

WASHINGTON COUNTY TO CROWN NEW QUEEN



Greta Sieren.



Gwen Piette.



Halle Hazelett.

RACHEL FISHBACK PHOTOGRAPHY



Grace Conway.



Kerra Longbine.



Taylor Bartholomew.



Zoey Dennler.

The Washington County Fair is quickly approaching, and one of the longest-running traditions is the crowning of the Washington County Fair Queen. This year, seven high school girls from around the county will be competing for the title of 2023 Washington County Fair Queen.

The contest starts off fair week on Sunday, July 16 as the contestants experience a day of interviews followed by a pageant that evening at 7 p.m. Joining the contestants on stage this year as the master of ceremonies will be Miss Iowa 2023, Alysa Goethe and the 2022 Washington County Fair Queen, Katie Leichty.

This year's contestants vying for the crown and title are: Taylor Bartholomew the daughter of Scott and Michelle Bartholomew of Washington, Grace Conway, the daughter of Sean and Barb Conway of Wellman, Zoey Dennler, the daughter of Darren and Karen Dennler of Crawfordsville, Halle Hazelett, the daughter of Joel and Angela Hazelett of Ainsworth, Kerra Longbine, daughter of Jason and Rachel Longbine of Ainsworth, Gwen Piette, daughter of Owen and Emily Piette of Ainsworth, and Greta Sieren, daughter of Jason and Katherine Sieren of Keota.



CHERYL ALLEN/THE NEWS

Bud's Custom Meats began by butchering livestock for local farmers, a service it still provides.

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the stuff that we do now." "We had three employees back then, and now I've got 10 employees," he continues. "Of course, we do three times the work that he did, but I have three times the employees too. We start at six o'clock in the morning and we go hard until about two o'clock. Then we just kind of clean up and then take care of customers until five o'clock."

At one point, that high productivity literally exploded the butcher shop's 200-amp electrical meter. The power company upgraded them to the largest meter they had, but "I was pushing that right to the limit," Havel says.

The solution was the solar panels you see flanking the shop. Havel took advantage of the government incentives offered at the time, installed the panels, and found himself with all the power he needed. The power he generates feeds the grid and turns his meter backwards, dropping his electrical bill by a third each month.

Changing government regulations in the meat processing industry are also a constant challenge the business faces.

"This business is changing all the time, [there are] new regulations all the time," Havel says. "We used to have zero jerky regulations when we first started doing it. Now it's completely different."

Today, variables such as water activity and humidity levels, moisture and protein content, are all regulated and controlled. Bud's Custom Meats keeps up, but it takes time and attention.

Changing market preferences have also affected the business. When Havel's dad owned the business, hides left over from butchered animals could be sold for a profit and turned into leather. Today that is no longer the case, as consumers would rather buy goods made of synthetic materials.

"We used to get paid \$50 [a hide] back when my dad was butcher," Havel says. "Now I pay them \$2000 a month to take the stuff away."

Growing, changing, and being challenged are parts of business and of life, and those aspects of running Bud's Custom Meats haven't detracted from Havel's love of what he does. He embraces his calling.

His favorite part of his work is "the customers that come in. We like to joke around in here with the customers, and people come back," Havel says. He

enjoys watching his counter people recall what customers usually buy and help them get what they came in for, and he likes finding out where people come from and getting to know them when he has the opportunity.

He also enjoys the hands-on aspects of his work; these days, taking care of the jerky and stuffing the beef sticks suit him best. "The cutting up the meat and the butchering part, that's just getting too heavy for me now," he says.

As he has just entered his 60's, Havel isn't ready to retire, but he is thinking about slowing down.

"This is a job where there's constantly coolers and freezers to watch all the time," he says. "I didn't get to travel near as much as what I wanted to, and I want to do some traveling before I get to where I can't do anything anymore."

"I suppose my ideal life now would almost be, work two months, take a two-week vacation," he says. "That way we could travel to the places we haven't seen and then come back."

To keep a business running for nearly 40 years is no easy feat. 80% of American businesses don't last 20 years, never mind twice as long. How has Havel managed to pull that off?

"Probably my hard work and dedication to the business," he says. "I'm here 13 hours a day. When my dad had it, I was probably here 10-12 hours a day. When I first took over, I didn't go home until all the work was done."

"It just takes a lot of hard work," he reiterates. "You've got to put in the hours."

Does it feel worth it? "Oh, yeah. Real worth it," he says. "It's satisfying to know that so many people are pleased with the products that you do."

If it's been a while since you visited, stop by Bud's Custom Meats at 3027 IA-22 in Riverside. You'll find a shop filled with far more than jerky and beef sticks; the butcher stocks a large variety of game fish and seafood, as well as exotic meats such as elk, rabbit, frog legs, and occasionally turtle. For those ready to fire up the grill, you'll find no shortage of steaks, burgers and hot dogs.

When Havel or his staff hand you that red-lettered bag filled with meat for meals or snacks, just read the text on it and you'll know what to say.

Thank you.

City signs contracts for Smith Creek Bridge

BY JOHN BUTTERS
The News

WELLMAN

Wellman city council members approved supplemental agreements with engineering firm Calhoun-Burns Associates, Inc. for final plans and drawings of the planned 9th Avenue/Ginkgo Avenue Bridge replacement project.

The agreements are part of a contract that council members approved in March of 2022 with the firm for professional engineering services and design work on the project. The Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) has plans to replace the

bridge over Smith Creek with in the next few years.

The estimated cost of the replacement project is \$1.4 to \$1.5 million, with the city responsible for an estimated \$400,000 in engineering and design costs. The state will pay up to \$1 million of the construction costs and retains the right of final approval of both the design and engineering proposals. The Washington County Engineering Department will assist Wellman with the planning, which will reduce its overall expense.

In a related action, the city approved a contract with JCG

Land Services of Nevada, Iowa to assist it in acquiring the right-of-way needed for the bridge project. The firm provides services for utility companies and public agencies in the acquisition of private property for public use.

In other business, the city council approved a contract with Gronewold, Bell, Khynn & Co. for the city's 2023 fiscal year audit. It also approved the purchase of a mower and the addition of a snowplow for one of the city's trucks.

A request to keep chickens at 1114 7th Avenue was granted.

COLLEGE HONOR

Des Moines Area Community College President Rob Denson recently released the names of students eligible for the Spring Semester President's List, including Jacob Foubert, Wellman.

The University of Wisconsin-Platteville announced its Chancellor's List, honoring those with perfect 4.0 grade-point averages for the spring 2023 semester, including Thaddeus Shetter, Electrical Engineering, of Wellman.

COLLEGE GRADUATES

Nearly 1,800 students graduated from the Spring Semester from Des Moines Area Community College's Ankeny, Boone, Carroll, Newton, Urban and West Campuses, including Jacob Foubert of Wellman (Civil Engineering Technology).

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RIVERSIDE RESIDENT RECEIVES GOVERNOR'S VOLUNTEER AWARD

The Governor's Volunteer Awards, now in its 39th year, provides an easy way for Iowa non-profits, charitable organizations, and government entities to honor their volunteers with a prestigious, state-level award.

This year, more than 600 awards are being presented by Governor Kim Reynolds and Lt. Governor Adam Gregg during five regional ceremonies across Iowa. It is estimated that more than 150 communities in Iowa were served by this year's honorees.

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Tony "Norm" Kron BENEFIT!

Saturday, Aug. 19
Riverside VFW Post 6414

- 10 a.m. Bags Tournament Sign Up
- 11 a.m. Bags Tournament
- 1 p.m. Live Music & Free-Will Donation Meal
- 3 p.m. Live Auction



Tony's life, as he once knew it, was changed forever on Feb 5 when his left leg was amputated below the knee. After several weeks, in both the hospital and a physical rehab facility, he was diagnosed with a rare kidney disease leaving him with kidney failure. He is now taking kidney dialysis three days, every week, in Muscatine. With the help from his son Emmitt, members of his family and friends, and with the use of a wheelchair, he is living independently in his own home. In several months he will be fitted for a prosthetic. At this time his future is unknown.

For information, contact one of the following:
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Bob Gall: 319-548-1999 (Bags Coordinator)
Linsey Gerot: 319-430-5271
Brian Michel: 319-530-0798

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Brett Walsh: 319-930-2131
Trisha Walsh: 319-330-4941
Jake Zahradnek: 319-936-7389
Angie Zook: 319-631-2978



CHERYL ALLEN/THE NEWS

Bud's Custom Meats makes about 1000 pounds of pork burgers a week, their biggest patty seller.