

Ackley World Journal

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Greenbelt EMS unveiled

Service combines Ackley and Eldora ambulance

BY SHAWN DIGITY
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The Ackley and Eldora city councils met on Wednesday, Jan. 25 for a special joint session to discuss and hammer out the details of the Ackley Volunteer Ambulance Service (AVAS) and Eldora EMS consolidation.

AVAS President Joan Frazier and Eldora EMS Director Maile Carter have been working on a new name for the combined service opting for Greenbelt EMS.

According to the overview presented, the merger will have many benefits including paramedic services, 24-hour coverage in each community, better utilization of resources, along with greater stability.

The consolidation will lead to one unified crew as well as a single service director, Carter.

A start date of joint services is set for July 1. Until that date, and

starting as of Feb. 1, the two services will operate under a dual-paging system leading up to the merger.

As the two services assimilate into one, contracts under the Ackley-centric name would expire without renewal, essentially dissolving the entity bit by bit as agreements exhaust. New contracts will be made through Greenbelt EMS.

As part of the merger overview, Ackley will be possessing its own station (rather than a shed) with two ambulances and a paramedic on site, once sleeping quarters have been established. Operation, maintenance, and funding each city's facility will fall upon its respective city's shoulders and include sleeping quarters, utilities, and building insurance (at a minimum).

Carter has been exploring options for sleeping quarters in Ackley including possibly retrofitting a building, though nothing concrete has been settle upon.

Ackley would additionally be onboarding with the same advanced life support (ALS) provider as Eldora. Current

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SHAWN DIGITY/ACKLEY WORLD JOURNAL

An accident on Hwy. 20 near the Wellsburg exit caused the deaths of four on Friday morning. The roadway was blocked for several hours as emergency crews transported the numerous who were injured in the accident.

Crash on Highway 20 claims four

BY SHAWN DIGITY
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Becky Schipper, Ackley World Journal Editor, also contributed to this story

A single-vehicle accident resulted in the deaths of four individuals on Friday morning. The names of the passengers who died as a result of the accident are all from Delhi - Ervin Borntreger, 22; Marlin Borntreger, 1; Emma Borntreger, 4; and Rebecca Borntreger, 2. The accident occurred at approximately 6:49 a.m. just

outside the Wellsburg exit ramp on U.S. Highway 20, near mile marker 187.

A 15-passenger van was traveling west and as it approached Wellsburg, the driver lost control on the slick, snow-covered roads. The vehicle veered into the median and overturned into the eastbound lanes.

There were 13 passengers as confirmed by the Iowa State Patrol, who also verified numerous injuries to several of the other occupants of the van. The injured were transported to healthcare

facilities in Waterloo, Iowa City, and Grundy Center.

According to a release from State Patrol Public Information Officer Alex Dinkla, further information will be disseminated through the Iowa State Patrol crash report website as details become available. The ISP later released that none of the occupants were using seatbelts or child restraint devices.

The crash is still under investigation.

Responding to the scene were the Iowa State Patrol, Iowa Department

of Transportation, Wellsburg Volunteer Fire Department and EMS, Grundy County Emergency Management and others.

Rumors that the accident involved an AGWSR school vehicle circulated, prompting AGWSR Superintendent Erik Smith to send out a message to patrons of the district.

Administration of Timothy Christian School were also contacted as rumors continued to circulate. They confirmed that it was not a TC vehicle and that all students were accounted for. ●



PHOTOS BY COREY MEINTS/ACKLEY WORLD JOURNAL

New Heikens Family Foods to focus on wholesale

BY COREY MEINTS
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The way Tanner Heikens and his wife Mallory looked at things, they had two options, stay as-is or grow with the industry. A third option, withering away and dying, just wasn't going to happen.

Family Traditions Meat Co., formerly Triple T Meats, is undergoing a name change to Heikens Family Foods that is meant to be more marketable in a highly-competitive industry. But with it comes a change that Heikens knows will not be popular. But it's not as drastic as it may seem in many aspects.

"Our own retail is such a small part of what we do, about 3 percent, we're going to shut down our retail and transition out of catering as well," Heikens said. "Because it is such a small part, we're going to focus on the wholesale side of our business."

While catering, deli and other goods and services will end in the near future with the latest changes, customers will continue to be able to get many of their other favorites - from beef sticks and bratwurst to steaks and hamburger. But, instead of walking in and shopping, people will have to order what they want then pick it up. They will still be accepting some catering jobs, Heikens noted.

It wasn't a decision the Heikenses took

lightly but those moves had to be done to accommodate where they want the business to go in the future.

"A lot of people don't know what we do here," Heikens said. "The impression that I get is that they think our business is our retail out front - our sales, the deli, catering - but that's just not it at all. Our retail business is just a small part of what we do."

The only way for people to truly know how far the company reaches is by knowing their UPC code number. The bulk of Heikens' business is private labeling for retailers. Things like snack sticks are in numerous locations now, only with somebody else's name on the package. It's that market that Heikens is pushing forward into.

"The realm we're moving into is with our wholesale," Heiken said. "We're working on government contracting and on getting into the retail sector of the Targets, the Casey's and Wal-Marts of the world."

A new machine, purchased with the help of various grants, was the first step in the

journey to getting the Heikens name in larger stores. Designed to cut portions with more precision and speed than humanly possible will help them meet those needs. Heikens added that more components can also be added, cutting labor while producing concise cuts of boneless products like pork loin.

While that machine has made the job easier, Heikens said he is currently hiring for the expected increase in demand for their products - although he admits that may

Tanner and Mallory Heikens show their new logo in what will become production space in the former Family Traditions Meat Company retail area.

Tanner Heikens prepares to run pork loins through a new machine that will help him get the new Heikens Family Foods label in stores. The new name represents a push to expand the company's wholesale distribution.

not happen until later this spring.

"We've been tossing this around since July because we are running out of production space fast," Heikens said.

"With the cost of building on a n addition, we couldn't really expand even though we have this opportunity."

What will happen immediately is the retail portion will close as early as Friday (Feb. 3). That could be pushed back to the following Friday, Heikens said.

"Our intention is to not leave people high and dry," Heikens said. "We have catering booked out through April or May so that's not

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shutting down, we're not booking anymore past that, though. We're just shutting down the retail."

Heikens said he is looking for somebody to purchase the catering business. For now, Heikens said the focus will be on re-configuring the front of the building from retail to production. Once that is done, people will be able to again get many of the meat, pork and poultry items they count on. He said everything they do for wholesale will be available.

"This was a tough decision for us to make because it's a part of the community and we still want to be a part of the community," Heikens said. "Eventually, once we get our construction in-house done, we'll end up have a receptionist out front so a person can come in and get what they need with a phone call. We're just not going to be an open retailer. This isn't something simple like a name change."

Heikens said customers will be kept up on the latest through their Facebook page, including a sale of everything retail that began on Monday and will continue through Feb. 10. At that point, the retail side will shut down and the remodeling will begin.

"I don't want anybody to feel like we're trying to disconnect with the community," Heikens said. "It just came down to where we're going as a company and what we have to focus on. All the signage and everything will change, a lot will remain. We don't have a set date on everything, but we are hoping to have everything in place by spring. The community can still get their taste, it will just be a different process." ●

Crawford recognized for Creativity in Service

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach North Central Area Awards recipients were recognized during an event held on Jan. 12. Among those recognized for outstanding achievements in 2022 in the north central area was Missy Crawford, Franklin County Director. She was one of 29 receiving awards for her work.



Crawford

Crawford has a creative knack for finding need throughout her

county and acting on filling those needs. She was presented with the Creativity in Service to All Iowans award. Judges noted that Crawford recognized the need for Latinx programming and continues to move forward to train and recruit volunteers as well.

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BECKY SCHIPPER/ACKLEY WORLD JOURNAL

A New Face

It will be a long process, though work on the façade at Ibeling Insurance Services (605 Main Street, Ackley) has begun with the removal of the canopy from the front of the building. Funding for the project includes a \$99,000 grant through a CDBG-CV façade grant through the Iowa Economic Development Authority. Funds were provided to the IEDA through the CARES Act, the property owner, and the City of Ackley (taxpayer contribution of \$1,000). Jim Allen, site manager for the project, noted that progress on the façade will take time and the community will see a stretch of time with little taking place due to the continuation of winter. Next up will be masonry work which he expects could take nearly a month. Dawson Culver, representing MWD Contracting, subcontractor for the project, works to remove supports which held up the canopy.

A Shift in Roles

ADC Elects New Officers

BECKY SCHIPPER
EDITOR

The Ackley Development Commission has installed a new board following their Jan. 5 meeting. Elected to the role of president was Lee Gallentine. Gallentine replaces Adam Clark, who served in that role for the past year.

Others serving in leadership roles are Matt Roelfs as vice president, Janet DeBerg as treasurer, John Enslin as secretary. Other board members include Adam Clark, Carlee Brass, Jon Forgy, Elaine Lawrence, and Darren Janssen.

Members took part in a TIF (tax increment financing) workshop in early December and will use what they learned to aid in identifying projects

which could have an economic impact on the community they serve.

The Ackley Development Commission is a local non-profit organization which encourages development to enhance the community and was founded in 1962. Six businessmen - Harry Lekwa, Keith Carstens, Martin Fritz, Ed Flessa, Avery E. Johnson, and Wayne Shugar pulled together to create the organization. Their single goal was to grow their community of Ackley.

Since that time the organization has worked toward that goal, assisting, and encouraging local businesses in expansions while prospecting for new businesses to locate, re-locate, or expand their businesses in the community.

Gallentine has served the organization for several years, including this new role within. ●



BECKY SCHIPPER/ACKLEY WORLD JOURNAL

Lindaman Family Fund

Doug and Rosie Lindaman present a \$750 grant to the Ackley Pool Betterment Committee members Amber Gronewold and Sharesh Willems for the splash pad project. Funds were provided through the Doug and Rosie Lindaman Family Fund, established with the Ackley Community Foundation (ACF). The ACF is an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa based in Cedar Falls.

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individual policies will be terminated to safeguard against any potential fraudulence and one account will be used for the singular Greenbelt EMS group.

Without potential issues with the July 1 start date itself, Eldora Mayor

David Dunn sought clarity on how the city's ledger would be handled during the transitional period, and more specifically, accounts receivable.

Eldora Councilwoman Carey Callaway Morton explained, there is approximately a 150-day lag from the time of the transaction to the pro-

cessing of payment for Eldora's accounts receivable, meaning that when the merger actualizes in July, Eldora will still be waiting on some cash flow as payments from April-June continue rolling in.

This, in turn, led to Callaway Morton's thought to form an expeditious subcommittee to concentrate on more of the financial facets of the projected agreement. Another example of the new subcommittee's responsibility, and possibly acting as more of a placeholder on the detail report, was a suggested 25-75% profit-loss split between Ack-

ley and Eldora, respectively. While not indicative of either city's income or expense proportions, the percentages were based on the general number of calls each received, still something that needed to be established by the financial subcommittee.

That subcommittee will consist of Carter, Frazier, Callaway Morton, along with Jerry Kramer (Eldora), Dan Scallon and Judy Crawford (Ackley). Their first meeting is scheduled for Feb. 1 at 6:30 p.m. at the AVAS shed in Ackley.

In the proposed financial overview, the income

from either emergency service would remain with those individual services until July 1. The same goes for each entity's debt with retaining its own foundation or fundraising cash, which would be earmarked especially for "large-ticket items" within Greenbelt's first three years.

Another topic for the subcommittee - what constitutes a large-ticket item with councils looking to get a clearer definition.

Donations received by either service will be invested into the "ambulances, equipment, and stations" of that gift's respective community. After the July 1 inaugural date, Greenbelt would also take over insurance payments, billing, and payroll.

Greenbelt EMS intends to do a rolling three-year review of its contract agreement, enabling those involved to determine whether the new service is still in the best interest of both communities. The merger's first review will take place on June 30, 2026, with the three-year check-ins done as reviews or studies on the feasibility of the merger's

in-practice performance.

Brief discussion about "easy-outs" and "exit clauses" for the three-year evaluations took place. A full audit on both the Eldora EMS and AVAS's inventory leading into the union is planned. AVAS will do stock on all supplies, noting which will remain in Ackley and which will be transplanted to Eldora. AVAS's assets, regardless of location or type, will be transferred to Greenbelt EMS for \$1. After July 1, Greenbelt will provide all "supplies and ambulance maintenance."

If, in the future, the contract is dissolved, assets would revert to the original owner at the \$1-transfer cost.

Greenbelt EMS will also move forward with a seven-person advisory board: service director Carter, a crew member within the AGWSR school district, a crew member within the E-NP school district, two elected community members from Ackley, and two elected members from Eldora.

No official action was motioned for during the special meeting. ●

Ackley World Journal
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