

Jasper County Tribune

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The gravel was WORTH the travel



RAGBRAI makes stop in Colfax for 50th ride

Jamee A. Pierson
Editor

The gravel was worth the travel for RAGBRAI cyclists heading into Col-

fax for the 50th annual ride July 27. The hills on the way out of town may have caught them by surprise but the party held in downtown showed how proud the community was to have them come through.

"The hills were kind of hillacious but the lines have been pretty short, better than past years," participant

Dale Raven said. "The crowd is smaller today. There were a lot of people yesterday. Now we have two nights left."

While in town, a bit of Colfax history was on display. A board displaying Colfax's Black cycling champion Leo Welker told the story of how he came to Colfax and his history in cycling.

According to the display, Welker

moved to Colfax as a teenager in the 1890s with his mother, Alice Battles, who ran the Pacific House Hotel. At the start of the 1900s, Colfax had a relatively large Black community with many churches, social clubs and businesses.

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Veterans affairs office needs more help to meet demand

Cases are successful but there is not enough time in the day, administrator says

Christopher Braunschweig
Staff Writer

To keep up with the influx of veterans seeking financial assistance and compensation, Jasper County Veterans Affairs Administrator Alyssa Wilson told the board of supervisors on July 25 that she may need her veteran service officer (VSO) to transition from an hourly position to a salaried position.

While presenting the quarterly report for veterans affairs, Wilson said the office is "definite-

ly" at a point where it needs two full-time workers on hand. Keith Thorpe, who works as the VSO, recommended Wilson change his position to salaried. County documents show the office is putting in the work.

In the past fiscal year, Wilson said her department has handled 1,042 veteran appointments. Within the past quarter, there were a total of 328 appointments between scheduled visits, walk-ins and

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Christopher Braunschweig/Jasper County Tribune

Jasper County Human Resources Director Dennis Simon and Melissa Hartgers, deputy auditor of payroll and benefits, participate in a work session with the board of supervisors at a past meeting.

Jasper County wrangles with too much saved up vacation time

Supervisors are working on revising policy to avoid huge payouts

Christopher Braunschweig
Staff Writer

In order to curb an overabundance of vacation hours accrued by Jasper County employees and avoid enormous payouts, the board of supervisors

are working with the director of human resources to update policies that would establish an across-the-board, 280-hour cap on all employee vacation time.

But that still leaves roughly 21 employees who have more than 280 hours of vacation saved up, which could lead to budgeting issues. Jasper County Auditor Jenna Jennings told Newton News this affects a wide range of employees, from department heads to union employees with differing rates of pay.

"Our highest employee would range around \$12,000 in payout," Jennings said.

During work session discussions over the past two weeks, the Jasper County Board of Supervisors agreed paying out all of those employees — some of which have more than 400 to 500 hours of unused vacation time — is unacceptable. Supervisor Denny Stevenson said he was adamantly against payouts.

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Christopher Braunschweig/Jasper County Tribune

Jasper County Veterans Affairs Administrator Alyssa Wilson speaks with the board of supervisors during the July 25 meeting at the courthouse.



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