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2022 Fall Home



Inside:
ELC's Parker Duitsman, Jasey Anderson qualify for Class 2A state cross country meet

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JURY SEATED FOR VANDERWILT TRIAL

Attorneys give opening arguments

By AMY H. PETERSON
STAFF WRITER

After a jury selection process that started at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday morning and continued until nearly 3 p.m. with intermittent breaks, 12 jurors and two alternates are seated

in the trial of Cejay Alexander VanderWilt. VanderWilt is accused of murder in the first degree in the Oct. 2, 2021 death of David McDowell. Four members of the McDowell family are attending the trial, along with VanderWilt's father, Doug VanderWilt of Spirit Lake.

In the opening statement for the prosecution, assistant

state attorney general Maureen Hughes said a group of people McDowell thought were his friends decided to settle their differences with a boxing match.

Hours later, however, the gloves were off, and Hughes said three young men "viciously and brutally" assaulted

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ELC Middle School honored as a 'high performing' school

By DAVID SWARTZ
MANAGING EDITOR

The Iowa Department of Education released its Iowa School Performance profiles and the Estherville Lincoln Central Middle School rose two places from "Acceptable" to "High Performing."

ELC Middle School Principal Brad Nelson said it's important to celebrate "a win like this. We're going to brainstorm some ways to celebrate our kids this week."

Last Friday, Nelson spoke to staff at the end of the school day to give them the good news.

"Each year every school in Iowa gets back their individual profile, which is like each school's individual report card," Nelson said. "The criteria they use are the Iowa Assessment results



ELC Middle School Principal Brad Nelson informs staff about the middle school's honor for improved learning last Friday.

Photo by David Swartz

Turn to ELC, Page 3A

Disclaimer: Area emergency personnel held a 'shooter' training exercise at Avera Holy Family Hospital on Wednesday, Oct. 19. All photos associated with this article were taken during the exercise and no one was harmed during this event.



BEING PREPARED

During a training exercise at Avera Holy Family on Oct. 19, Estherville officers Nick Helmich and Justin Hinrickson beckon to one of the 'survivors' of the event. Volunteers played their roles as victims as law enforcement sought to track down the 'shooters.' A safety officer removed the ammunition from all weapons used in the exercise prior to entering the hospital.

Photo by David Swartz

Emergency personnel conduct 'shooter' exercise at Avera

By DAVID SWARTZ
MANAGING EDITOR

It's a sad part of today's world that emergency personnel have to be concerned about an active shooter.

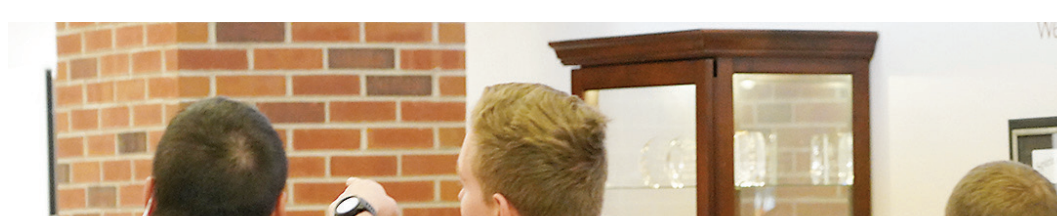
However, being prepared for such a scenario is part of that life of service.

On Wednesday, Oct. 19, area law enforcement and other emergency personnel conducted an "active shooter" training exercise at Avera Holy Family Hospital around 4 p.m.

Volunteers were used to play the two "shooters" and the victims, who were dressed up with a variety of wounds.

Emmet County Emergency Director Travis Sheridan, one of the coordinators of the event, noted the Estherville Lincoln Central School District conducts this type of drill annually. This was the first time the exercise has taken place at the hospital.

The exercise was coordinated by Sheridan, Linda Adams at Avera Holy Family, Emmet County Public Health Nurse Kari Batman, Estherville



One of the 'victims' points officers in the direction of one of the 'shooters' during the Oct. 19 drills.

Photo by David Swartz



Police Captain Nate Dunlavy and Emmet County Chief Deputy Justin Schultes.

Sheridan said Adams wanted to hold the exercise at the hospital to test its procedural protocols.

"As a whole what we did

went fantastic," Sheridan said. "We recognize the things that we need to work on. Communications in the hospital was spotty."

Sheridan said in a real life scenario, more emergency personnel would have responded

with ambulances and law enforcement coming in from all over.

Two Estherville police officers, Jacob Hinrickson and Nick Helmich, and Sheriff Mike Martens both responded

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Supervisors approve budget amendment

By MICHAEL TIDEMANN

The Emmet County Board of Supervisors approved a \$93,200 amendment to the current-year budget at its Tuesday, Oct. 25 meeting.

The amendment includes \$35,000 for Annex renovations, offset by ARPA funds, and \$58,200 for tornado sirens at Tuttle Lake campgrounds, which will be paid mainly through FEMA money. Auditor Amy Sathoff said she had received no written comments on the budget amendment.

Supervisor John Pluth moved and Supervisor Todd Glasnapp seconded the motion, and the board approved.

In other business, Board Chair Jeff Quastad said he had attended an Iowa Drainage District Association meeting at which members were encouraged to be consistent in writing their county pipeline ordinances. Quastad said he will share the county's final draft with the IDDA.

Supervisor Lisa Hansen asked about the county filing a motion to intervene on pipeline companies' construction permit applications. "We need to get that done," Hansen said. Pluth agreed the county should move forward on the matter.

Supervisor Tim Schumacher reported on Northwest Iowa Planning & Development Commission and mental-health meetings. He said Lexie Ruter from the Estherville Area Chamber of Commerce had indicated interest in serving on the NWIP&D Board.

Schumacher also reported on the completed RIDES building projects in Spirit Lake and possible upcoming projects in Spencer and Storm Lake.

Sathoff said the Estherville Public Library had raised its match, as requested by the board. Sathoff said early voting can also be done at the Courthouse 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The general election will be Nov. 8. Sathoff also said later in the meeting she will request a wage increase for precinct election officials.

Emmet County Engineer Walter Davis-Oeth requested and received approval for a building permit application by River Valley Telecommunications to provide Internet service to Peterson Point for security cameras.

Davis-Oeth also requested and received board approval for a gravel-crushing contract with Hagedorn Construction for \$336,000 plus fuel surcharge.

The board agreed to allow expansion of the Peterson Point parking area. As for a request by the Peterson Point Foundation to provide an LP tank, the board decided to wait to see if Pro Co-op would donate a tank since it would be selling the fuel. Upcoming

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The amazing journey of honeybees

Local honey purveyor shows distilling honey involves more than a comb

By AMY H. PETERSON
STAFF WRITER

Saturday afternoon, Toni Hazen opened her greenhouse, Meadow Secrets, to about a dozen people who came to learn more about honey.

"Honey is a super good medicine for us, isn't it?" Hazen asked the group.

In this age of home delivery, anything can arrive on one's doorstep, and each spring the bees arrive at Hazen's door in a wood box.

"Three pounds is about 10,000 honeybees, and inside is the queen's home," Hazen said.

The queen bee lives inside a container roughly the size of an adult's index finger. Hazen removes the wood cork and replaces it with a marshmallow. She releases the horde of bees and they start eating the marshmallow and release their queen.

"The reason we do that is because it takes a little time. The queen gives off this chemical that they can smell called pheromones and that will attract the honeybee workers to her. Once they accept her, they get to know her pheromones as they're eating that marshmallow and free her - they won't kill her. They'll see she's the queen and then they will start



Toni Hazen demonstrated the process of making honey undertaken by tens of thousands of bees in her hive each year.

Photo by Amy H. Peterson

Turn to BEES, Page 3A

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Toni Hazen demonstrates how to install a honeybee package to start one hive colony. For beekeeping classes and hands on training, reach out to the local Northwest Iowa Beekeepers Club on Facebook.

BEES, Continued from Page 1A

working," Hazen said.

The queen gets one big adventure in her life. She takes a maiden voyage to find a group of "boy bees" or drones, and flies in order to until she's mated with 10 to 20 of them. She flies back to her hive full of their contributions and fertilizes each egg, then starts laying 1,500 to 2,000 eggs each day for the rest of her life.

Starting with the 10,000 delivered bees each spring, Hazen says she has 60,000-80,000 by July.

The bees that hatch are first nurse bees, mostly just feeding in order to grow. Then they clean the hive and take care of the queen. There are foragers who go out in a two-mile radius to collect pollen to bring back to the nest.

Hazen handed out samples of bee pollen, considered a superfood that helps the human body build up immunity to flowers and other plants that cause en-

vironmental allergies.

"Each one of these pollen pebbles was in a pollen pocket on the bee's leg...What the beekeeper does is have a little spring trap that sits in the front entrance of the hive. The minute that honey bee flies in and steps his little legs on that screen, they fall, and that pollen pebble pops right out so we can collect it," Hazen said.

Over the summer, Hazen said she monitors the bees to make sure they're eating and filling their boxes with honey.

"I'll just keep stacking the boxes once they're filled with honey," Hazen said.

Is it difficult to go in and get surrounded with bees?

Hazen said she uses a smoker to mask her human pheromones and puts on a full body suit.

"It's a good idea to smoke yourself because that's one great way to mask your pheromones so the guard bees are

"It's a good idea to smoke yourself because that's one great way to mask your pheromones so the guard bees are not coming after you. Put your suit on, smoke yourself, and you should be pretty safe."

—Toni Hazen

not coming after you. Put your suit on, smoke yourself, and you should be pretty safe," Hazen said.

Hazen picked up a honeycomb and showed with a tool how she slides the tool down the front of the honeycomb to remove a beeswax layer, then places the honeycomb frame into an extractor—about a five-gallon barrel that looks somewhat like a large pressure cooker — and spins the rest of

the honey out of the opened honeycomb cells, filtering out the debris, wings, etc.

"I would bottle it from there straight fresh. I do warm it up slightly afterward to help with crystallization, but only to 120 degrees and no more than that and not for very long," Hazen said.

Commercial, mass producers of honey will cook the extracted honey until the enzymes that provide the medicinal

properties of honey are gone, Hazen said.

"That's why it's very important to find a local beekeeper so you can get the actual healthy benefits from it. There are plenty around here, too," Hazen said.

After extracting honey, Hazen winterizes the hive with tar paper and wood chips to help absorb moisture and keep the queen warm.

"The worker bees form a cluster and shiver to generate heat," Hazen said.

In the spring, the process starts again.

Hazen sells honey, beeswax soap and other items in the greenhouse when it's open and at Wilder Thymes Natural Foods in Spirit Lake.

ELC, Continued from Page 1A

from the previous year and the Conditions for Learning Survey which the kids take during the spring. The survey basically says how good of a school environment you have. The 'report card' is based on how you do on those."

Nelson said he had never experienced this type of growth in one year before.

"Last year, we were listed as 'acceptable' at 54 points," he said. "This year, we jumped up to a 60, skipping past 'Commendable' and jumping into 'High Performing.' This

designation of 'High Performing' is based on the scores from last school year, but it is really a reflection of our students' life long school experience beginning at the preschool level.

"This shows that the kids really had a fantastic year last year," he continued. "It reflects 100 percent on staff. It also tells that the kids gave great effort on the test and they're open to learning. Our staff is really doing a nice job of figuring out what the students need and doing a great job of

teaching their tier one curriculum. Our staff is also better attuned to the emotional needs of our students, and we continue to look for areas to better our connections to our students."

Nelson also credited fellow educators from the district's other buildings.

"It is nice to work in a district where we work together with Demoney and the high school," he said. "A lot of props to (elementary principal) Connie Humble and (high school principal) Brad Leonard and their staff as well."

COUNTY, Continued from Page 1A

Peterson Point fundraisers include Dec. 4 at Ingham Lake Bible Camp and Christmas on the Farm Dec. 10.

The board reviewed the final plat of the Oleson Farms Subdivision and set a public hearing for 9:30 a.m. Nov. 15. The board also set a public hearing for the pipeline ordinance for 9:30 a.m. Nov. 22.

Sheriff Mike Martens requested and received approval to spend \$17,000 for a third truck for his department. Martens already had budgeted for two other trucks. Martens also said he had two new deputy prospects. He said he is short one jail employee and needs more employees than that in communications.

Treasurer Brenda Moore requested and received approval to waive property tax interest for one individual who had sent a check that was not cashed before the Sept. 30 deadline.

The board also approved a manure management plan by Roger Petersen.

TRIAL, Continued from Page 1A

McDowell, taking his wallet.

Hughes outlined the state's case against VanderWilt, focusing on statements the defendant allegedly made and the fact that he legally owned a shotgun and was seen practicing with it on video taken at an outdoor shooting range. Hughes said VanderWilt put a plan into motion because he wanted vengeance against McDowell. Hughes listed others involved and who are witnesses to the events that led to McDowell's death and said the state's evidence against the defendant is overwhelming and that the only just verdict is guilty of murder in the first degree.

Attorneys for the state, county attorney Melanie Summers Bauler and assistant state attorney general Maureen Hughes,

submitted exhibits to the court that included lab reports from the Dept. of Criminal Investigation, overhead maps of the rural Estherville area where McDowell's body was found, a video found on McDowell's social media of the alleged Aug. 13, 2021 assault, Snapchat messages, excerpts from a jailhouse video, videos from around the Estherville area, including the Super 8, a local convenience store, and Wal-Mart. The state submitted a list of about 150 exhibits.

Defense attorney Michael Adams told jurors he agrees that this case is an ugly case. He thanked the jurors for their service and commended them for not taking the easy way out. "This case is sad, ugly and horrendous," Adams said, but

he told the jurors they were the judges of facts and urged them to keep an open mind and pay close attention to the evidence presented.

"Continue listening closely and use your common sense," Adams said, adding that he thought the evidence would prove VanderWilt is not guilty of first degree murder.

"It's up to you to see it," Adams said.

Adams reminded the jury that the defense has no burden to prove anything, and that reasonable doubt is the highest burden of proof in criminal justice.

The trial runs all this week through Friday and continues on Tuesday with no court on Monday as at least one witness will be called on Tuesday, Nov. 1.

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CORRECTION

In last week's edition of the Estherville News, we included a photo of the veterans present with Estherville mayor Kenny Billings and veterans affairs coordinator Case Ross to sign the Operation Greenlight Proclamation. The veterans were Marty Kane, Warren Evans and Carol Monson. The Estherville News regrets the error.

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