

Serving Emmet County and the surrounding communities!

THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2023

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Coming up: Estherville FFA holds annual banquet; look for more next week



Inside: ELC basketball players receive allstate honors Page 1B



giving local kids a

Local residents curious about what's going on in former Roosevelt building now have answers

BY AMY H. PETERSON STAFF WRITER

ince it's been around almost six decades, most people know the Head Start program is a federally-funded preschool program. In November of 2018, the Emmet County program moved into the former Roosevelt School building on Sixth Street in Estherville, and have two Early Head Start (EHS) classrooms at the former McKinley School. Construction continues to bring these two EHS classrooms to the Roosevelt building, and with other improvements, including a new playground that opened in 2022, the program's young children will soon be taught under one roof. Students who attend the Head Start centers learn from 8:15 a.m. -3 p.m. Monday-Friday. Home visitors work with babies and toddlers from

prenatal parents to three-year-olds in the home-based program 90 minutes per week. The home-based program is a way to strengthen family ties and build a foundation of parents' involvement in their children's education.

Chantel Kloucek, director Coordinator of Emmet County's Head Start Programs, said one of the best things about Head Start is the programs holistic approach.

"It's a comprehensive approach where we include the families in on everything: we help them set goals whether it's a personal goal on education or food stability or transportation; whatever the obstacle is, the home visitor will go help them set a goal and work toward meeting that goal," Kloucek said.

"We plan for the needs of each child on an individual basis so that they may receive the best education based

on their needs," Kloucek said. Head Start is an early childhood program that has been around since 1965 in the U.S., 1966 in Emmet County. Head Start programs are offered to qualifying families at no cost. The continuing goal of Head Start is to support the growth and development of children from birth to age 5 with services that support early learning and development, health and family well-being "We recognize that parents are the children's first teachers, so family participation throughout the program is the key to giving the children a strong beginning to their education," Kloucek said. This respect for parents and the family unit – whatever that looks like right now – permeates each aspect of the program.

While confidentiality regulations prohibited the Estherville News from taking photographs of the children in class, a tour of the building shows a project on Eric Carle's The Very Hungry Caterpillar in which children each painted a round, paper caterpillar segment and put them all together to make a long caterpillar across a hallway wall. In another class, photographs of each child wearing a coat and winter gear are set on a background of fluffy snow to show each child happily playing outside. Classroom rules in English and Spanish show what students should display: looking eyes, listening ears, quiet mouth quiet voices, helping hands, walking feet, instead of the more vague and negative orders to pay attention, stop talking, no running. It's all connected to the Head Start program's values:

two-year contract with ELCEA Base pay to increase to \$41,000 in 2023-24

BY DAVID SWARTZ MANAGING EDITOR

The Estherville Lincoln Central School Board on Monday gave its approval to a two-year agreement with the teachers' union-the ELC Education Association.

In year one (2023-24) of the two-year agreement, the monetary portion is for \$4,000 for each current employee covered under the Master Contract except for those currently making tended leave of absence. \$37,000. Those teachers will receive \$4,700. The base salary will be increased by \$4,000 to \$41,000.

ELC School board approves

In year two (2024-25), each current employee covered under the Master Contract will receive \$2,500. The base will increase by \$2,000 to \$43,000. Other highlights include adding personal concerns to extended leave of absence (unpaid), as well as medically diagnosed mental health illness as a reason for needing an ex-

In a related matter, the board also approved a one-time \$1,000 incentive for those under the master contract. This incentive will only be given teaching staff who remain committed to ELC for another year by signing their issued contract for 2023-2024 within five days of receipt of the contract and remain employed at ELC on Aug. 20, 2023. This retention incentive will be paid

Turn to ELC, Page 2A

Scheevel and Van Roekel cases: where does confidentiality begin and end?

Scheevel argues through his attorney that the State of Iowa is withholding evidence he needs to defend himself against charges relating to confidential records

BY AMY H. PETERSON STAFF WRITER

Monday morning, Judge Nancy Whittenburg presided over a virtual hearing relating to Ben Scheevel's request for evidence the State of Iowa is using in its case against him. Scheevel was arrested almost a year ago - April 7, 2022, and charged with over 80 counts of wrongfully acquiring data on local individuals from confidential databases and criminally re-disseminating that data using official computers entrusted to him when he was an Estherville police officer. Scheevel's trial has been

scheduled for Nov. 14, 2023. The hearing was ordered due to a Motion the Iowa Attorney General's office filed Feb. 23, 2023 stating that the State

sees no way to produce to the defendant more than 18,000 emails from the accounts of the State's witnesses, Estherville Police Chief Brent Shatto and Officer Tyler Van Roekel.

Van Roekel is charged with several counts that involve assisting Scheevel to access the information. Van Roekel, through his attorney, Turn to CASES, Page 3A

Relay for Life meal and auction April 1

Emmet County Relay for Life is raising funds for cancer research through the American Cancer Society with a meal and auction on Saturday, April 1. The event will be held at the Estherville Elks Lodge #528 on Highway 9 West. Social begins at 5 p.m. with the meal served from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Emmet County Cattlemen will grill ribeye steaks for sandwiches. Accompaniments include homemade potato salad, chips, and dessert with coffee, lemonade or water to drink. The live auction begins at 6 p.m. with Bruce Eisenbacher, Auctioneer. The 2023 Relay for Life honorary survivors are McKenzie Peta, Dawson Siefert and Kate Van Cleave. Tickets are \$15 per person.

Every child is educated based on their individual strengths and needs.

Turn to HEADSTART, Page 3A

Emmet County taking part in Severe Weather Awareness Week

BY MICHAEL TIDEMANN

It might not seem timely with a foot of snow on the ground, but Emmet County will participate in Iowa Severe Weather Awareness Week March 27-31. The week will focus on awareness of severe thunderstorms, tornadoes and flash flood warnings.

Travis Sheridan, Emmet County EMS director, said he'll focus on tornado warning awareness Wednesday, March 29 when a statewide tornado drill will be held at 10 a.m. "As a county, we're going to participate in the tornado warning," said Sheridan.

Emmet County has installed emergency warning systems at the Tuttle Lake and Wolden campgrounds with help from FEMA funding. Sheridan said the sirens can be heard for a two-mile radius, covering lake-area housing developments as well as the campgrounds.

Area schools will participate as well. Students and staff just have to be aware that tornado warnings are being sounded, not fire, so they should Turn to WEATHER, Page 2A



A funnel cloud was seen on the west side of Estherville last July. This submitted photo shows the tornado from the south.

Council sets public hearing for water tower repainting

Rezoning OK'd for FFA project

BY AMY H. PETERSON STAFF WRITER

evening's Monday At Estherville city council meeting, the council waived the second and third readings of the zoning reclassification for the area at 1620 7th Ave. South, which is the site of the Estherville FFA's planned new building. The plat was rezoned from single-family residential to agricultural.

The council also approved an ordinance amending city code relating to fences, hedges and retaining walls. No fence more than four feet in height may be located in any front yard. However, for civic, public, and industrial uses, owners may request the board of adjustment review for a variance. Jeff Kautz, wastewater superintude to the city for funding its tendent, provided the council operations. with the annual wastewater

"We take a lot of pride in pro-

environment. City staff works

hard to run the plant as effi-

ciently as possible to produce a

good quality effluent that con-

sistently meets permit limits."

Current staff at the wastewater

treatment center include Kautz,

Ian Schmitz, Bryan Morisch,

Jesse Condon, Nick Larson,

Police Chief Brent Shatto

and Zach Edwards.

"We certainly would not be report. Kautz said little had able to do the work that we do without great partnerships changed from last year. The city wastewater plant treated and working relationships that we maintain within the city," 370,125,000 gallons of raw sewage in 2022. Kautz said, Chief Shatto said.

Shatto detailed the effort to tecting water quality and the update department policy using Lexipol, a software program with staff support that enabled Shatto and Captain Nate Dunlavy to receive assistance in getting a new and updated policy manual into effect. Lexipol also provides daily two-minute training bulletins for all officers to stay current on policy. Among other statistics, the department's reserve

also presented the annual poofficers put in a combined 398 lice report. Look for reporting hours of volunteer work for the on police data in future isdepartment, including training hours and assisting full sues of the Estherville News. Highlights included Chief time officers. Reserve officers Shatto's expressions of grati-Turn to COUNCIL, Page 3A



The Estherville City Council is taking bids for painting this water tower off 14th Avenue. Photo by Amy H. Peterson





HEADSTART, Continued from Page 1A

• Children and families come first: • All people are included and

respected; • Children's basic needs are met, and their ideas and interests are important;

 School readiness includes academic skills and social and emotional competence for children, advocacy skills for parents, and kindergarten partnerships;

Families can get help with their goals and with basic needs, and are valued partners. Learning doesn't end in the classroom, but involves the adults at home so the learning continues. One of the ways families can

get help with the things they need, Kloucek said, is through the donation station in the school's lower level.

Donations are also the best way people in the community can help, Kloucek said. Those who make blankets, hats, and other handcrafted, useful items can make them for the children and families, children's clothing and winter gear is always needed, potty training kits for families, transportation assistance, and dental or medical funds for children and families who don't have insurance are among the program's

ongoing needs. In addition to a local dentist, Head Start partners with the Emmet County Department of Public Health, the monthly free clinic, Estherville Lincoln Central Schools, local churches, and others. The program is inclusive of all children, including those with disabilities and health needs, foster children and homeless children. While the Head Start

preschool program for ages

CASES, Continued from Page 1A

Ned Bjornstad, filed a waiver of his right to be present at the hearing. Friday, March 17, Assistant State Attorney General Zachary Miller filed a successful motion to continue VanRoekel's trial to Nov. 14, 2023, the same date as Scheevel's trial.

On March 3, 2023, Scheevel's attorney, Adam Zenor of Des Moines, filed a resistance to the State's motion – with Zenor putting the word "motion" in quotes. Zenor said the State was asking Emmet County District Court to endorse the State's "unilateral decision to State has no reason to believe withhold evidence from Mr.

3-5 might be familiar, Early Head Start is less well-known. Emmet County's Early Head Start classrooms for ages 2-3 have a one to four teacher/ student ratio, plus an assistant shared between the two classrooms. Two qualified early childhood teachers teach the 8 children enrolled in that EHS classroom at the McKinley location (until the program moves to Roosevelt), meaning there are five adults for the 16 children aged two to three who attend the center.

Roosevelt has three Head Start preschool classrooms for ages 3-5: one is the three-yearold classroom with a teacher and two assistants, and two classrooms have four-yearolds, with one teacher and two assistants in each. There are 52 children enrolled in the preschool program, 16 in the EHS Center Based program (McKinley), and 33 children in the home-based program for a total, of 76 families and 101

students. In addition to the seven lead teachers and seven assistants, the program has six home-based teachers or home visitors, a secretary, a janitor, three cooks, an interpreter, a nurse, a behavior specialist and a coordinator. The teachers are served by an education coach and a home base coach.

"The coaches keep us accountable to the people for quality education, making sure the teachers follow the evidence-based curriculum and use the best teaching methods," Kloucek said. In addition to accounting for the federal funding through the U.S. Office of Head Start, which is overseen by the U.S.

Dept. of Health and Human

Services, Emmet County's

AY is a child's WORK at HEAD START

Head Start program must meet requirements for the State of Iowa's licensing of child care centers. That includes a visit from the Department of Human Services (which merged with the Iowa Dept. of Health this year) every year and license renewal every two years.

Who are the families of Emmet County Head Start? Confidentiality regulations prevent us from learning much specific information that could identify a child or family. However, Upper Des Moines Opportunity, the Graettinger-based federal action agency that oversees Head Start, provided data in their 2021 Community Needs Assessment. Kloucek was one of about a dozen UDMO staff

members who developed the assessment. Emmet County is second only to Buena Vista County in serving the highest number of Spanish-speaking residents, but neighboring Dickinson County is the most diverse-language county in the UDMO region with more than 20 speakers each of French, Haitian or Cajun; Russian, Polish or other Slavic Languages; Chinese, other Asian/Pacific Island languages, and German or other West Germanic Languages, with all of these a greater proportion of local residents than the proportion in the U.S as a whole. The assessment measured numerous data points from sources throughout the state of Iowa, and Emmet County fell toward the middle among the

pact of poverty on children's counties in the UDMO area on most of them. development extends far

Among the things Head Start families identify as their strengths include steady employment and access to healthy food. Parents and staff state the top reasons families who would qualify don't access Head Start are: they're not aware of services, eligibility rules may exclude their family, lack of personal financial resources, waiting lists are too long, and transportation barriers or location is too far from home. Issues in the Emmet County

community that present a challenge to Head Start meeting its goal of helping children become ready for kindergarten and lifelong learning are those common to rural Iowa: the im-

ute," Zenor said.

be disclosed to Scheevel and his attorneys.

beyond insufficient income in

the family. Trauma-informed

care in early childhood makes

a different in brain develop-

created the assessment stated

the program's services must

be expanded in order to have

a greater impact on local chil-

Enrollment in Head Start

has remained stable over the

last several years. Kloucek

said families may enroll their

children in Head Start at any

time throughout the school

year. For more information,

Kloucek can be reached at

712-765-1058, or by visiting

the UDMO webage @ udmo.

com

dren and families.

ment. The committee who

Miller said the emails the State has already delivered include emails that Chief Shatto downloaded on a search of his city email for items related to Van Roekel and Scheevel.

Judge Whittenburg said both the matter of how to proceed with discovery and the request that she review the materials on camera to determine if they can lawfully be turned over are under advisement.

"When the court makes a ute, Bennett Finn said. These decision on both: first, the include criminal histories, on-camera review and then following that the motion, those

Ringsted girl reaches goal

Kaitlyn Hammond of Ringsted was featured in the March 9 edition of the Estherville News with her plans to attend the Congress of Medical Leaders. Hammond reported late last week that she had reached her fundraising goal with over \$2,000 in donations and will be able to attend the Congress.

DNR to begin annual spring burning

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will be conducting prescribed burns this spring on wildlife management areas managed by the Iowa DNR's Prairie Lakes Wildlife Unit in Clay, Palo Alto, Emmet and Kossuth counties.

Areas scheduled for prescribed burns are Dewey's Pasture, Hawk Valley, High Bridge, Tom Tuttle Marsh, Little Sioux, Fen Valley, Elk Lake, Barringer Slough, Dan Green Slough and Ocheyedan in Clay County; Blue Wings Marsh, Dewey's Pasture, West Fork and Fallow Marsh in Palo Alto County; Ingham-High, Bur Oak, Iowa Lake, Anderson Prairie, Birge Lake, Grass Lake, Tuttle Lake and Twelve Mile Lake in Emmet County; Goose Lake, Stateline, Seneca and Iowa Lake Marsh in Kossuth County. Prescribed burns are used to improve wildlife habitat, control

invasive plant species, restore and maintain native plant communities and reduce wildfire potential and vary in size from a few acres to several hundred acres. Burn units are typically on a 4-5 year rotation.

Prescribed burns typically begin mid to late morning and are completed by late afternoon or early evening between mid-March and mid-May. Burns will be conducted on a day that meets the objectives and weather conditions defined in the burn plan. Any prescribed burns that are not able to be completed this spring will be considered for the burn schedule next fall.

Contact Iowa DNR wildlife biologist Rob Patterson at 712-330-2563 with any questions or concerns.

Rethinking beekeeping workshop at Rock Rapids

The NW Iowa Beekeepers Association (NWIABKA) is hosting the workshop - Next Steps for Rethinking Beekeeping: New Ideas - New Techniques - New Equipment on Saturday, April 1. The workshop will be held at the Central Lyon High School Agriculture Room, Rock Rapids from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

According to one of the workshop teachers, "Too many bee colonies are dying during the winters in NW Iowa, SW Minnesota, and east central South Dakota. The costs of replacing dead hives and the loss of the investment into the care of colonies that eventually die isn't sustainable for many beekeepers. The goal of the workshop is to present new ideas, techniques, and equipment that will help beekeepers keep their colonies alive. The workshop will introduce beekeepers to Integrated Pest Management and biosecurity management practices."

Some of the workshop topics will include: using the Damaree and Snelgrove methods for controlling swarms; requeening commercial bee packages and nucs with northern raised Varroa Sensitive Hygienic queens; demonstration of options for making summer splits that will overwinter as replacement colonies; using brood breaks, drone brood trapping, methods to reduce hive robbing, and resistant bee stock to control the Varroa mite; and review ways to diminish colony diseases.

The fees for the workshop are adult-\$50; family of 2-\$75, family of 3 or more-\$100, and youth (18 yrs. & younger) -\$25, youth scholarships available. Included in the fees are printed materials, snacks & Saturday lunch, two drone combs for trapping Varroa mites, one push in cage for requeening and discounts on Scalvini and Mozzato queen cages for brood breaks, Varroa Mite Alcohol Test Bottles and other supplies. Fees and merchandize purchases are cash or check only at the workshop.

The NWIABKA is announcing a queen grafting and rearing workshop for Saturday, May 20th, starting at 9:30 a.m. at Rock Rapids. Beekeepers will learn the basics of raising queens from their best colonies. Participants will have the option of receiving up to three ripe queen cells on Memorial Day to install in splits or to use for requeening established colonies. To register for the April 1st workshop, send an email by March 30th to dmvanbroek@gmail.com. For questions about either the April 1st or May 20th workshops call Tim at 507-227-5919.

and any items seized. On August 1, 2022, the Court issued a protective order that prevented Scheevel or his attorneys from re-disseminating any of the materials. In so doing, Miller, the assistant state attorney general, said, "The State acknowledges the Order to provide the material seized via warrant, but at the time I was unaware that those materials included things protected by Iowa statutes that don't appear to have an exception under those statutes for dissemination

ity violated.

and discovery," adding, "the that the defendant [Scheevel]

Miller said the State feels a protective order is not sufficient to protect people related to and not related to this case from having their confidential-"Most of those materials are

completely unrelated to the case. The emails span from 2016 to 2022," Miller said, adding that the subject matter ranges from advertisements to police investigations of other matters, to juvenile arrest information. Miller said the State was seeking guidance on how to follow Iowa law and still comply with the discovery order.

materials. Sept. 7, 2022, the State sent 36 audio and video recordings - these were relevant. Nov. 8, 2022, the State sent over 3,200 pages of evidence. Zenor said the State's own disclosures indicated they had possessed most of this evidence by March 25, 2022, including the email records they downloaded during their investigation. Feb. 1, 2023, the State sent more than 13,000 pages of evidence and seven audio recordings. It should be up to Scheevel to determine which pieces of evidence are exculpatory, or might add to his defense, Zenor said.

withhold that material. Those constitutional rights would be a check on any particular stat-

Estherville city attorney

Jennifer Bennett Finn on March

14 filed a Limited Appearance

in the case. Bennett Finn told

Judge Whittenburg her pur-

pose in appearing is to pro-

tect the interest of the city of

Estherville and/or Estherville

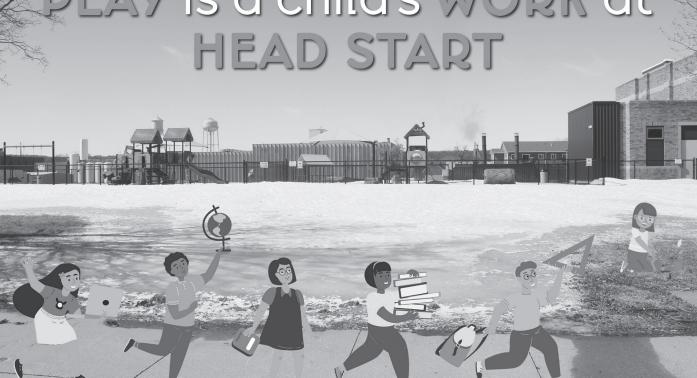
Police Department. The infor-

mation in police department

emails includes sensitive mat-

ters protected under Iowa stat-

confidential intelligence data,



Scheevel.'

On July 22, 2022, the Court ordered the State to send, any way and we don't believe among other materials, copies that is the case. But because of of all subpoenas and search warrants executed during the investigation, all affidavits supporting the search warrants,

will not abide by the protective order. We're not arguing that in the statutes cited in the State's motion, we did not want to just turn over those emails without an order from the Court."

Zenor, the defense attorney, "The defendant is in the said the information the deunique position of having been fense seeks falls under the proalleged to have violated a stattective order already in place. ute and then having that very On August 10, 2022, Zenor statute used toward all these said in the resistance, the State items that would be exculpasent more than 100,000 pages tory – and therefore violative of almost completely irrelevant of his constitutional rights to

the identity of sexual assault victims, minor victims, and juvenile offenders. the Judge look at the records on camera – receiving them by

electronic means - to decide

whether the materials should

decisions will be placed in writing filed with the clerk and you'll receive your copies," Bennett Finn requested that Judge Whittenburg said.







COUNCIL, Continued from Page 1A

helped at major crime scenes and assisting with security at community events among other tasks.

The council set a public

hearing for April 17 on the

proposed plans, specifications

form of contract and estimated

Tower Repainting Project. City

said the east water tower has

less visibility, so the city is not

for a logo on it. However, it

west water tower.

Juergens' property at 603 South 1st St. The easement would be solely for the purpose of vehicle traffic, and would release the city from all liability from the use of the easement.

cost for the 2023 East Water Mayor Kenny Billings also appointed Nancy Clark for anadministrator Penny Clayton other term on the city Planning and Zoning Commission, paying the \$10-15,000 extra which the council approved. In other business, the counwill be painted blue on the botcil discussed dam mitigation tom and white on top like the and approved a proposal from

In other business, the council set a public hearing for its April 3 meeting on a proposal to grant to Cory Juergens Option Sales/Service Tax)

Construction an encroachment easement over the south 22.67 feet of city property adjacent to

Stantec for engineering of the dam mitigation project for \$72,000. The funds would come from LOST (Local

Chief discusses situation with former officers

At Monday evening's city council meeting, Estherville police chief Brent Shatto submitted the annual police report. Shatto addressed the situation with former officers Scheevel and Van Roekel, stating: "2022 was a challenging year for the Estherville Police Department and one that we are not particularly proud of. In April, we were faced with the challenge of having one of our own officers charged with crimes by the Iowa Attorney General's Office. This is a position that we never thought we would face. The Officer has been placed on Administrative Leave since the indictment... These changes have been a strug-

funding. City council member LOST fund program would be Dave Seylar said city residents should contact their Iowa representatives to state that a change to state control of the March 14 workshop on the funds now coming to cities CO2 pipelines during public and other entities through the forum. With a range of opin-

damaging to the progress of small towns and rural areas. The council discussed its

gle for our department for many reasons as it has taken a toll on morale, changes to our shift coverage, and leaving our department shorthanded throughout the end of the year. Our department is still operating shorthanded. We are hoping to be able to fill positions within the department soon. A former Chief of Police here once coined the phrase, 'we never do anything easy here.' I always say that 'some days are better than others and that all we can do is try.' Our officers try hard to do the right things and persevere to make our department the best that it can be."

ions as to whether the council should or should not submit a letter to the Iowa Utilities Board in opposition of the Summit Carbon Solutions and Navigator Heartland Greenway pipelines planned

for Emmet County, the council tabled further discussion. The next meeting of the Estherville city council will be April 3 at 5 p.m. in the council chambers of city hall.

ESTHERVILLE NEWS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Send obituaries to dswartz@esthervillenews.net or call 712-362-2622. Deadline is noon Tuesdays. Obituaries must be through a funeral home or paid in advance. Contact David Swartz.

Public notices/Legals:

Send items to Taylor Nissen at thissen@ esthervillenews.net or call 712-362-2622.

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News Items:

Send news tips, reports, stories, photos and other inquiries to dswartz@esthervillenews.net or apeterson@esthervillenews.net or call 712-362-2622. Deadline is noon Mondays. Contact: David Swartz or Amy Peterson

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