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# PCM EXPLORER

## PCM Taking on the world

### PCM Robotics Team, the AI

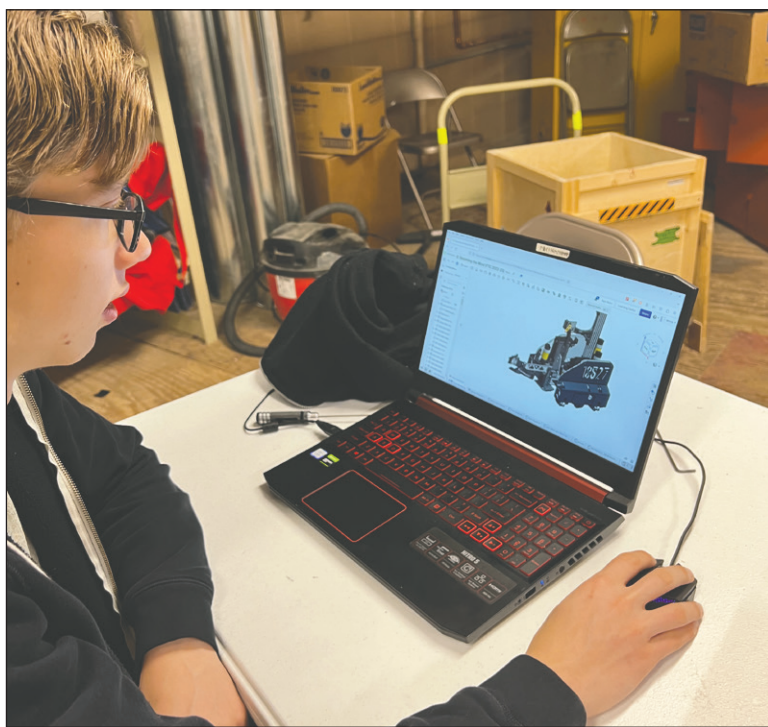
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The PCM Robotics team, the Alchemists, are ready to take on the world at FTC World Championship in Houston, Texas. From April 17 to 22, the team of PCM High School students will compete against 192 teams from more than 50 countries to try to become the top alliance and bring home the first place trophy.

“We build robots, cool robots in order to complete tasks that we are given each year and we do this competitively,” senior Justin Hall said. “There are other robots in the field of play and we try to do it well enough that we are able to do it better than the rest of them. We’ve been able to do it to a level where we are currently one of the top teams in the world. We are some of the best at that task.”

In their third year, the Alchemists have become the team to beat in the State of Iowa. In that short amount of time, the team has grown from working with local engineers at Vermeer and Pella Corporation to learning the CAD programming and creating each piece specifically for their robot.

“In previous seasons we had



Senior Evan Johnson shows the 3D model of the robot the team created with CAD programming, which they used to build the working model used in competition. Jamee A. Pierson/PCM Explorer

a couple of engineers from Vermeer and Pella Corp help us through the process of figuring out how to do this,” Hall said. “The cool part is once you have the basics down you can do a lot of it yourself. All of it is modeled digitally and after having a few years of experience it is a down to the team members to come up with the ideas and build the robot. A lot of it is just conversations, filling up the white board with ideas and seeing which ones work the best and bouncing things off each other constantly.”

Now, the team designs, fabricates and creates the robot and its accessories on their own. Through research on parts to finding businesses to help make the pieces, it is 100 percent the Alchemists work.

“Just about everything on here is custom fabricated, we made it custom ourselves,” Hall said. “The side plates and the base plate and a lot of the parts on here are sheets of aluminum that have laser cut to the shape we want and bent to form. We

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## PRAIRIE CITY/MONROE

### Ready, set, hunt

#### Easter Egg hunts in Monroe, Prairie City Saturday

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Grab the Easter basket and get ready to grab candy as Monroe and Prairie City host Easter Egg Hunts April 1. Events in each community will have kids on a sugar high and give the perfect opportunity to meet the Easter Bunny, too.

In Monroe, activities start with the Monroe Kiwanis Annual Pancake Day Fundraiser. Breakfast is served at 7 a.m. at the PCM High School. The meal is free-will donation and there will also be a free bike raffle.

The Easter Egg Hunt, sponsored by the PCM Elementaries PTO starts at 9 a.m. and will be on the football field. Divided into age groups, thousands of pieces of candy and goodies are spread across the ground ready to be gobbled up in a matter of minutes.

Down the road in Prairie City, a Spring Celebration is being held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Family Life Center, 105 S. Sherman St. A craft show will start at 9 a.m. with the Easter Bunny stopping by at 10 a.m. for a candy toss and photo opportunity.



Children participate in the candy throw during the Spring Celebration in Prairie City. Both Prairie City and Monroe have Easter activities Saturday. File Photo

## JASPER COUNTY

### MAX IS BACK | Mobile coffee truck will be stopping by Monroe, Prairie City and Colfax each week

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Once a week, Max’s Coffee, a mobile coffee shop, makes a stop in local communities to serve up delicious caffeinated treats. After taking the frigid winter months off, owner Amy Schreiber-Bierbaum is back with her coffee truck and is more excited than ever to serve her customers.

“I’m looking forward to getting back to making drinks and making

people’s day a little bit better,” Schreiber-Bierbaum said. “I like the days I’m playing around with what I should add to the menu because it’s almost like getting to play mad scientist when trying new things; it’s the fun part of what I do and I’m looking forward to that.”

A business that started with Schreiber-Bierbaum roasting her own beans and checking out coffee shops, after working her day job from

home during the pandemic, she decided to take her life in a new direction. The joy coffee brings her made all of the hard work that went into making Max’s Coffee a reality worth it.

“The first year went really well, better than I anticipated. I wasn’t sure how people would respond to a mobile coffee business, but everything went over well and we stayed busy right up until the end of our season in December,” Sch-

reiber-Bierbaum said. The business definitely came with challenges, from interesting parking spots to troubleshooting her machines when they weren’t working quite right. Each one taught her something new and helped her continue to grow her business.

“The biggest challenge of the year was just the learning curve of everything. I had worked in a coffee shop to prepare

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Max’s Coffee is back serving a variety caffeinated treats, along with drinks for kids and even goodies for four-legged friends. Jamee A. Pierson/PCM Explorer

## MONROE

### Working on the family farm

#### Nolin Red Angus cattle business spans generations

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A family farm is just that, moms and dads, grandparents and grandkids, coming together to raise livestock to show and sell. Nolin Red Angus out of Monroe has been in the cattle business for more than 30 years, specializing in James Red Angus cattle along with teaching the future generations all about the family farm.

“Cattle, as well as a variety of livestock, have been raised on the Nolin Family Century Farm since

1884,” Mike Nolin said. “The farm dynamics have greatly changed over the years, but the one common thread is cattle.”

Growing up, Nolin raised primarily Hereford cattle. When his family moved from Des Moines to the family farm in Monroe, they also had sheep, goats, chickens and a variety of cattle including crossbreeds and Salers.

“I spent many years researching and watching cattle sales determining what breed of cattle I wanted to invest in,” Nolin said. “In 1989, I began raising Red Angus cattle with my parents Gene and Marjorie Nolin.”

In the early years, Nolin’s kids, James and Jessica, would hand-pick their show heifers from the herd. They have shown cattle



For more than 30 years, the Nolin family has raised James Red Angus cattle, passing down the knowledge and passion to future generations. Jamee A. Pierson/PCM Explorer

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