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Iowa Lakes Community College honors veterans

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ELC All-District Football selections announced

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### Holiday will delay paper delivery

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday next week, the Nov. 24 edition of the Estherville News will be delivered to homes on Friday, Nov. 25.

### Rosburg win poses challenge for county offices

By MICHAEL TIDEMANN

Winning the county treasurer's race may have been good news for Republican Lisa Rosburg, currently working in the Emmet County Auditor's office, but that may well have been some not-so-good news for the Emmet County supervisors at its Tuesday, Nov. 15 meeting.

Rosburg garnered 65.47 percent of the vote compared to 34.53 percent for Democrat Kati Rivera, currently working in the treasurer's office. Auditor's office employees Roxanne Budach, Rosburg and Heidi Goebel presented their concerns to the supervisors at the end of Tuesday's meeting.

Rosburg's multitasking, including the formidable job as county information technology director, will leave a gaping void in the auditor's office, the three employees said. Goebel said that in addition to Rosburg doing IT duties, she handles accounts payable and serves as drainage district clerk.

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### Iowa Lakes students hard-wired for success

Electrical students are in demand

By MICHAEL TIDEMANN

The Iowa Lakes Community College Board of Trustees at its Tuesday, Nov. 15 meeting learned how students are training for jobs in electrical technology.

Doug Zemler, director of the electrical technology program, said students can either earn a two-year associate of science degree or train as electrical apprentices. Zemler currently has 21 students in the degree program and nine apprentices. He also teaches an electrical maintenance course for electrician continuing education.

Zemler noted a high demand for electricians with most students coming from area schools. He introduced two students, Jonathan Ramirez and Luke Huber.

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Father Paul Kelly plays taps at the conclusion of the Veterans Day Program last Friday. Mary Gray holds the flag for the honor guard.

Photo by David Swartz

## Veterans honored on cold, windy day

Short program held at Veterans Park

By DAVID SWARTZ  
MANAGING EDITOR

With the thermometer at 25 degrees and wind gusts of up to 30 miles per hour coming out of the northwest, a small, but hardy band of community residents turned out for the annual Estherville Veterans Day ceremony on Friday.

Held annually at 11 a.m., the ceremony has been held out Veterans Park on the northeast corner of Central Avenue and 18th Street since the creation of the park.

An honor guard consisting of members of VFW Post 3388 and American Legion Post 91

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The crowd at the 2022 Veterans Day Ceremony at Veterans Park took shelter by this pine tree last Friday.

Photo by David Swartz

## SUPERVISORS APPROVE STATELINE SETTLEMENT

By MICHAEL TIDEMANN

The Emmet County Board of Supervisors at its Tuesday, Nov. 15 meeting approved a negotiated settlement with StateLine Cooperative regarding the Halfa feed mill – but left hanging StateLine's request for reimbursement of 2015-16 taxes paid on the mill.

The agreement pegs an assessed value of \$680,000 for overhead bins at the mill. However, the cooperative did not protest 2015-16 assess-

ments to the Emmet County Board of Review, the Iowa Property Assessment Appeal Board or the Iowa District Court for Emmet County.

Emmet County Assessor Barb Bohm said StateLine's attorney has threatened to sue the county if it did not receive an adjustment for the 2015-16 assessment years.

Supervisor Tim Schumacher said if the county agreed to StateLine's demands, it could open up similar situations.

Emmet County Attorney Melanie Summers-Bauler said if the matter did not go beyond district court, as StateLine requested, any decision would provide persuasive but not binding judicial authority on similar cases.

After further discussion, Schumacher moved and Supervisor Lisa Hansen seconded a motion to adopt Resolution 22-21, the settlement agreement as written.

## County approves dispatcher raise

By MICHAEL TIDEMANN

In an effort to attract new dispatchers to the county law center – and retain the current ones – the Emmet County Board of Supervisors at their Tuesday, Nov. 15 meeting agreed to Sheriff Mike Martens' request

to raise dispatcher base pay \$2.57 an hour.

Martens said area dispatchers on average receive \$20.05 an hour, compared to \$17.48 for Emmet County. He proposed raising the base pay to \$20.05 with a top tier of \$22.32 an hour.

Supervisor Lisa Hansen said raising hourly pay may be a way to help attract applicants and so reduce overtime.

Hansen moved and Supervisor Tim Schumacher seconded her motion to adopt Martens' wage increase request, and the board approved.

## P&R director hiring still in progress

Board discusses soccer fields too

By AMY H. PETERSON  
STAFF WRITER

The Estherville Parks & Rec Board welcomed new member Lais Nespole to the board. Nespole replaces Randy Nelson, who resigned due to conflicts that kept him from attending meetings. Nespole, who's originally from Brazil and speaks Portuguese, Spanish and English, is human resources director at Redwood Farms in Estherville. Nespole said she's lived in Estherville for six years and is a supporter of Estherville joining league soccer with area teams from Spencer, Jackson and Fairmont among others.

City administrator Penny Clayton walked the board members through the budget for the new city aquatic center. As of Oct. 31, about 82% of the pool budget has been spent.

"This is the first year of operating the new pool; we weren't sure how it was all going to



On Monday, the Estherville Parks and Recreation Department briefly talked about league soccer coming to Estherville.

shake out financially, and we don't do a lot financially with the pool over the winter months," Clayton said.

The city budget year runs July 1-June 30. While this year the pool opened in mid-June,

it's anticipated that it may open Memorial Day weekend in future years, leaving one month of use in the current fiscal year.

"This is not a horrible thing that we're at 82% already, but

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# Mining for cryptocurrency affects rural electric power

Iowa Lakes Electric Coop shares power source Cornbelt Electric Power with Grundy Center, site of a major Bitcoin mining operation

By AMY H. PETERSON  
STAFF WRITER

It doesn't seem possible that currency can be created from computers performing mathematical equations, but that's the nugget of what cryptocurrency is. Walls of computers and servers – over 2,000 inside a white Quonset hut in Grundy Center, Iowa – pop and whirl throughout the day and night to generate a computer file that translates to a form of currency that is traded in the volatile market of cryptocurrency. Bitcoin (BTC) is the most popular form, but Ethereum (ETH), Tether (USDT), and Binance Coin (BNB) have millions of users and each has a

market cap of over \$50 billion with Bitcoin way ahead of the pack with a current market cap of \$389.8 billion.

On U.S. Senator Joni Ernst's fall visit to Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, she said the financial impact of cryptocurrency and how the federal government should regulate it are topics she and Senator Charles Grassley are discussing in meetings of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Tim McCollough, President of Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, said, "We have seen this year alone a requirement of up to 60 megawatts in new loads in northwest Iowa all related to crypto mining. [Iowa Lakes

Electric Cooperative] has a requirement to serve new members regardless of industry. [Crypto's] energy intensity is large."

The cryptocurrency mining operation in Grundy Center is part of The Mining Store out of Texas. J.P. Baric is CEO and he said the location of the mining center is influenced by the low price of electricity in Iowa. The Grundy Center location is the flagship location for The Mining Store. Plans are in the works to open an additional site of approximately 4 MW about 20 minutes away from the first one, which opened in 2018. Long range plans call

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On Dec. 22, 2021, The Mining Store shut down most of its power at its cryptocurrency mining center located in Grundy Center, Iowa. CEO J.P. Baric said, "We understand with extremely cold temperatures, the grid will demand more supply and we are committed to responsible use of energy in these types of situations. We are capable of cutting our load in under 30 minutes and we will scale down our load in its entirety if needed."

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News

Supervisors approve election canvass

By MICHAEL TIDEMANN

The Emmet County Board of Supervisors at its Tuesday, Nov. 15 meeting approved the canvass of the Nov. 8 election.

Assistant Auditor Roxanne Budach presented the election results, which showed a 50.89 percent voter turnout, or 3,432 ballots cast out of 6,744 registered voters.

Incumbent Governor Kim Reynolds and Lieutenant Governor Adam Gregg received 74.33 percent of the vote, compared to Democrat Dieder DeJeans and her running mate Eric Van Lancker with 23.64 percent.

Emmet County voters' support for Republican candidates also exceeded the statewide trend across the board, with incumbent Republican Secretary of State Paul Pate receiving 73.13 percent compared to 26.84 percent for Democrat Joel Miller.

Emmet Township trustee; Phyllis Martens, Emmet Township clerk; Bryon Nelsen, Iowa Lake Township trustee; Deb Tietje, Iowa Lake Township clerk; Dennis Hoffman, Lincoln Township trustee; and Jen Hoffman, Lincoln Township clerk.

John Norwood; and Republican Brenna Bird ousting longtime Democrat Attorney General Tom Miller with 65.69 percent of the vote for Bird compared to 34.31 percent for Miller.

In the District races, Republican Dave Rowley swept the field with no challenger at 98.71 percent of the vote.

Emmet County voters decided they wanted to retain their supervisors, with Republican John Pluth receiving 53.45 percent and Jeff Quastad, an independent, getting 45.78 percent.

Supervisors appointed Joe Crouch to fill a vacancy for the soil and water district commissioner.

Other township results included Jeff Felkey, Armstrong Grove trustee; Jennifer Welbig, Armstrong Grove clerk; Jerry Pluth, Center Township trustee; John E. Klingbeil, Center Township clerk; Mark Guge,

Emmet Township trustee; Phyllis Martens, Emmet Township clerk; Bryon Nelsen, Iowa Lake Township trustee; Deb Tietje, Iowa Lake Township clerk; Dennis Hoffman, Lincoln Township trustee; and Jen Hoffman, Lincoln Township clerk.

More than 75 percent of county voters decided to retain judges, and 82.09 percent voted in favor of Constitutional Amendment 1, regarding the right to bear arms.

Goebel suggested outsourcing Rosburg's current IT duties and redirecting the accounts payable and drainage clerk duties to other employees.

A huge problem, though, is that IT experts don't come cheap, especially in today's environment plagued with myriad cybersecurity issues.

Supervisor John Pluth agreed IT should be a separate position.

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"You actually feel like somebody cares what you're feeling," said Huber who plans to continue with his current employer after graduation and eventually start his own company.

Ramirez is considering either going on for an electrical engineering degree or starting his own business.

"It's been pretty good," Ziemler said of job prospects for graduates. "I've never had anybody not get a job. There's high demand everywhere."

And that demand is only likely to continue. Ziemler said the average age of Iowa electricians is in their 50s.

In other business, the trustees heard a report from Beth Elman, executive director of marketing, on upcoming college activities,

including the Madrigal Feast Dec. 2-3.

Dan Lutat, executive director of foundation and governmental affairs, requested and received approval for the donation of \$10,000 in medical equipment from Palo Alto County Hospital for the nursing program.

Jolene Rogers, executive director of community relations, requested and received approval for a 260E New Jobs preliminary agreement for 20 new jobs in Kossuth County.

Jeff Soper, chief financial officer, presented monthly bills and the financial report for board approval.

The board also heard report from Iowa Lakes President Scott Stokes and Trustees Bob Jennings and Jane Nolan Goeken.

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also attended. Pastor Doug Burton of First Christian Church opened the ceremony.

"I stand here on a day like today, and having seen spring three days ago, and think, 'what in the world happened?'" he said. "But I also

think about any war-time experience, where that soldier had to put up with that same weather, only he didn't get to run away in 10 minutes. He had to stay until he was taken off the line. Appreciate the fact that soldiers stayed where they were supposed to and

kept the line." Pastor Cole McCormick of Trinity Lutheran Church gave the message.

McCormick shared words from Joshua Chapter 1 verse 9: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened,

and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Then he said it was an honor to gather around this "Gold Star Monument" and honor veterans.

McCormick also talked about the call that the veterans

and their families answered and the sacrifices they made.

"Veterans, we honor you today and you remain in our prayers," he said.

Pastor Tim Johnson of Estherville Lutheran Church wrapped up the ceremony with a prayer.

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in. "In my opinion, we need an IT person," said Emmet County Assessor Barb Bohm.

Supervisors handled a number of other matters at Tuesday's meeting, including:

- Learned from Supervisor Todd Glasnapp that Emmet County has gone 427 days without a lost-time accident.
Approved a bridge inspection contract with Kirkham Michael and purchase of a 2022 Chevy Silverado for secondary roads for \$56,800.

Approved the final plat of Oleson Farms subdivision.

- Had a request from Cindy Voss of RIDES for the county's continued yearly support of \$5,000. The board will take up the matter during budget planning.

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for additional sites in eastern Iowa: one in Black Hawk County and three in Tama County.

The low price of electricity from rural cooperatives could bring cryptocurrency mining operations to Emmet County or the surrounding counties. The Mining Store currently pays \$0.04 per kilowatt hour to Grundy County Electric Coop compared to Iowa's average of about \$0.065. GCEC is supplied by Cornbelt Power. Corn Belt Power Cooperative serves 41 area counties. Cornbelt also supplies Iowa Lake Electric Cooperative. ILEC supplies electricity to the city of Estherville, which maintains the city's lines and provides power to city customers.

including hot summer days and what Anderson said are peak residential usage times throughout a typical day: 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

McCullough of ILEC has said there are numerous factors contributing to the finite amount of energy the cooperative's facilities can produce. From supply chain issues delaying new infrastructure to price volatility in Europe having a greater part due to the globalization of energy supply to rapid inflation - up to 30% year over year - in energy costs, simply turning to more renewables or even more natural gas, coal-fired or petroleum sources is easier suggested than executed.

"Growth of the load relating to bitcoin mining is outpacing the capacity to produce electricity and adding demands to the system. More demands without more generation will put us into a crisis," McCullough said.

Grundy County's cooperative electricity sales to commercial and industrial customers grew from 16.5 million kWh in

2018 to 36.9 million kWh in 2020, largely due to the mining store.

Baric said Mining Store gives more than it takes, employing a growing team of employees who patronize local businesses and live in the area, paying taxes. He has said the company could do better, offering tours to local students and groups, and getting into the community.

At least one community has staked its future on bitcoin mining. Rockdale, Texas, which has a population around the same size as Estherville, was home to a massive aluminum smelting operation. In a 1952 edition of "Saturday Evening Post," Rockdale was proclaimed to be "The Town Where it Rains Money." Alcoa, however, began shutting down its operations in Rockdale in

2008, citing problems with the power supply and market conditions. By 2014 it was all gone. Today it's trying to reverse its fortunes by becoming location to one of the world's largest bitcoin computing mines.

And in North Carolina, a small company is trying to convert old tires into energy commodities that can be used for power. Using thermal demanufacturing, machines reverse engineer tires then mix the product into oil, synthetic gas, carbon char and steel. A company in Franklinton, North Carolina hopes to use most of the energy created from the process to power a data center to mine various cryptocurrencies 24/7.

Setting up walls of computers to mine data uses a lot of electric power and generates a lot

of heat. The high temperatures and humidity in Texas and North Carolina have caused issues with sustaining the operation of the mining computers. Anderson said even at the Grundy Center facility the hallways formed by the specialized open shelving that holds the computers and servers can reach 95 degrees F in the winter. Workers at the site sometimes go into the area to warm up. Iowa and other northern states with low utility rates could attract other companies to set up shop.

The Estherville News will continue to cover stories about energy in the community. If you work with cryptocurrencies, we would like to hear from you.

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utilities are definitely running quite a bit higher than I anticipated when we put this budget together. So next budget will look a lot different," Clayton said.

The board also reviewed two layouts for the renovation of what was the bathhouse for the former pool site. Currently the ninja park and a sand feature are located on the site of the old pool. The bathhouse, which was built in 1985, is on deck to be renovated into a gathering area with restrooms. There will be a shower in the outside facing restroom which will allow campers, kayakers, and hikers to hop into the shower after being in or near the river, and inside-facing restrooms for people inside the event shelter to use. The budget for the shelter house for this year's budget is

estimated to be \$118,000.

The board also discussed soccer fields. The current soccer fields south of the Emmet County Animal Shelter are in rough shape due to gopher holes, rough ground, and the question of whether the space is large enough for two soccer fields. The space, even if refurbished, would have to be relinquished each year by Aug. 1 due to football practice beginning at Estherville Lincoln Central Schools.

"We will be getting new aerial photos in the spring, so that would give me a better idea of how much room we have there. To me, it seems like there's a lot of room but soccer fields are large, so I don't know. And then I don't know if there's a third division, and then of course there's do you get your friends and family there to watch, too," Clayton said.

Other than the current space, there was no alternate space in Estherville that could be explored for regulation soccer fields. Nespole said at last week's city council meeting that players who work at Redwood Farms are interested in playing in the competitive league and bridging the gap between the current Estherville soccer program, that's capped at the fourth grade, and a new one that would bring older kids into the game.

Nespole said youth who want to play soccer travel to Spencer and Fairmont's programs currently.

Board chair Ann Ingvall said, "There's been some people with kids that are older that want soccer to happen within the school system."

Clayton said she would check with the school district to see if there is a way to get started on a cooperative program.

In other business, board member Laurel Hash, reading the maintenance update for Roger Hash, parks maintenance supervisor, said a local youth group had been helpful with the maintenance of Oak Hill Cemetery.

"Trinity church youth group came and helped clean one of the hills at Oak Hill Cemetery. They raked it," Hash said.

The city has the expense of tree removal at Oak Hill Cemetery with bids received for the work. The maintenance crew also covered graffiti under the Fourth Street Bridge and performed a few items of maintenance at Veterans Park prior to last Friday's Veterans Day celebration.

The next meeting of the Estherville Parks & Rec board will be Monday, December 12 at 5:30 p.m. in the council chambers of city hall.

Christmas Tea & Auction Nov. 19 at 5:30PM (Doors open at 5PM) Dolliver United Methodist Church

STOP THE CO2 PIPELINES COMMUNITY MEETING Thursday, December 1 @ 6:00 PM Iowa Lakes Community College Auditorium

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HOLIDAY BAZAAR Saturday, November 19th 8:30 - 11:00 am Trinity Lutheran Church 721 18th Ave. N., Estherville

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