



SALUTE TO BOY SCOUTS
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Cascade Pioneer

YOUR HOMETOWN PAPER SINCE 1876



COUGARS MAKE HISTORY
PAGE 8A

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Daniel Charland • Staff Photo

FFA Alumni & Supporters host fundraiser supper

From left, Cascade High School FFA members Addy Supple and Ellie Noonan help serve food at the FFA Alumni & Supporters Fundraiser Supper, Jan. 30.

Get to know your librarians: New resident Mariah Beechum

BY DANIEL CHARLAND
daniel.charland@wcinet.com

From the moment Mariah Beechum moved to Cascade in November 2022, she wanted to get involved in her new local library. A native of Columbus Junction, she worked part-time at the public library and considered it a natural choice to carry her passion over to the library of her new home.

Beechum worked at the Columbus Junction Public Library from April to November 2022 after encouragement from the librarians who saw her there frequently.

"It was a safe space," she said. "I liked being in the library as it was. Junction had an opening and they said, 'Mariah, you already know everything about the library — might as well work here,' so that's what I did. I started to get my mind off the fact that my father was passing away



MARIAH BEECHUM

from cancer at the time, then I picked up more hours and moved here."

As it just so happened, Beechum's move occurred at the same time the Cascade Public Library was looking for another librarian. Beechum saw the opportunity and pounced on it.

"I was hoping an opening would eventually show up. I was going to get library cards and everything when I came here and saw there was an opening. I instantly filled out the form since it was a part-time job. It was an easy decision."

As a paraprofessional at Drexler Middle School, Beechum said there's a lot of overlap between her work with students and library visitors.

"A lot of the children I educate love books or find the library to be their calming space. We spend a lot of time finding books they like and it's the same thing here for all ages."

Just as she considered the library a haven, Beechum said many students use libraries to feel safe and comfortable.

"First of all, you can hide almost anywhere in a library. Secondly, there are all kinds of information — you might not like one aspect of books, but you can always find something that might tickle your fancy."

In her previous library work, Beechum worked with programming for book clubs and citizenship work. Now, taking inspiration from the Columbus Junction library, she manages the Cascade Library's new TikTok account to develop a bigger reach. Beechum said this will attract

LIBRARIAN ~ turn to page 5A

Summerall steps in as Cascade Communications manager

BY DANIEL CHARLAND
daniel.charland@wcinet.com



CHRIS SUMMERALL

Blowing in from the Alaskan frontier, Chris Summerall steps into his new role as Cascade Communication's general manager following the retirement of Dave Gibson. Summerall has roughly 23 years of experience working in rural telecommunications and values the role technology has in rural communities.

"Technology plays a very important role in small areas because you're not right next to a hospital, for example," he said. "With COVID, if we didn't have this infrastructure in place, there's no way we would have had the bandwidth or connection for things like seeing your doctor in real-time. I think it's important to keep small rural communities connected, especially for that reason."

Summerall began his career in telecommunications in August 2000 as a technician in Florida, eventually taking on various positions like lead trainer, cable maintenance and repair before working his way up to a management position at CenturyLink. In 2014, he moved to Alaska to work as a plant superintendent with Copper Valley Telecom.

"I'd always wanted to go to Alaska," he said. "I was talking to a guy who was a contractor friend of mine who asked if I wanted that. I said, 'yeah' and he said, 'Well, maybe it will happen one day.' That night I got a phone call from him. I came to find out he was the old COO of a company in Alaska and they were looking for someone. I went up, interviewed, and the next thing you know I'm in Alaska."

Summerall returned to Florida in 2016 to help his dad and

returned to CenturyLink in a new position as a regional operations supervisor. He returned to Alaska in March

2018 as an exchange manager for the Arctic Slope Telephone Association on the north slope, a 90,000 square-mile area of rural land where he coordinated all day-to-day operations. He remained with them before returning to Copper Valley as their new COO in 2020.

Summerall said he and his family moved to Cascade because of its balance of being a small rural community while still having easy access to businesses and services.

"We wanted to be back in the lower 48, closer to amenities but still have the rural atmosphere and work for a smaller company. I always want to make a difference wherever I go. This opportunity presented itself, and we decided Iowa was the place we wanted to be."

The manager transition process began with Summerall's arrival at Cascade Communications on Sept. 26, 2022 and lasted a few months to allow him to learn the current management's approach before taking over. Summerall said he appreciated the transition period and is happy to work at a smaller company with tighter communication.

"Before I was in charge of about 60 people — here, it's seven. It's more low-key and I think that's an advantage because communication is a lot

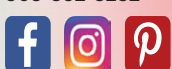
MANAGER ~ turn to page 2A

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Cascade Pioneer earns INF awards

Sports 'Small but sweet'



BY BETH LUTGEN
 Cascade placed second for Best Special Section Advertising for the Building and Progress edition; Best Front Page; Best Feature Pages, for photo pages compiled by Dave LaBelle and Daniel Charland; and Coverage of Agriculture, for stories written by Daniel Charland and Laura Drummy.

The Pioneer finished third for Best Sports Photo, a shot by Beth Lutgen of Elizabeth Gibbs hurdling; Best Editorial Page; and General Excellence (the total number of points earned in the contest).

The Pioneer is one of three newspapers in Eastern Iowa Media Group-North, along with the Dyersville Commercial and Manchester Press, which both received awards in Weeklies Class III (for papers with circulations over 1,551).

For the Dyersville Commercial, LaBelle earned a pair of awards in the Best Sports Feature Story category. He placed first for his story

Calendar
CASCADE
 Monday, Feb. 6
 Tuesday, Feb. 7
 Wednesday, Feb. 8
 Thursday, Feb. 9
 Friday, Feb. 10
 Saturday, Feb. 11
 Sunday, Feb. 12
 Monday, Feb. 13
 Tuesday, Feb. 14
 Wednesday, Feb. 15
 Thursday, Feb. 16
 Friday, Feb. 17
 Saturday, Feb. 18
 Sunday, Feb. 19
 Monday, Feb. 20
 Tuesday, Feb. 21
 Wednesday, Feb. 22
 Thursday, Feb. 23
 Friday, Feb. 24
 Saturday, Feb. 25
 Sunday, Feb. 26
 Monday, Feb. 27
 Tuesday, Feb. 28
 Wednesday, Feb. 29
 Thursday, Feb. 30

News Briefs

DUBUQUE COUNTY PARTICIPATING IN PILOT TO SEND TEXT MESSAGES ABOUT COURT DATES

Dubuque County is participating in a pilot project letting residents receive text messages about court proceedings.

The Iowa Judicial Branch announced in a press release that Dubuque County is among several counties participating in the project. Residents who choose to participate in the free project can receive message reminders about their upcoming court dates or payment plan due dates.

"We hope these text reminders help people avoid the additional consequences of missing an important court date or payment," State Court Administrator Robert Gast said in the release. "We are testing the effectiveness of the two services before deciding whether to take it statewide."

The other participating counties are Shelby, Sioux, Polk, Marshall and Davis.

Text message reminders will be sent seven days, three days and one day before a scheduled hearing, as well as five days and one day before a payment is due.

The hearing reminders are for criminal, simple misdemeanor and non-traffic cases, the release states. Reminders for the payment plan due dates are for disposed criminal, simple misdemeanor and traffic cases.

To sign up to receive the text messages, residents can text SUB and their case ID to 1-844223-7995 for court dates and 1-844-226-1554 for payment plan due dates. Residents also can sign up for reminders in person at the county courthouse or by calling the clerk of court.

More information can be found at iowacourts.gov/for-the-public/ereminders.

ROCK BAND WITH DOZENS OF HITS COMING TO JONES COUNTY FAIR

A rock band that has notched dozens of Top 10 hits will perform this summer in Monticello.

Officials with Great Jones County Fair announced Jan. 30 that Shinedown will take the stage at 8 p.m. Thursday, July 20. Tickets are \$56 each and go on sale at 10 a.m. Feb. 10 at greatjonescountyfair.com.

Shinedown has had 29 songs crack the Top 10 on the Billboard Mainstream Rock Airplay chart, with 18 songs reaching the No. 1 spot. The band's No. 1 hits include "Second Chance," "State of My Head," "Atlas Falls," "The Crow & The Butterfly," "Monsters" and "Planet Zero."

Other previously announced acts set to perform at Great Jones County Fair this summer are rapper Pitbull on Friday, July 21; country artists Jon Pardi and Russell Dickerson on Saturday, July 22; and Christian music acts We the Kingdom and Anne Wilson on Sunday, July 23.

Tickets for those shows are currently on sale.

The Cascade Pioneer excelled in the annual Iowa Newspaper Foundation's Better Newspaper Contest earning nine awards, including two first-place plaques. The awards were handed out at the annual banquet in Des Moines Feb. 2.

The Pioneer, which competes in Weeklies Class II (for papers with circulations between 876-1,550) finished first for Best Newspaper Website for the fourth consecutive year.

The contest's judge said, "This is a great site, from the writing and photos to the variety of content and ease of use."

The Pioneer also took first for Best Sports Section for the second consecutive year.

The contest's judge said, "Photos pop; nice editorial lede on anchor story; strong, attention-grabbing headline on second front-page story; good use of break-outs, i.e. pull quotes, calendar, final score."

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about home plate umpire Dale Wiederholt.

The contest's judge said, "A great article about one of the toughest jobs in sports — umpiring or being a referee or official. The writer lets us know that this umpire is just a regular guy, well respected, no nonsense but with an understanding of those who argue with him. Great job."

LaBelle's story about Hank Lucas earned him second place.

For that story, the judge said, "We all love to read about the successes of athletes from our area, and this writer does a great job of putting us in the footsteps of the man in his journey to the Big Leagues. I felt like I was with him on his journey."

The Commercial also placed second for Best Ad Featuring Furniture, Furnishings, Appliances or Hardware, the ad for Classic Custom Cabinets was sold by Penny

Goebel; Best Feature Pages, for pages by LaBelle about Ryck Mescher, Dale Wiederholt and the Farley American Legion Post 2022 flag disposal ceremony; and Coverage of Business. Dyersville placed third for Best Front Page.

The Manchester Press finished second for Best Special Section Advertising, for the Your Family magazine; and third for Coverage of Court and Crime, for articles written by Dylan Kurt.

Managing Editor Beth Lutgen was pleased with her team's results. "It is outstanding that our three EIMG-North newspapers were recognized by the Iowa Newspaper Foundation. When we are working on our assignments each week we aren't thinking about awards, but we appreciate the recognition."

"All of our awards are a testament to our hardworking staff that goes above and beyond each week to inform and educate our readers."



Daniel Charland • Staff Photos
 Children took part in multiple crafts across the various Aquin classrooms at Family Night. From left, Maddox Kremer and Emily Conrad make rainbow snowflakes with fourth grade teacher Liz Lensen.

Aquin holds family night



From left, Jonathan Poole and Caleb Poole talk with Aquin Resource Teacher Lisa Merritt and School Counselor Lea Keuter at the greeting desk.

MANAGER: Keep system updated

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

easier and it's not like herding cats to get everyone on the same page."

Continuing Cascade Communication's history of perusing new technology to upgrade its services, Summerall plans to stay on top of new developments, even possibly new services that the company can provide.

"I think it's important for us to have a vision and a mission and I'm working with the board and staff to come

up with one everyone can drive for. As far as technology, it's ever-changing and we need to be on top of it if we don't want to be left behind and have someone come in and provide a better service than we do. I'm very much engaged in regulatory technology, staying on top of what's new and what's to come."

A meet-and-greet for Summerall will be held at Cascade Communications Thursday, Feb. 9 from 2-4:30 p.m. All are welcome.

Women, Land and Legacy listening posts spur discussion

BY JAKE BOURGEOIS
jake.bourgeois@wcinet.com

As they welcomed women to the Jones County Extension office in Monticello, Jan. 30, for a pair of listening posts, organizers for the new Women, Land and Legacy (WLL) joint chapter for Jones and Delaware counties were ecstatic about the response they got.

"Great participation," Alycia Willenbring, resource conservationist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said. "Everyone was really excited to be involved and have an opportunity for educational events targeted towards women."

WLL is a locally led non-profit group that spans the country as a resource for women in agriculture. WLL is a bottom-up USDA education and outreach program, which empowers women landowners and farmers to be agents of positive change in their communities through active participation, educational sessions and networking opportunities. It provides participants opportunities to inform agencies what their needs are and bridges partnerships between government, non-profit organizations, faith and community groups. Partners provide local, relevant information, speakers and resources to local women so they can make the best farming and conservation decisions for their land.

The goal for the chapter is to host at least a few events a year for women, with topics being curated based on what local members were interested in learning more about. The listening post provided a wide range of feedback. Interests included: general resources, life insurance and legacy planning, how to connect with legislators, pasture rotation and planning and workshops around conservation and soil health.

Attendees also expressed interest in not only learning about various techniques but also in being able to connect with someone who's actually put them into practice.

"Like a role model of sorts. Have it seen on the