

Tequila

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and said, 'I heard at one time you were interested in the location and I am lowering the rent.'

The couple had already opened Cocina Hernandez in downtown Colfax and weren't interested in relocating the restaurant. After some time passed, the new building owner came back to the pair and

proposed the idea of opening a bar.

"We thought, we'll give it a shot," Hernandez said.

When it came to actually opening an establishment in the former convenience store, a complete renovation had to take place.

"It took months, from finding mold in the walls when we were tearing them out to just tearing it down to the floor and rebuilding from there," Hernandez said. "I knew I wanted something different.

We don't want to be competing or take anything away from the (Thirsty) Turtle, so it was just to be different, something new. There also isn't anything like it in Jasper County. Something to try to get people in."

The work paid off with a fresh, new bar with plenty of space now open. Amenities including a pool table and several TV are among the many reasons to make a stop at Worth A Shot.

"Everybody seems to enjoy it. We did a soft opening

Jan. 12 with friends, family and some of the local business owners and they all liked it," Hernandez said.

Behind the bar guests will find a variety of tequilas that range from \$20 per shot to \$5 a shot.

"We've got domestic beer, imports, rum, whiskey, it's a full bar," Hernandez said. "Once the weather warms up the taco truck will be out here."

With the bar adding another entertainment option to the

community, the owners and staff hope it helps to keep people in town when they chose to have a night out.

"It keeps options open out here and keeps people and revenue in Colfax instead of driving into the city every time people want to go out and have a good time," bartender Renae Morales said.

Worth A Shot is open 3 to 10 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 3 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday and 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday.

School Choice

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still more deliberation to be done, but the bill could reach the floor by the end of the month. He does expect the bill to come early into the session. The Senate may be moving quicker than the House, too. Dunwell also said the bill is different than its 2022 draft.

"This is not the same bill as last year. The bill that came out last year was scrapped and done away with and they started with a fresh start," Dunwell said. "They actually kind of listened to some of the concerns and questions that were out there and wrote a new bill in terms of that."

ACCOUNT ELIGIBILITY CHANGES OVER THREE YEARS

According to information Dunwell shared on his Facebook page about education savings accounts, the funding will be allocated annually by the state. It is estimated Iowa's public schools will retain about \$1,205 per pupil in categorical funding for each student who resides in their district but chooses private school.

Education savings accounts/school vouchers will be available in different ways over the next three years. Reynolds said in her condition of the state address the plan will be phased in, focusing first on the families with the lowest income levels. In three years, she said, every family will have a choice in education.

For Year 1 (2023-2024), all kindergarten students, all public school students and private school students at or below 300 percent federal poverty level will be eligible. The rules are the same for Year 2 (2024-2025), except the federal poverty level threshold for private school students will be set at 400 percent.

By Year 3 (2025-2026), all K-12 students in Iowa regardless of income will be allowed an education savings account/school voucher.

Dunwell said any new students who enroll into a private school next year can be granted an education savings account/school voucher. Those funds that would have gone to the public school would follow the student into their account. Stone said public schools will still be able to count that student for

certified enrollment.

"We're not going to short any public schools on that count or the money that first year," Stone said.

Another aspect of the governor's legislation is providing funds back to the public schools. Dunwell said public schools now do not get money for the students who live in their district but are attending nonpublic school. The governor "is allowing those to be counted for some of our categorical moneys."

DEMOCRATS SHARE DATA ON PRIVATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

The Jasper County Democratic Party shared information from the Iowa Department of Education's log of certified enrollment of non-public schools in Jasper County. According to the 2022-2023 certified enrollment data, there are currently 195 students in Jasper County attending private schools.

- Newton Community School District: 92 students
- Lynnville-Sully Community School District: 70 students
- PCM Community School District: 21 students
- Colfax-Mingo Community School

District: 8 students

- Baxter Community School District: 4 students

Two private schools reside in Jasper County: Newton Christian School and Sully Christian School. About 58 percent of the nonpublic school students in Jasper County attend these two schools.

Other nonpublic school students in the county attend Ankeny Christian Academy, Bergman Academy, Grandview Christian Schools, Mt. Olive Lutheran School, Pella Christian Schools and Peoria Christian School.

Jasper County Democrats say the Newton and Lynnville-Sully school districts would be impacted the most by the Students First Act.

Dunwell claims this isn't so. In the case of Lynnville-Sully, he said during his Zoom call the school district would receive \$1,205 per nonpublic school student. Which means, according to Dunwell, Lynnville-Sully would collect \$84,350 from the state for those students.

But opponents of the school choice bill say public schools receiving \$1,205 per student is still much less than \$7,598.

Voshell

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health through Skiff Medical Center, now MercyOne, to the county entity of the Jasper County Health Department.

"You really want to leave it better than you found it, and I think that is what Margot did," Jasper County Health Department Administrator Becky Pryor said. "She really pushed us to do more and a lot of dif-

ferent program changes. There have been tough times. We have shed tears. We've had happy times. There has been a lot that has happened. I thank her for pushing us to be better and thinking about the community, all of your volunteer hours. We respect you and appreciate everything that you have done for us."

During her time on the board, Voshell was a champion for the health department in

the county. Helping lead during the pandemic is not something anyone anticipated, but Voshell was there every step of the way for guidance and support for the department.

She also took the time to learn about all aspects of public health including what environmental health does not only for Jasper County but the greater Central Iowa area.

"We want to thank Margot for your time.

Septic stuff isn't the most fun, but you took the time to learn and you kept us involved when we didn't fit the page very easily," community development director Kevin Luetters said.

Voshell was presented with a certificate from Regional Community Health Consultant at Iowa Department of Public Health Heather Bombei along with a gift from the health department in appreciation for her time and effort.

"It's been an honor and a privilege," Voshell said.

As Voshell departs, Jody Eaton, former CEO at Central Iowa Community Services, is joining the five-member board. Eaton has a wide range of experience with health care, specifically mental health services.

"As a former county employee, I have a little bit of knowledge of how the budgets work, how supervisors work and the workings of the county," Eaton said.

Also with Voshell's departure a new board chair was approved. Julie Smith will now lead the meetings and the board for the coming year.



Jamee A. Pierson/Jasper County Tribune

Jody Eaton, middle, is the newest Jasper County Board of Health member.

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