

WRANGLING WINS

NWest Iowa is the Wild West of volleyball year-in and year-out and 2022 was no exception. This year's All-Review team has many players who were expert sharpshooters to get big kills. See SPORTS Section B

THE N'WEST IOWA

REVIEW

VOL. 50 NO. 21

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2022

www.nwestiowa.com



The Kraai farmland at 4247 360th St. southwest of Sheldon has about 73 tillable acres. The land was sold for a record \$30,000 per acre at an auction on Nov. 11. Photo by Justin Rust

Kraai farmland draws record \$30,000 per acre

Sale yields total of \$2.195 million

BY ERIC HARROLD
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SHELDON—While Mark Twain was not known for his economic prognostications, it appears as if he may have been right on the money when

he said, "Buy land, they're not making it anymore."

Farmland seven miles southwest of Sheldon sold for a record \$30,000 an acre on Nov. 11. The 73.19 acres of Sioux County farmland garnered a total of \$2.195 million. Rock Valley-based Zomer Company led the auction. Reports are a local farmer purchased the

property but Zomer is not releasing the information yet since the purchaser has not closed on the property yet.

The sale exceeded the previous state record which was recorded in Plymouth County in October when 55 acres of prime farmland was sold by

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Director Nicole McCray leads DINOvember family storytime Friday, Nov. 4, at Rock Valley Public Library. DINOvember was part of a monthlong theme at the library. Photo by Elijah Helton

Prehistoric theme a hit at public library

DINOvember has brought in readers

BY ELIJAH HELTON
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ROCK VALLEY—The family programming at the Rock Valley Public Library has been roaring this month.

It's DINOvember for library patrons and director Nicole McCray, whose activity calendar is packed with prehistoric reptiles.

"Our dinosaur books are highly circulated already. We have a whole section, and they

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Angie Paulsen and Galen Blankers of the Boyden Fire & Ambulance team requested funds from the Sioux County Board of Supervisors at its Nov. 1 meeting. Photo by Eric Sandbulte

Boyden seeks new fire, ambulance spot

Anonymous group puts up big money

BY ERIC SANDBULTE
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ORANGE CITY—Boyden Fire & Ambulance secured funds from the Sioux County Board of Supervisors at its Nov. 1 meeting to go toward a new

fire and ambulance building project.

An anonymous investment group is putting up the building, which will be shared with the Boyden-Hull School District to provide a bus barn. It is located on the corner of Main Avenue and Taft Street.

See BUILDING on A9



BY ALEISA SCHAT
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NORTHWESTERN PROGRAM SERVES AS COLLEGE TRANSITION FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Northwestern College junior Dylann Van Berkum, an elementary education major originally from Rock Rapids, met Christian Westra, a second-year student in the NEXT program, on Northwestern's campus. The two remain good friends. Photo by Lem Maurer

RANGE CITY—The NEXT program at Northwestern College started out small. In 2016, the program for college students with intellectual and developmental disabilities had one student.

This year, the two-year program began with a cohort of 12, and by creating a space for students who otherwise might not have the opportunity

to attend college, the program is effecting a quiet transformation of campus life in Orange City.

"I always wanted to go to college," 20-year-old Ailee Moquist said.

Moquist, a first-year student in the NEXT program, sings in the choir and performed in the children's play this fall. She knew she wanted to pursue a career in theatre, and it was her dream to go to college — but she knew there would be obstacles.

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WEEKEND WEATHER:

SATURDAY HIGH: 19 LOW: 12
SUNDAY HIGH: 38 LOW: 19

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NEWS

Northwestern program takes next steps forward

NEXT

Continued from page A1

"My plan was I wanted to go to college in New York," Moquist said. "I have a disability, so going to a regular college, my parents explained, would probably be difficult. My dad found a website that lists colleges all over the world with alternative programming, and we found Northwestern."

Moquist, who is from Edina, MN, toured several programs with her family, and Northwestern College was her first choice.

"It's incredible — I definitely made the right choice being here," Moquist said.

Still, she had a somewhat rocky start.

"I would definitely say there have been some challenges," Moquist said. "My disability really affects everything, even though you can't see it — it's my social skills, body, mind. It's intellectual."

With the benefit of supportive professors and students, however, Moquist has been able to thrive in her classes.

"There has been a lot of adaptation and accommodation — not all the time, but just when it's needed," she said. "That's really nice and helpful in a lot of classes — because college is hard."

Along with preparing students to pursue careers and live independently, the NEXT program is intended to provide students with disabilities the opportunity to experience the richness of college life.

According to NEXT program director John Menning, many students with intellectual and developmental disabilities face a dearth of options after high school graduation.

"What's next for them after high school? There was nothing — there's nothing for many students if they have a disability. And what better setting than a college setting?" he said.

Menning runs the program along with assistant director, Sherry Lang, who is new to the program this year and grew up in rural Orange City. Before taking the position, Lang spent her career in elementary education.

Alternative college programs like Northwestern NEXT are part of a growing trend on college campuses across the country. Still, Northwestern's program is one of just 129 in the nation designated as a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program by the U.S. Department of Education.

Aside from meeting standards of excellence, the designation means families hoping to enroll their children in the program are able to apply for federal financial aid. It has put the program on the map, and this year, the NEXT program has students from four different states and from as far away as Massachusetts.

Integrated

Northwestern NEXT is designed to support students without siloing them in the program. NEXT students participate in intramurals and theatre, they eat in the cafeteria and they live in the dorms — sometimes rooming with students pursuing four-year degrees.

Their social and academic integration is supported by as many as 40 Northwestern students who sign up to mentor students in the program. Mentors invite NEXT students to social outings, sit with them in the cafeteria or tutor them in their courses.

The NEXT students are

FOR MORE INFO:

■ To learn more about Northwestern Next, visit www.nwciowa.edu/next or contact John Menning at 712-707-7454 or john.menning@nwciowa.edu or Sherry Lang at 712-707-7456 or sherry.lang@nwciowa.edu.

not the only ones who benefit from the mentorship program. It is transformative for the mentors, too, according to Menning and Lang.

"We've had students — typical students — change their vocation because of our students," Menning said. "They've gone into special ed because they love the friendships they have made with our students. They love just working with them and seeing their growth in their learning. We have mentors that say, 'We can't imagine having college without the program.'"

Lang, too, has witnessed the responses of student mentors.

"I feel like they would say they're better humans because of it," Lang said.

Support

The NEXT program pushes for integration, but in their first year, NEXT students take classes designed exclusively for the two-year program. The classes are intended to equip the students for college life, and first-year NEXT students learn about life skills, healthy habits and career pathways they might begin to pursue during their time at Northwestern and beyond.

"The students don't just take classes from us, though — they have to be integrated," Menning said.

NEXT students audit up to nine credits of regular college courses, and Menning and Lang work with each student and professor to draw up a learning agreement that establishes expectations for the NEXT student in the course as well as the learning accommodations the professor agrees to make.

"We meet with the professors ahead of time, and for each student in each class, they will sign the learner's agreement," Lang said. "Everybody has seen it ahead of time, so there are no surprises."

Second-year NEXT student



Northwestern NEXT mentor Jenna Smit, a sophomore accounting major, tutors Raema Doty, who is in her second year of NEXT, a program for students with disabilities. Photo by Lem Maurer

Raema Doty, who is from Williamsburg in eastern Iowa, said she is diving into her education courses this year. In Teaching Reading and Language Arts, she is getting a glimpse of what it might be like to work with elementary students in a classroom.

"It's teaching you how to be a future teacher in a school, and what that looks like — writing lesson plans, making up a lesson plan, how to read a book to the classroom," Doty said.

This semester, Moquist is taking a course in public speaking — which she finds terrifying. In another course, First Year Seminar, which is taken by every first-year Northwestern student, she is working on an independent research paper about mental health practices in the Gilded Age.

"I just thought it sounded interesting," she said.

First-year NEXT student Jackson Stroud, from Ponca, NE, said his favorite course this semester is Theatre Production Ensemble.

"I do a lot of work up in the cats — up in the ceiling," Stroud said. "I do a lot of hands-on work with the light crew."

Students in the NEXT program have the opportunity to explore a wide range of disciplines alongside their peers pursuing bachelor's degrees, but they also have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities and the arts.

One of Moquist's favorite college experiences so far is acting in this fall's production of "Frank Einstein," the children's play put on by the Northwestern College Theatre Department.

"There were only 10 of us in the cast, so we bonded fast," Moquist said. "We were like our own little theatre family."

Moquist hopes to pursue a career in theatre after she graduates from the NEXT program, and she considers herself a theatre major, even though she is not pursuing her four-year degree.

"I love theatre so much," she said. "I've always loved slipping into someone else's shoes — that's always come easily for me."

Career prep

Along with providing a place for students with disabilities to take college courses, live in dorms and meet people from around the world, the NEXT program also prepares students for careers that might otherwise have been out of reach.

"We do have pathways that they can choose," Menning said.

Along with providing NEXT students with the opportunity to work on or off campus during their time in the program, they are guided into classes that will support them in their future professions.

According to Menning, employment rates are low for the population served by the NEXT program — they hover around 12 percent.

"That's our hope — that they go home, and they have more confidence and skills to do whatever they desire, or at least to get a higher paying, more prestigious job," Menning said.

Students who graduate with a certificate from the NEXT program go on to work as paraeducators in schools or certified nursing assistants in hospitals or nursing homes. Some begin jobs in day-care centers, restaurants or grocery stores.

Stroud plans to become a dietary aid after he graduates with his certificate.

"I love helping people," Stroud said.

Doty is still dreaming, but she knows for sure she wants to work with kids after she graduates from the program this spring.

"I actually had an opportunity last year to take a paraeducator course online, so I went through that, and I did get certified," Doty said.

Students in the NEXT program who are interested in a career in education can take a course to become a certified paraeducator through the Northwest Area Education Agency.

"A lot of things are up in the air right now, but I know I do want to work with kids in some capacity," Doty said. "I'm still thinking and praying about it."

Before she takes that next step into her future beyond college, Doty will be in the first group to walk across the stage during Northwestern's graduation ceremony this spring.

Menning remembers the first time a NEXT student walked across the stage to receive his certificate of completion.

"The place went crazy. It was pretty neat," he said.

Menning said building students' confidence is the heart of the NEXT program. Recently, in class, NEXT students listened to the song "I Am a Child of God."

"While we listened, we wrote down all the things that God says about us," Menning said. "We want that to be at the center of everything. We want to build them up. They've been knocked down. They've been behind. We've heard terrible stories of being bullied. We want them to leave here feeling good about themselves — to know they can tackle anything."



Northwestern College NEXT director John Menning and assistant director Sherry Lang want to create a campus culture enriched by students with disabilities. Photo by Aleisa Schat

DINovember is a roaring success

LIBRARY

Continued from page A1

are all out a lot," McCray said. "There was research about kids getting obsessive about things, and the No. 1 thing that kids get obsessed with is transportation/vehicles, which as a librarian, yes, I know that to be true. The second most common thing was dinosaurs, so it's an easy theme to do."

The theme stomped into town with a dinosaur storytime the morning of Friday, Nov. 4.

The first book, plucked from library's extensive collection on the topic, was "Three Triceratops Tuff" by Stephen Shaskan. The plot follows three brothers evading and outwitting a grumpy — and hungry — Tyrannosaurus rex.

McCray likes to add some commentary with her reading.

"Would you like to come into Rock Valley if you had to pass a T-rex every time?" she asked the couple dozen children who added a chorus of "Nooooo!"

The books were selected specifically for the event's targeted preschool demographic. Learning vocabulary included "grub" and "scarce."

The hour also included games, songs and a craft.

On Wednesday, the library hosted a "Tea-Rex Tea Party." On Friday there was a DINovember family story time followed by a showing of the movie "The Land Before Time II: The Great Valley Adventure."

The first movie in the popular children's series "The Land Before Time" was shown the previous week.

McCray said she plans on more events later in the month. The Rock Valley Public Library is quick to update the calendar at rockvalley.lib.ia.us/events.



Three-year-old Levi Faber of Rock Valley plays with a Tyrannosaurus rex on Nov. 4 at the Rock Valley Public Library. The facility hosted a DINovember family storytime that morning. Photo by Elijah Helton

She got the DINovember idea from library social media groups she is part of, and she wants to make the theme an annual occurrence.

"I'm hoping to keep it going and have different things each year," McCray said.

Director since 2016, McCray said she works hard to put on events to keep folks of all ages coming back to her library.

"It gives a space for families to come and be together with an organized activity, learning something new usually, and also socializing with other families," she said. "Our numbers are very reflective. You can tell the months we have a lot of storytimes going on. The programming gets people into our space, and they can see what we have to offer."

It's not just little kids, McCray noted a group of teenagers playing board games as another example of how the library's

AT A GLANCE:

Institution: Rock Valley Public Library

Director: Nicole McCray

Address: 1531 Main St., Rock Valley

Hours: 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Monday and Wednesday;

10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday,

Thursday and Friday; 10

a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday.

Phone: 712-476-5651

Online: rockvalley.lib.ia.us

space is valued in Rock Valley.

"When you think about the impact, not just today, think about those guys 20 years from now when they'll probably be parents themselves, whether they're in our community or not, they're going to remember the library," she said.



A new building is under construction to house the Boyden Fire & Ambulance by early 2023. The other half will be used as a bus barn for the Boyden-Hull School District. An anonymous group is putting forth money for the project. Photo by Eric Sandbulte

Bus barn to fill portion of fire structure in Boyden

BUILDING

Continued from page A1

"You might say it's a duplex," said Boyden firefighter Galen Blankers. "The Boyden-Hull School District lost their bus barn two years ago in a windstorm, so they're getting the west half, the back half. We're getting the east half."

The fire and ambulance portion of the building costs \$650,000, with the investment group behind the project willing to contribute a \$250,000 match. With \$150,000 left to cover, Boyden Fire & Ambulance has been working hard to secure additional funds.

Fire chief Chris Starkenburg said letters requesting donations have been sent out to the community and local businesses, which have been well-received. The fire and ambulance crew also earned a record amount at its annual Pancake & Sausage Supper on Oct. 15, with about \$15,000 given.

Starkenburg said seeing the community support the fire and ambulance crew like that has been rewarding.

To help with financing the build, Blankers and fellow firefighter Angie Paulsen attended the Nov. 1 meeting of the Sioux County Board of Supervisors, which approved \$15,000 to be paid in three

annual payments of \$5,000 starting in the next fiscal year.

The new fire station will feature six truck bays, with the main garage portion measuring 110 feet by 75 feet. The department has four fire vehicles and two ambulances.

Its part of the building also features a meeting room area at the back.

The main benefit of the new building is that it can better accommodate the larger vehicles being made.

The current fire station was built in the 1970s, and it has become difficult to find new vehicles that can fit its truck bays, which are only 34 feet deep and 10 feet tall.

"Everything is growing in size, getting physically bigger," Starkenburg said. "Fire trucks are in that category as well. We found that out with the purchase of our last fire truck. We have to park it as close as we can to the door to be able to get around behind it. It does restrict us a little bit."

The new fire station is progressing at a good pace, with the building enclosed. Starkenburg expects the fire department to move into the new space sometime in February or March. Once that move has taken place, the city of Boyden will take over the old fire station.