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REVIEW



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Feenstra writes bill to bolster beginning farmers

Part of Farm Bill, would extend crop insurance

BY ELIJAH HELTON
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WASHINGTON, D.C.—Young farmers would get a boost from a bipartisan bill by U.S. Rep. Randy Feenstra (R-Iowa) as generational turnover looms in the agriculture

industry. The Crop Insurance for Future Farmers Act would expand who qualifies for federal crop insurance programs meant for beginning farmers. Current law covers the first five crop



Rep. Feenstra

years, and the bill would double that "beginning farmer" definition to the first 10 years.

The legislation would increase premium subsidies for veteran farmers. "I am proud to introduce common-sense legislation that extends vital crop and livestock insurance protections to new, beginning and veteran farmers to lower their insurance payments for their first 10 years in busi-

ness," Feenstra said.

The Hull Republican introduced the bill on June 6, co-sponsored by Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minnesota).

It is part of Feenstra's legislative push toward this year's Farm Bill, which has to pass the GOP-held House and a Senate controlled by the Democrats. Feenstra has referred to farm policy as a relatively easy area to find common ground. He and Craig

sit on the House Agriculture Committee.

Feenstra said securing long-term food production is a legislative priority that benefits everyone.

"I am confident that this investment in the next generation of producers will pay dividends for our economic vitality, grow our rural

See FEENSTRA on page A5

DENOMINATIONAL

division

FINAL PART OF A SERIES:

BY ALEISA SCHAT
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REGIONAL—Congregants of Bethel Reformed Church in Sheldon gathered in an open lot on Sunday, May 21, as the Rev. Dave Van Kley pushed a shovel into the soil and broke new ground. After a 2017 fire damaged the congregation's historic church building at 611 Seventh St. beyond use, the church had been without a physical home.

"We called it 'The Land Between,'" Van Kley said.

Like the Israelites wandering in the desert, Bethel's congregation has spent the past few years forging an identity that is not anchored in a permanent home.

"This building journey has been very difficult — and we've lost people," Van Kley said. "We've had to weather some tough stuff — but God has brought us through it. And we're seeing Him work."

Along with the challenges of maintaining a church without a permanent gathering place, Bethel belongs to a denomination that is in its own season of desert wandering. In the last couple of years, the Reformed Church in America has experi-

enced rupture and transition, and there is uncertainty about what lay on the other side.

In 2021, churches in N'West Iowa historically affiliated with the Reformed Church in America began to leave the denomination in significant numbers, a symptom of deepening division within the denomination.

The catalyst for the split was escalating disagreement about issues related to human sexuality, including whether same-sex marriages and the ordination of LGBTQ clergy should be sanctioned in RCA churches. In the last several decades, the denomination has continued to affirm a traditional stance on issues related to human sexuality, but in practice, pastors and churches have freedom to follow their own convictions in their own contexts.

As Van Kley watched churches across N'West Iowa break ties with the RCA, he has not felt the urgency to make a choice — particularly in the wake of the fire and its aftermath.

See CHURCH on A3



The Rev. Dave Van Kley addresses those gathered for a groundbreaking for a new building for Bethel Reformed Church in Sheldon. Fire damaged the old church. Photo by Justin Rust

N'West Iowa churches affiliated with historic denominations, including the Reformed Church in America and the United Methodist Church, are splintering along political and theological lines. The choice — to leave or stay — reflects a decision to pursue renewal from within the denomination or find it elsewhere.

"This building journey has been very difficult — and we've lost people. We've had to weather some tough stuff — but God has brought us through it. And we're seeing Him work."

DAVE VAN KLEY, BETHEL REFORMED CHURCH PASTOR

CHURCHES WRESTLE WITH SPLINTERING AFFILIATIONS

Rain, lightning fail to drown out RiseFest shows

Crowder, others play in Sheldon

BY JUSTIN RUST
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SHELDON—Rob Roozeboom tried not to watch the weather forecast for the weekend of RiseFest.

The forecasters were not being kind to the founder and president of Rise Ministries, the organization behind RiseFest.

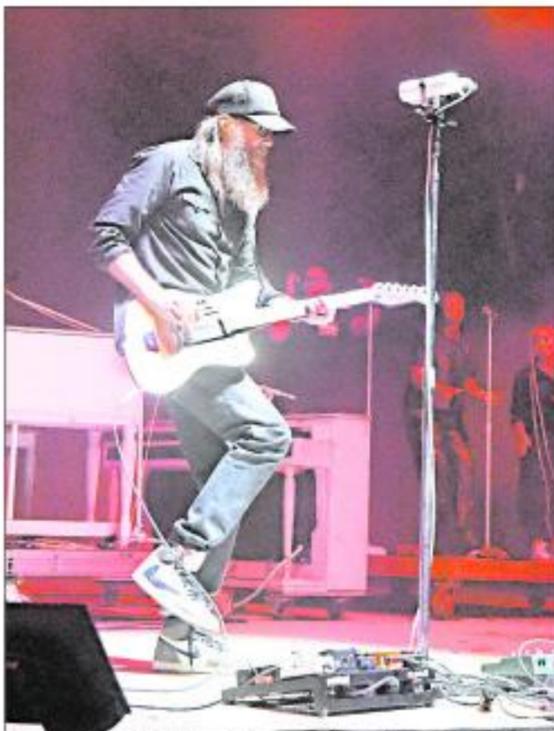
There was a threat of rain for much of Friday and Saturday, June 9-10, with the potential for scattered thunderstorms on both evenings.

A watchful eye helped keep RiseFest relatively dry throughout the two-day Christian music fes-

tival, though. While there was rain in portions of N'West Iowa and south and north of the area, the scattered showers stayed away from the RiseFest grounds for the most part. Some lightning did cause Crowder, last Saturday night's headliner, to go on stage more than an hour after he was planned but the Dove Award winner still was able to perform a full set after the delay.

The possibility of precipitation did not keep scare away festivalgoers either. More than 9,700 people passed through the RiseFest gates on the opening night and then almost 9,300 attended last

See RISE on A10



After a rain and lightning delay, Crowder performs at RiseFest as the headliner late Saturday night in Sheldon. The two-day Christian music event drew over 19,000 people. Photo by Justin Rust

Sioux County board revises building rule

Meant to lock down illegal construction

BY ERIC SANDBULTE
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ORANGE CITY—The Sioux County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved new language to better define what counts as nonfarmable ground.

Originally presented during the May 31 board of supervisors meeting, the changes were proposed to continue to protect

Sioux County's farm ground. With the approval on Tuesday, the resulting ordinance will have a first reading at the June 27 supervisors' meeting.

The ordinance set to be redefined allows the issuance of a permit to build a house on less than 35 acres of what's considered nonfarmable land if one of these three conditions are met:

■ At least 75 percent of the site contains soil unsuitable for

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WEATHER:

SATURDAY

HIGH: 81

LOW: 60

CHANCE OF PREC: 70%

SUNDAY

HIGH: 81

LOW: 60

CHANCE OF PREC: 30%



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NEWS



Sioux County Zoning director Shane Walter discusses proposed changes to building permit language regarding nonfarmable ground at Tuesday's county board meeting as supervisors Carl Vande Weerd and Dan Altena listen. Photo by Eric Sandbulte

Zoning rules clarified for Sioux

BOARD

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agricultural operations.

■ The site is an irregularly shaped lot that — because of its area, size or shape — has limited potential for agricultural production.

■ At least 75 percent of the site contains slopes greater than 9 percent and/or there are trees covering 75 percent of the site.

Sioux County zoning director Shane Walter had said what constitutes "soil unsuitable for agricultural operations" was rather subjective and the criteria could benefit from more precise language.

The proposed changes would have the new criteria listed as:

■ At least 75 percent of the site has a nonirrigated capability class of 3 or greater or has a crop suitability rating of 40 or below and has no history of agricultural uses in the previous five years and eight of the last 10.

■ The site is an irregularly shaped lot that — because of its area, size or shape

— has limited potential for agricultural production and has no history of agricultural uses in the previous five years and eight of the last 10.

■ At least 75 percent of the site contains slopes greater than 9 percent and/or there are trees covering 75 percent of the site and it has no history of agricultural uses in the previous five years and eight of the last 10.

The definition of land agricultural uses also would be outlined, defined as crop production, agricultural animal husbandry, horticulture, viticulture/viticulture and pasture or Conservation Reserve Program land when held or operated in conjunction with other primarily agricultural uses.

These changes put it on the building permit application to prove that the land in question would qualify.

It's too common for property owners to start building a home and plead ignorance to the need for a building permit in the hopes that it pressure the county to accept the permit application, according to supervisor Carl Vande Weerd.

"If we don't get stringent on these rules,

we're either going to get a lawsuit from the people we've turned down or they're just going to continue to build and then ask for forgiveness," Vande Weerd said.

The county can fine the landowner if they begin to build without the needed permit, doubling the fee of the building permit. The usual fee for a building permit is \$2 per \$1,000 of total construction cost. Additionally, Walter can issue a fine of up to \$750 per infraction, with each day constituting a new infraction.

While supervisors emphasized the need for enforcement, Walter said enforcement requires strong, consistent backing from the board of supervisors as permitless builders might try to reach out to supervisors to gain a more favorable outcome.

"I need consistency here in order for me to be consistent, and that's not always been the case in the past," Walter said.

Vande Weerd made the motion to approve the ordinance along with including additional language dictating the board of supervisors' support Walter in enforcement efforts.

Farm Bill proposal to boost beginners

FEENSTRA

Continued from page A1

communities and keep Iowa farmland in the hands of Iowa farmers where it rightfully belongs," he said.

Farmers getting older is an imminent problem for the ag industry.

Just over a third of all farmland is owned by people older than 65. Less than a tenth is owned by those under 35. The country's total number of farms also has dropped to about 2 million in 2022 from three times that a century ago.

Feenstra said the next generation needs a boost to get ready to take over the sector.

Earlier this year, Feenstra formed his Agriculture Advisory Board, which includes dozens of ag producers and experts from Iowa's 4th Congressional District.

"These same producers are extremely concerned — as am I — that our young farmers face major hurdles to succeed in today's bleak economy," Feenstra said. "As inflation breaks records, interest rates increase and economic uncertainty persists, it is exceedingly difficult for the next generation of producers to enter the farming community and make a good living."

The board is meant to draw attention to issues and offer solutions that can be addressed in the 2023 Farm Bill. The legislation is renewed every five years as the main piece of federal farm policy.

The agriculture mega-bill is expected to be formally assembled, debated and voted on later this summer.

Chuck Conner of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives said the Crop Insurance for Future Farmers Act would make for a strong inclusion in this year's Farm Bill.

"Crop insurance is a critical risk management tool for farmers across the country and this bill contains important reforms to help the next generation of producers effectively utilize the program," Conner said.

After nutrition programs, the second-largest chunk of the Farm Bill goes to crop insurance. Nearly \$100 million in federal dollars goes to production protection every year.

"We want to make sure that our agenda gets in the Farm Bill," Feenstra said.

"We're the second largest ag district in the country, the 4th District is, that's why it's so important."

Trial rescheduled again for Sheldon homicide charge

Man accused of killing his mother

BY JEFF GRANT
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PRIMGHAR—The trial for a 41-year-old Rock Rapids man accused of murdering his mother at her home in Sheldon in March has been postponed again.



Kassel

Nathaniel Byron Kassel has pleaded not guilty in O'Brien County District Court in Primghar to the charge of first-degree murder of 62-year-old Jody Lynn Duskin.

Kassel also has been charged with two counts of fifth-degree theft in connection with the incident.

Judge John Sandy on Tuesday, June 13, rescheduled the jury trial for Tuesday, Oct. 17, with a pretrial conference scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Monday, Aug. 21.

The continuance was made at the request of Kassel's attorney, state public defender John Loos Jr. of Sioux City.

The trial originally was scheduled for June 20 and later continued to Aug. 15.

According to criminal complaint documents filed in district court by the Sheldon Police Department, Kassel

was residing with Duskin and messaged other family members, stating "I'm killing Jody," at approximately 8:45 p.m. Wednesday, March 22.

At approximately 11:30 p.m. that same date, Kassel "was overheard in a phone conversation stating he made a mistake and hurt someone."

The O'Brien County Communication Center received a 911 call at about 4 p.m. the next day about a deceased female at 604 Fourth Ave. in Sheldon.

When authorities arrived, they found Duskin had been shot in the head.

Kassel was arrested about noon Friday, March 24, in Flandreau, SD, outside the Native Nations Cannabis Dispensary after the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe police chief noticed a vehicle at the Royal River Casino & Hotel that fit the description of a 2013 Ford Edge owned by Duskin.

Kassel was taken into custody at Brookings County Sheriff's Office in South Dakota.

He was found to be in possession of two handguns — a .22 and a 9 mm — from Duskin's residence.

An autopsy of Duskin took place March 25 by the Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner in Ankeny, and her death was ruled a homicide.

Kassel was extradited March 27 to the O'Brien County Jail in Primghar, where he remains with bond set at \$1 million.

LAW & ORDER

BETTENDORF DRIVER TO JAIL FOR OWI BY ALVORD

ALVORD—A 28-year-old Bettendorf man was arrested about 3 a.m. Sunday, June 4, near Alvord on a charge of first-offense operating while under the influence.

The arrest of Kyle Gunnar Freebern stemmed from the stop of a 2008 Buick Lucerne on the 1900 mile of Garfield Avenue about four miles northeast of Alvord, according to the Lyon County Sheriff's Office.

Freebern had bloodshot/watery eyes, impaired balance and the odor of an alcoholic beverage and failed field sobriety tests, according to the incident report.

HARTLEY MAN JAILED ON TRESPASS CHARGE

HARTLEY—A 30-year-old Hartley man was arrested about 11:10 p.m. Friday, June 9, on a charge of first-offense trespassing.

The arrest of Kevin Allen Chindlund stemmed from him entering the property of Crazy Bob's BBQ in Hartley and attempting to gain access to the locked front doors by shaking them, according to the Hartley Police Department.

Chindlund previously had been told not to be on the property, according to the incident report.

ASHTON WOMAN JAILED FOR TRESPASS, THEFT

ASHTON—A 36-year-old Ashton woman was arrested about 5 p.m. Sunday, June 4, on charges of first-offense trespassing and fifth-degree theft.

The arrest of Kari Irene Buckley stemmed from two incidents at Fred's Plumbing & Heating in Sheldon, according to the Sheldon Police Department.

Buckley was caught trespassing at Fred's Plumbing & Heating and told to leave and warned she was not allowed on the property on Tuesday, May 30.

She was found on the Fred's Plumbing & Heating property again about 8:45 p.m. Thursday, June 1, taking scrap metal from a dumpster, according to the incident report.

The scrap metal was valued at less than \$300.

ESTHERVILLE MAN TO JAIL FOR ALTERCATION

SHELDON—A 34-year-old Estherville man was arrested about 11:10 p.m. Saturday, June 10, in Sheldon on a charge of disorderly conduct — fighting/violent behavior.

The arrest of Daniel Joseph Dreckman stemmed from him throwing multiple punches at a Boyden man on the RiseFest grounds in Sheldon, according to the Sheldon Police Department.

SUTHERLAND MAN TO JAIL FOR YELLING, THC

SUTHERLAND—A 28-year-old Sutherland man was arrested about 7:45 p.m. Tuesday, June 6, on charges of disorderly conduct — loud raucous noise and first-offense possession of a controlled substance — marijuana.

The arrest of James Michael Brockhaus stemmed from him getting in a yelling match with a female who walked away from him, according to the O'Brien County Sheriff's Office.

The female went to another location in Sutherland, crying and in distress, according to the incident report.

Brockhaus followed the female to the residence and began yelling loudly at the female's family members.

He was arrested for disorderly conduct and was found in pos-

session of a small plastic container of THC wax.

MOTORCYCLIST JAILED FOR POT AFTER CRASH

ORANGE CITY—A 29-year-old Orange City man was arrested about 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 7, on charges of first-offense possession of a controlled substance — marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, failure to maintain control and reckless driving.

The arrest of Luther Grady Hofmeyer stemmed from a report of him falling off a 2020 KTM motorcycle near the intersection of Eighth Street and Albany Place Southeast in Orange City, according to the incident report from the Orange City Police Department.

Hofmeyer refused medical treatment, according to the incident report.

He had bloodshot/watery eyes, slurred speech, impaired balance and the odor of an alcoholic beverage.

Authorities found a small wooden one-hitter device containing raw marijuana and a pipe used to ingest marijuana in a black shoulder bag in Hofmeyer's possession during a consent search.

SANBORN MAN TO JAIL FOR PUBLIC INTOX, METH

SANBORN—A 44-year-old Sanborn man was arrested about 9:40 p.m. Tuesday, June 6, on charges of first-offense consumption of alcohol in public place and first-offense possession of a controlled substance — methamphetamines.

The arrest of James Gilbert Axdahl stemmed from him being found lying in a driveway on the 200 block of West Fifth Street, according to the Sanborn Police Department.

He was unable to sit up or

stand without assistance, according to the incident report.

Axdahl was transported to MercyOne Primghar Medical Center to be examined.

While being examined in the emergency room, Axdahl reached into his pocket and handed a deputy a small baggie with a white crystalline substance that he said was methamphetamine.

HAWARDEN TEEN JAILED ON TWO THEFT CHARGES

HAWARDEN—A 19-year-old Hawarden resident was arrested Thursday, June 8, on charges of second-degree theft and fifth-degree theft.

The arrest of Samantha Alyson Mackie stemmed from her taking products at Bomgaars in Hawarden valued at \$1,500-\$10,000 on May 26 and an item at Quick Corner convenience store in Hawarden valued at less than \$300 on May 23, according to the Hawarden Police Department.

Warrants for her arrest were issued June 6.

WOMAN ARRESTED FOR STEALING CHARGE CARD

BOYDEN—A 41-year-old Sheldon woman was arrested about 12:20 p.m. Thursday, June 8, on four counts of fifth-degree theft.

The arrest of Tamara Sue Van Der Brink stemmed from a report of the theft of a Co-op Gas & Oil charge card from a Sheldon man's vehicle, according to the Sioux County Sheriff's Office.

Upon further investigation, it was discovered that Van Der Brink used a stolen to charge four gas purchases at Cenex in Boyden: \$59.98 on May 31, \$63.34 on June 1, \$53.52 on June 2 and \$35.08 on June 2, according to incident reports.

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