and delivery orders will be accepted until noon on Feb. 1.

Bingo for Conservation

Lyon County Conservation Foundation is hosting an afternoon of Bingo Saturday, Feb. 4 from 2-4 p.m. in the Lyon County Nature Center at Lake Pahoja. The fundraiser will support environmental education programs and a natural playground by the Nature Center.

Waffle Breakfast

George Emergency Medical Services will host a Dad's Belgian waffle breakfast fundraiser Sunday, Feb. 5 from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. in the George Elementary School multipurpose room. Funds from the free-will donation will be used for equipment purchases.



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A FAMILY AUTO SALVAGE BUSINESS

Dalton Lems of Doon started Moon River Auto in 2013. In December 2022, he purchased Lems Auto Recyclers, a company his grandfather originally started in 1953, and merged it with Moon River Auto. Lems keeps one of the signs from his grandfather's business up in the lobby as a reminder of how it all started. (Photo/Dominique Kooiker)

Back to where it began

Moon River Auto moves into former Lems Auto facilities

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In northwest Iowa, it's not uncommon to see several generations working in the same industry or in a family-owned-and-operated business. For Dalton Lems of Doon, the auto salvaging business runs in the family.

"The original Lems Auto was started by my grandfather, Garrett Lems, back in 1953. When we got out of it about 12 years ago, the

thought never came into my mind that I would be back on the same original property that my grandfather started the business on in '53. That was a pretty neat thing to be able to get this property back into the family name," said Lems. Dalton's father, Alan, took over Garrett's business when the time came, and Dalton also worked in the family business for a while.

"My dad and I were in the salvage business at Lems and got out of it af-

ter a while around 2011. I decided to do something completely different just to try it, and I didn't care for it. So, two years after I left Lems, I decided to start Moon River Auto in 2013, and it's grown into this. We sell used and new parts, repairable vehicles and used vehicles. We do pretty much everything across the spectrum with the exception of vehicle repair," said Lems.

Moon River Auto kept growing. Clients poured in and, before long, the busi-

School choice program becomes law

Discussion dominates local Eggs and Issues forum

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■ More than half of those attending Eggs and Issues Saturday, Jan. 28 were current or former educators or school administrators.

It's been one of the hot topics in the Iowa state house for at least the past two legislative sessions. Now, after years of debate and a decisive election with school choice at center stage, Gov. Kim Reynolds signed her private school scholarship program into law Tuesday, Jan. 24.

"I urged the General Assembly to think big and to aim high, to ignore the hysteria that always accompanies school change," Reynolds said. "In passing the Students First Act that is what you did, and I cannot think of a more worthy cause to aim high and dream big for than the future of our children."

The Iowa House and Senate spent nearly 10 hours debating the legislation, which Reynolds named as her top priority for the 2023 legislative session. The law establishes an education savings account (ESA) program for K-12 students, giving students an account of \$7,598 each year to use for private school tuition and associated costs.

Starting with the 2023-2024 school year, all kindergartners, Iowa public school students and private school students with a family income of 300% or below the federal poverty line will be eligible to receive funds from the program. The income eligibility expands to 400% of the federal poverty line in the second year and there is no income limit starting in the third year.

Critics said the legislation would harm public schools, especially those in rural areas. Iowa State Education Association President Mike Beranek said by passing the governor's bill, legislators were ignoring their constituents' wishes. Almost three-fourths of Iowa public schools are counties with no option for private schools,

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