

# Jasper County Tribune

Serving Colfax • Mingo • Baxter • Western Jasper County

Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023

128 Years • No. 16

Single Copy \$1.00



## Colfax-Mingo school board member says 'Iowa cannot afford vouchers'

### Mary Poulter speaks out against school choice at Capitol building

Christopher Braunschweig  
Staff Writer

Mary Poulter, a member of the Colfax-Mingo school board and a retired principal at Prairie City Elementary, spoke out against the governor's school vouchers/educational savings bill during a senate subcommittee meeting on Jan. 12 in the state capitol.



Poulter

"Iowa cannot afford vouchers," she said. "They will harm public school fund-

ing. Supplemental (State) Aid has not kept up with inflation. Schools have been underfunded. How can we take on more debt? Again, we talk about cutting taxes. Vouchers don't really offer the parents choice. Private schools make that choice."

Poulter also argued that public schools take in everyone and that private schools "don't have to educate students with behavior issues" or other needs. The school board member recalled a student from Jasper County that wanted to attend private school but was turned down without a reason.

"This child was a child of color," Poulter said. "How is that choice for these parents?"

VOUCHERS — See Page 2



Jamee A. Pierson/Jasper County Tribune

Owner Meghann Hernandez and bartender Renae Morales at the newly built bar on opening day of Worth A Shot Tequila Bar and Cantina in Colfax.

## New Colfax bar is 'Worth A Shot'

### Tequila-themed bar now open on North Walnut Street

Jamee A. Pierson  
Editor

After a couple of opportunities to open a business in the former convenience store location north of Colfax, Meghann Hernandez thought it'd be "worth a shot" to create a unique tequila

bar in the long vacant building. The newly transformed space at 1407 N. Walnut St. is now Worth A Shot Tequila Bar and Cantina and features the best tequila around along with a full bar for a good time.

"We also own the Mexi-

can restaurant in town. My husband had once tried to put the restaurant in here but the old owner wanted too much for rent," Hernandez said. "When the new owner bought it he approached us

TEQUILA — See Page 3

## School choice discussion takes over first week of legislative session

### Dunwell holds meeting to discuss the details of controversial Students First Act

Christopher Braunschweig  
Staff Writer

*Editor's Note: This is the first of a two-part series on the school voucher bill currently being proposed at the Iowa Legislature.*

Iowa lawmakers are one week into the 2023 legislative session, and already the governor's proposed school choice law is generating fierce discussions.

Several people packed into a senate subcommittee meeting on Jan. 12 in the state capitol to voice their opposition or support of the law. Fueling the

discussion even more is a school choice ad paid for by a conservative political action committee and featuring Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds.

Known as the Students First Act, the proposal would permit education savings accounts — oftentimes referred to as school vouchers — to parents who choose to enroll their children in an



Dunwell

accredited private school. Families will have \$7,598, the state's cost per pupil, to use for tuition, fees and other qualified expenses.

Opponents of the proposal argue it takes away money from public schools to go towards private/charter schools, provides tax dollars to religious instructional institutions and lacks public accountability. Others say the money allocated for the proposal is a waste of tax dollars.

Rep. Jon Dunwell, R-Newton, held Zoom call and Facebook Live meeting on Jan. 12 to give a summary of the legislative session thus far, a large

portion of which was dedicated to the Students First Act. Joining him was Rep. Henry Stone, R-Forest City, the House majority whip.

Together, they disputed what Dunwell was calling "misinformation" about the proposal and the process in which it is considered for approval. The Jasper County Democratic Party said in a Jan. 11 Facebook post the proposal would be rammed through the House and Senate education committee in a day's time.

Dunwell told Newton News there is

SCHOOL CHOICE — See Page 3

## Conservation secures \$1.14M grant for Red Rock Prairie Trail

### Funding from bill sponsored by Miller-Meeks will go towards Phase 2 construction

Christopher Braunschweig  
Staff Writer

Jasper County Conservation announced this week it received a \$1.14 million grant for the Phase 2 construction of the Red Rock Prairie Trail.

In a press release, conservation said the grant is made possible thanks to a partnership with Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks of Iowa's Second Congressional District, who sponsored a bill passed in the omnibus package. Miller-Meeks said she was pleased the funding for the trail could be included.

"Community Project

GRANT — See Page 2



Provided by Jasper County Conservation

Jasper County Conservation was the recipient of a \$1.14 million grant through a partnership with Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks, who sponsored a bill passed in the omnibus package. The omnibus provided conservation with a grant that would go towards the Phase 2 construction of the Red Rock Prairie Trail.



Jamee A. Pierson/Jasper County Tribune

Regional Community Health Consultant Heather Bombei, rights, presents Margot Voshell, left, with a certificate in honor of her 12 years served on the Jasper County Board of Health.

## Voshell honored for board of health service

### Jody Eaton welcomed as newest board member

Jamee A. Pierson  
Editor

Former Jasper County Board of Health member Margot Voshell was honored for her 12 years of service

to the county at the January board meeting. Voshell, who served as the board chair during most of her term, saw the transformation of public

VOSHELL — See Page 3



CONTACT US Newsroom: 641-792-3121, ext. 7 • Advertising: 641-792-3121, ext. 2 Subscriptions/Delivery: 641-792-5320 • Billing: 641-792-3121, ext. 6

SHAW MEDIA  
EST. 1951