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# PCM EXPLORER

## PRAIRIE CITY

### Prairie City Public Library gets \$5K in matching funds from Jasper County

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Prairie City Public Library was authorized on Jan. 3 to receive \$5,000 in matching funds from the Jasper County Board of Supervisors, which would go toward an Iowa Economic Development Authority Community Attraction and Tourism Grant application that could net the library an extra \$170,000 for a new facility.

Sue Ponder, director of the Prairie City Public Library, said the library has been fundraising for the expansion and renovation of an empty building in the town square to serve as its new location. The new library would be adjacent to the Prairie City City Hall



Sue Ponder, director of the Prairie City Public Library, speaks with the Jasper County Board of Supervisors on Jan. 3 in the county courthouse. Christopher Braunschweig/PCM Explorer

and less than a half block from the Red Rock Prairie Trail. the library has raised more than \$600,000 in donations With the fundraising campaign kicked off in May 2021,

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## MONROE

### Stock up with a stack

#### Monroe Library temporarily closing to install new carpet

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Book lovers have less than a week to stock up on their favorite reads before the Monroe Public Library closes its doors for renovations. The library will be closed to the public from Jan. 16 to 28 to have new carpet installed, the next step in a revamping of the building.

“It does involve a very extensive move of 20,000 plus books,” librarian Brenda Tripp-Lanser said. “We’re going to be doing it in sections. And because we need to keep our collection in-

tact and not have kids in the building that could get hurt, we will need to close for several weeks.”

The carpet, which is more than 20 years old, is more than ready to be replaced. A new, fresh look will only enhance the ongoing work the library has put into updating the space. From removing walls and reworking amenities to reorganizing where and how the books are displayed, the library has worked to make it a safe, fun space for readers.

For the latest renovation

MONROE LIBRARY • 3

## MONROE

### The new Salon Essence

#### Monroe salon moves to former Casey’s location in a modern, refreshed space

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The move may have only been about a block to the west but the transformation in the new Salon Essence building is one that has to be seen. Located in the former Casey’s square site on the corner of Highway 14 and Marion Street in Monroe, those walking through the door would never know a convenience store once filled the space.

Owner Alicia Hansen put in more than a year worth of work to transform the building from aisles of food and supplies to a chic, clean salon straight out of a favorite Instagram post. New walls covered in fresh white paint contrast with a black ceiling and furniture for a fresh look for the business.

“I technically closed on the building in June of 2021 and I literally ordered

the windows the day we closed. Then, there was eight weeks right off the bat that we had to wait for them,” Hansen said. “It just wasn’t moving very fast. I never thought it would take as long as it did, but it took a really long time.”

The finished product was worth the wait. The new location boasts a large open space that holds four stylist stations, two washing chairs and space to mix hair color, a reception and waiting area and product shelves. Rooms for tanning, massage, additional services, laundry and a new bathroom were also added providing ample space for growth for the business.

“We put in sliding barn doors between the two massage rooms to allow for couple massages,” Hanson said. “The hallway goes on forever. It is really fun because it is all new.”

Hansen is most excited with the



Salon Essence owner Alicia Hansen is most excited about the updated space at her new location on the corner of Highway 14 and Marion Street in Monroe. Jamee A. Pierson/PCM Explorer

look of the space, an aesthetic that isn’t found in very many businesses in the area. It is also a change from what the former location looked like, a building that held a variety of salons within the walls for the past several decades.

“The space is something that most

wouldn’t think. When people come in here they are just shocked. It is so different from what we had and it isn’t something you see around here very much,” Hansen said. “My favorite part

SALON ESSENCE • 3

## JASPER COUNTY

### MEET YOUR NEW AUDITOR

#### Jenna Jennings appointed to Jasper County Auditor following the retirement of Dennis Parrott

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Jenna Jennings, an 11-and-a-half-year employee of the Jasper County Auditor’s Office, is now in charge of the department after the seat was left vacant following the retirement of Dennis Parrott. The board of supervisors voted 3-0 on Jan. 3 to appoint Jennings as the county auditor, and she was immediately sworn in.

Supervisors held closed session interviews with Jennings, a payroll clerk, and deputy auditor Tina Mulgrew prior to the appointment. Jennings and Mulgrew shared a hug after the decision was made. All three supervisors agreed the candidates met the qualifications and have years of experience under their belts.

After the interviews were finished and the board convened to open session, su-

pervisor Denny Stevenson said it was a tough decision but he had to choose what was best for the office and for the county in general. Stevenson said Jennings would be a good fit and make the office her own.

“I got the opinion that Jenna would be willing to do what it takes, to make it her own, make some improvements, keep some stuff the same,” Stevenson said.

Brandon Talsma, chair of the board of supervisors, agreed with Stevenson and said Jennings “can deal with some of the shortfalls that are currently in that office.” Talsma also believed she could work well with the other elected officials and department heads but also keep supervisors in their place.

County supervisor Doug Cupples said both candidates had good qualities and at times excelled at one point



Jenna Jennings, formerly a payroll clerk at the Jasper County Auditor’s Office, was appointed to the county auditor seat following the retirement of former county auditor Dennis Parrott. Christopher Braunschweig/PCM Explorer

over the other. Based on the other two supervisors leaning towards Jennings, Cupples said “it sounds like the decision is made” and he is “in agreement with the decision.”

#### WHO IS JENNA JENNINGS?

Before she was a payroll clerk, Jennings started her career in the auditor’s office working on the real estate side. After about seven months she moved over to

AUDITOR • 3

### Talsma continues serving as chair of the board of supervisors

#### Cupples was the person most likely to be rotated to center seat but he declines

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Brandon Talsma is chairperson of the Jasper County Board

of Supervisors for the second year in a row. The newly re-elected supervisor abstained from the vote on Jan. 3 that put him in the center seat of the board and placed fellow county supervisor Doug Cupples in the vice-chair role.

Typically, the board of supervisors rotates its chairpersons at the start of a New Year, allowing every member a chance to lead

CHAIRPERSON • 2



Brandon Talsma was chosen on Jan. 3 to remain the chairperson of the Jasper County Board of Supervisors. Christopher Braunschweig/PCM Explorer