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Rock Rapids Care Center closes doors temporarily?

Residents moved to Hull nursing home

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BY JUSTIN RUST JRUST@NWESTIOWA.COM

SHELDON-While Rock Rapids Care Center's facility sits empty, the company that manages the longtime nursing home insists the closure is only tempo-

Arboreta Healthcare on Friday, Feb. 3, moved the residents of the Rock Rapids' facility to Pleasant Acres Care Center in Hull, which it also manages.

But Rock Rapids Care Center administrator Chris Rickard said the facility is not closed for good despite moving all its residents out of the building along Highway 75 on the south side of Rock

Rickard said the temporary closure is due to a staffing shortage at Rock Rapids Care Center.

This is not a closure but a transfer of residents," he said. When Rock Rapids Care Center will reopen has not yet been determined. We will evaluate our staffing needs to determine when the timing is right and safest for our residents.

Rickard added the decision was "not taken lightly."

"We know that our residents and families are affected," he said. "We are communicating with these families to ensure they understand the need to keep their loved ones safe and

See CLOSURE on page A9



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Rock Rapids Care Center sits empty after moving its residents to Pleasant Acres Care Center in Hull Feb. 3. Rock Rapids Care Center administrator Chris Rickard said it is a temporary closure until staffing shortage issues can be figured out. Photo by Sheila Rust



Licensed mental health counselor and play therapist Katie Vander Zwaag demonstrates play therapy with the help of her daughter, Rian, 4, at Creative Living Center. Photo submitted

Play therapy used to assist children

'Their language is play,' therapist says

BY ALEISA SCHAT

ROCK VALLEY-When licensed mental health counselor and play therapist Katie Vander Zwaag works with children in her practice, she doesn't use words to draw out their thoughts and feelings. She uses the language of play.

"As adults, we are so good at talking about our feelings," Vander Zwaag said. "We sit down with a friend, or we go to therapy and we talk out our issues, and through talking them out, usually some clarity

Children, however, are at an earlier stage of development, and their brains work differently. Instead of using language, children largely make sense of their experience through imaginative play.

"Their language is play, so they want to play out - they want to act out - their feel-

2023 NORTH STAR

ings and their problems," Vander Zwaag said. "What we do in play therapy is we give kids a space to do that."

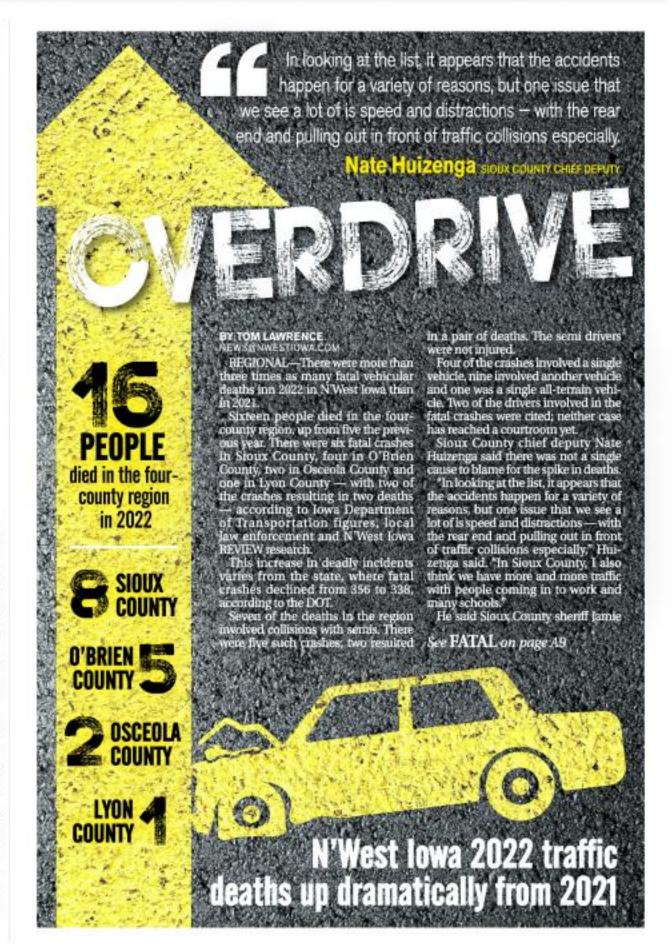
Vander Zwaag, a 33-year-old Rock Valley native, practices at Creative Living Center, a counseling and mental health agency based in Rock Valley. She has a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling from the University of South Dakota in Vermillion and she is a registered play therapist.

Thirty-nine-year-old Erica Wassenaar is another registered play therapist at Creative Living Center, which also has locations in Hawarden, Orange City, Rock Rapids, Sheldon and Sioux Center.

Wassenaar said forms of psychotherapy, or "talk therapy," that are appropriate for adults don't work with chil-

"Kids' brains are just not wired yet for talk therapy," Wassenaar said. "When your

See THERAPY on A8







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NEWS

Staff shortage given as reason for facility close

CLOSURE

Continued from page A1 in good care and apologize for the inconvenience that this may cause during this time."

Rickard said staffing will continue to be evaluated but until the issue can be fixed at the Rock Rapids facility, the building will remain closed and empty.

"Beyond continuing to provide great care for our residents, our ongoing focus is our employees," Rickard said. "They are the heart and soul of our facilities. We continue to make a conscious effort to enhance wages and benefits and to offer retention plans to attract and keep great employees. If you are called to serve in the health-care industry, consider a career in long-term

The Rock Rapids Care Center housed 16 residents and can hold up to 44 people. Families were called and notified the week of the resident transfer, Rickard said, but no response was given on how many of the 16 residents were moved to the Hull facility.

"They had the choice to allow their loved ones to transfer to Pleasant Acres or we would provide assistance to move their loved ones elsewhere," Rickard said. "We developed a safe plan for transfer that has been approved by the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals."

The Rock Rapids Care Center opened in 1977 and the nursing home was formerly known as Rock Rapids Health Centre before Arboreta took over management of the facility in June 2021.

Arboreta Healthcare, a forprofit organization, operates out of Sarasota, FL.

The residents were not the only ones transferred to Pleasant Acres.

"The facility's current staff will transition with residents to Pleasant Acres, allowing them to have some familiar faces as they were welcomed into their new living environment," Rickard said, Pleasant Acres has the ability to hold more residents than Rock Rapids Care Center with a capacity of 60, but there were only 12 people living there before the Rock Rapids residents moved in.

The Rock Rapids facility has been fined three times in the past three years, according to seniorcare.com, none of those during the period Arboreta has been managing the nursing home.

The last one fine was \$216,869 in January 2021, which was for reasons including the immediate jeopardy of many residents that included quality of life and care deficiencies, pharmacy service deficiencies and infection control deficiencies.

The facility was fined \$10,168 in August of 2020 for a few complaints centering around quality of life and care deficiencies and fined \$9,750 in June of 2022 for infection control deficiencies.

All three of the fines were given during the coronavirus pandemic.



Arboreta Healthcare's sign for Rock Rapids Care Center still sits in front of the building even though it moved the residents to Pleasant Acres Care Center in Hull on Feb. 3. Rock Rapids Care Center administrator Chris Rickard said the closure is only temporary. Photo by Sheila Rust

"The lingering effects of the COVID pandemic combined with scarcity of health-care staff in rural communities have been the chief contributors to many facilities in our industry experiencing the same challenges," Rickard said.

While Rickard was adamant the Rock Rapids Care Center closure is only a temporary one, it continues a trend of nursing home shutting their doors around the state. At the end of January, nursing homes in Fort Dodge, Humboldt, Maquoketa and Win-

terset announced they would be closing. Fifteen nursing homes closed in Iowa in 2022 and 13 were in rural areas.

Rock Rapids has one other nursing home, Lyon Specialty Care, and an assisted living facility, Premier Estates, which is also managed by Arboreta.

Sixteen people die in area traffic crashes in 2022

FATAL

Continued from page A1

Van Voorst released a report showing the numbers of citations and stops in the county in 2022 were some of the highest on record.

Huizenga said public education is one way to reduce crashes, injuries and deaths.

"We also worked with the state patrol on a couple of saturation patrols last year, which we hope to continue," he said.

"We also continue to use our Nixle alert system to give people information on road conditions and hazards to be aware of and the locations. We hope these are received before people drive and make them aware of safety issues, and the Nixles reminds folks when they see an accident come across their phones to drive defensively and eliminate distractions"

Fatal incidents

Here is a list of the fatal accidents in

■ Jan. 19: Storm Perry, 30, of Paullina, died after he lost control of his 2017 Dodge Journey while driving north on Highway 59 (Silver Avenue) about three miles northeast of Paullina, according to the O'Brien County Sheriff's Office.

The SUV entered the east ditch before striking the embankment of 450th Street, causing it to go airborne. The vehicle landed and rolled before coming to rest on its top in the yard of 4490 Silver Ave.

Perry, who was not wearing a seat belt, was pronounced dead at the scene.

■ Feb. 14: Gilbert Chavez of Montebello, CA, was southbound on the Highway 60 expressway about a mile north of Ashton on Feb. 14 when his 1999 Chevrolet Tahoe left the roadway, according to the Osceola County Sheriff's Office.

Chavez, 41, overcorrected the vehicle, causing it to roll several times before coming to rest upside down in the northbound lane. He was ejected from the vehicle. Chavez, who was not wearing a seat belt, died on Feb. 17 at Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls, SD, after his family disconnected life support.

A passenger in the vehicle, 32-yearold Dezirae Ann Barela, also of Montebello, was injured and transferred to Osceola Regional Health Center in Sibley.

■ Feb. 20: David Puhrmann, 41, of Paullina, was injured when he left a pickup he was a passenger in as it drove down Broadway Street in Paullina. It is unclear if Puhrmann fell or jumped. He was injured but delayed getting medical attention before being taken to Orange City Area Health Center.

Puhrmann was transferred to Sanford USD Medical Center in Sioux Falls, where he died on Feb. 24.

■ March 5: Chet Reinking, 49, of Ireton, was killed in a four-wheeler accident in Ireton. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

■ March 28: Curtis Brownmiller, 70, of Spencer, was seriously injured while driving west on Highway 18 about a mile east of Hull when his 2017 Nissan Versa struck the rear of 1998 International tanker truck driven by 42-year-old Jeffrey Robert Verhoef of rural Hull, according to the lowa State Patrol.

Verhoef had been waiting for traffic at the Indian Avenue intersection and had started to turn south when his truck was struck. Brownmiller's car came to rest in a field northwest of the intersection.

Brownmiller, who was wearing a seat belt, was transported to Sioux Center Health, where he died from his injuries. Verhoef was not cited.

■ March 29: Noah Salentiny, 22, of Sioux Falls, was eastbound on 290th Street, two miles north of Hull, when the 2006 Chevrolet Equinox he was driving collided with a westbound 2014 Ford Explorer driven by Jillian Meyer, 31, of Boyden.

Salentiny was turning left toward a residential driveway when the vehicles collided. His Equinox entered the north ditch and rolled.

Salentiny, who was not wearing a seat belt, was transported to Hegg Health Center in Rock Valley, where he died from his injuries. Meyer suffered minor injuries.

■ April 27: Two people were killed in a crash impacting three vehicles two miles northwest of Hull.

Suzanne Barron, 56, of Sioux City, was traveling west on 310th Street when she failed to stop for the stop sign at the intersection of highways 75 and 18, according to the Iowa State Patrol. Her 2017 Dodge Caravan was struck by a southbound 2019 Freightliner M2 semi and trailer driven by 46-year-old Jamie Hueschen of Sioux City. Both vehicles ended up in the southwest ditch.

Barron was airlifted to Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls, where she died.

Rene Ross II, 45, of Hull, a passenger in the Barron vehicle, was transported to Sioux Center Health, where he died. Barron and Ross were wearing seat belts.

Hueschen was transported to Sioux Center Health for treatment of minor injuries and released.

A third vehicle, an eastbound 2009 Chevrolet Silverado driven by 31-year-old Ethan Kooima of Hull, was stopped on 310th Street at the intersection, waiting to turn south. Kooima was not injured but his pickup was slightly damaged by flying debris from the collision of the

other two vehicles.

■ May 12: Carol Fliear, 71, Matlock, was eastbound in a 2016 Ford Taurus on Highway 9 near Indian Avenue just west of Rock Rapids when her vehicle crossed the centerline and collided head-on with a 2007 Freightliner semi driven by Gregory Krieger, 64, of Sibley.

Fliear was transported to Avera Rock Rapids, where she was pronounced dead. Krieger declined medical treatment.

■ Aug. 3: Noah Monroe, 15, Ashton, was killed after the 2018 Honda moped he riding, which was westbound on 280th Street, four miles north of Sheldon, collided in an intersection with a southbound 2016 Hyundai driven by Bonnie Allison, 71, of Spencer, according to the Iowa State Patrol.

Monroe was transported to Sanford Sheldon Medical Center with what the trooper called "life-threatening injuries" and died later in the day. Allison was not injured nor was she cited.

■ Aug. 6: Mark Kirkholm, 66, of Storm Lake, died at the scene of a two-vehicle at the intersection of Taft Avenue and 390th Street two miles east of Primghar. His 2020 Ford Escape, which was headed west, was struck by a northbound 2000 Chevrolet pickup driven by Laurie Ann Banks, 56, of Sutherland, according to the Iowa State Patrol. Kirkholm, a former Storm Lake police detective, was not wearing a seat belt and was partially ejected as his vehicle went into a ditch and rolled. Banks, who failed to stop at a stop

sign, was transported to MercyOne Primghar Medical Center with undisclosed injuries. She was cited on Feb. 8 for failure to obey a stop sign and yield the right of way. Banks had been charged with driv-

Banks had been charged with driving without registration in 2013 and speeding in 2021 and pleaded guilty in both cases.

■ Sept. 7: George Klein, 84, of Sheldon, was killed on the Highway 60 expressway near 250th Street four miles south of Ashton when his northbound Silver King tractor was struck from behind by a 2023 International semi pulling an oversize load driven by Tyler Fisk, 22, of Holcombe, WI, according to the Iowa State Patrol.

Fisk was charged in Osceola County on Dec. 23 for failure to stop in assured clear distance and with failure to reduce speed to a reasonable and proper rate. No hearings have been scheduled and the cases remain open.

■ Sept. 18: Reyes Felipe Lopez Lopez, 25, of Rock Valley, was killed in a one-vehicle crash on 390th Street about two miles west of Sioux Center.

Lopez Lopez was westbound in a Mercury Mariner SUV when he left the road near the intersection with Garfield Avenue. The SUV vehicle entered the north ditch and went over a culvert before striking an embankment. Lopez Lopez, who was wearing a seat belt, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Marco Vincio Lopez Lopez, 32, and a 3-year-old girl, both of Rock Valley, were transported to Sioux Center Health and later flown to a Sioux Falls hospital.

Alcohol was a factor in the crash, according to the Iowa State Patrol accident report.

Reyes Felipe Lopez Lopez had a troubled driving record. On July 8, he was cited for reckless driving, failure to maintain control, interference with official acts, driving while his license was denied or revoked, and no valid driver's license after a 2008 Honda Odyssey van was found in the ditch at the intersection of 210th Street and Elmwood Avenue northeast of Alvord, according to the Lyon County Sheriff's Office. He was found hiding in the weeds near the van.

Exactly a year before the fatal crash, on Sept. 18, 2021, Lopez Lopez was cited for multiple offenses following an alcohol-related incident that damaged property at the Heartland Hotel and Suites and Premier Bank in Rock Valley. He had numerous other citations for a variety of drivingrelated charges.

■ Oct. 17: Two people ended up dying following a head-on collision between a 2008 Ford Focus being driven on the wrong side of Highway 18 near Marsh Avenue on the west edge of Sheldon and a 2016 Peterbilt Conventional semi, according to the lowa State Patrol.

A passenger in the Focus, Samuel Garcia Ruiz, 44, of Worthington, MN, was pronounced dead at the scene. Ruiz was not wearing a seat belt.

The driver, Manuel Garcia Calachij, 17, and two passengers, Maribel Morales Morales, 17, and Yasmin Julessa Ambrocio Perez, all of Worthington, were trapped inside the vehicle. Garcia Calachij died at Sanford Medical Center in Sioux Falls on Oct.

The driver of the semi, Kris Evans Mara, 54, of Sioux Center, was uninjured.

■ Dec. 8: Brian Williams, 48, of Omaha, NE, a former Sheldon resident, died at Sanford USD Medical Center in Sioux Falls.

Williams was injured on Dec. 6 when he was southbound in the 3400 block of Nettle Avenue about four miles southeast of Sheldon when the Hyundai Elantra he was driving crossed the centerline and struck the rear axle of a trailer attached to a northbound 2007 Peterbilt semi driven by Devon Stetson, 22, of Hull, according to the Iowa State Patrol. The Elantra then went into a ditch.

Williams was transported to Sanford Sheldon Medical Center and later airlifted to Sanford USD Medical Center in Sioux Falls. Stetson was not injured.

LAW & ORDER

SANBORN MAN JAILED

FOR ASSAULT, FENTANYL
SHELDON—A 21-year-old
Sanborn man was arrested about
12:35 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 2, in
Sheldon on charges of assault,
interference with official acts, possession of a controlled substance
— fentanyl — third or subsequent
offense and possession of drug
paraphernalia.

The arrest of **Dalton Kade Den Hartog-Hopcroft** stemmed from
an investigation of an assault at
a residence on the 800 block
of Ninth Street shortly before
midnight Wednesday, Feb. 1,
according to the Sheldon Police
Department.

Den Hartog-Hopcroft allegedly got into a physical altercation with another individual when he was asked to leave the residence, and when the other individual was on the ground, Den Hartog-Hopcroft kicked the individual in the mouth.

kicked the individual in the mouth. Den Harlog-Hopcroft then fled the scene but was found walking along Second Avenue.

He was ordered multiple times to place his hands behind his back but refused and then fled on foot, according to the incident reported.
A Taser was deployed to stop
Den Hartog-Hopcroft, but an officer still had to use physical force
to handcuff him.

During a search, Den Hartog-Hopcroft was found to be in possession of fentanyl and a glass bulb pipe.

Den Hartog-Hopcroft was additionally charged with violation of a no contact/protective order after allegedly calling an individual who he is not to have contact with from the O'Brien County Jail in Primghar at about noon Sunday, Feb. 5.

SIBLEY WOMAN JAILED FOR HAVING THC COOKIE

SIBLEY—A 52-year-old Sibley woman was cited about 10:35 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2, on a charge of first-offense possession of a controlled substance — marijuana. The citing of Michelle Flaine

The citing of Michelle Elaine Klaahsen stemmed from a report of a woman who was not feeling well at her residence at 802 Second St, according to the Osceola County Shariffs Office.

County Sheriff's Office. g
Klaahsen said she her arms h

were numb, she felt "super dizzy" and she was "very thirsty," according to the incident report. She said she usually takes can-

nabidiol oil before she goes to

bed but had eaten a carriabidiol cookie she ordered online instead. Klaahsen said it was the first time she had tried the cookie, which law enforcement found to

be a Delta-9 THC chocolate chip

DRIVER CLOCKED AT 118 ARRESTED BY HOSPERS

HOSPERS—A 26-year-old Hartley man was arrested about 5 a.m. Friday, Feb. 3, after the vehicle he was driving was clocked at 118 mph on the Highway 60 expressway near Hospers.

The arrest of Branden John Hengeveld stemmed from the stop of a southbound 2014 Chrysler 300 on the expressway near 380th Street about two miles north of Hospers, according to the Sioux County Sheriff's Office.

The deputy suspected Hengeveld had consumed alcohol; however, further sobriety test-

ing showed Hengeveld was not intoxicated and just under the legal limit of .06. Hengeveld was transported

to the county jall in Orange City where he was charged with reckless driving and speeding.

He pleaded guilty to the reckless driving charge the same day in district court in Orange City and was ordered to pay a \$250 fine, a \$37.50 and \$60 in court-related costs.

For the speeding charge, Hengeveld must pay a \$300 fine, a \$45 and \$55 in court-related costs.

REMSEN MAN CHARGED FOR OWI AFTER CRASH

ALTON—A 30-year-old Remsen man was arrested about 1:15 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 4, in Alton on charges of first-offense operating while under the influence and failure to maintain control of his vehicle.

The arrest of **Derek Daniel Gengler** stemmed from him losing control of a 2004 Dodge Dakota pickup and going into the ditch while trying to turn south

onto Kennedy Avenue from Highway 10, according to the Orange City Police Department. He had bloodshot/watery eyes,

impaired balance, slurred speech and the odor of an alcoholic beverage and failed field sobriety tests, according to the incident report.

PIPESTONE WOMAN TO JAIL FOR OWI, NEGLECT SIBLEY—A 38-year-old Pig

SIBLEY—A 38-year-old Pipestone, MN, woman was arrested about midnight Saturday, Feb. 4, in Sibley on charges of firstoffense operating while under the influence, three counts of neglect or abandonment of dependent person, two counts of failure to use a child restraint device, failure to obey a stop sign and yield the right of way, and speeding.

right of way, and speeding.

The arrest of Florinda Niz Chavez stemmed from the stop of a 2010 Dodge Journey on Fifth Street near 11th Avenue in Sibley after being clocked at 56 mph in a 35-mph zone and running a stop sign, according to the Osceola

County Sheriff's Office. She had bloodshot/watery eyes, impaired balance, slurred speech and the odor of an alcoholic beverage and failed field sobriety tests, according to the incident report.

Niz Chavez admitted to drinking two beers, according to the incident report.

These ware three children in

dent report.

There were three children in the vehicle, two of which were not buckled in.

ROCK VALLEY WOMAN TO JAIL ON CHARGE OF OWI

ROCK VALLEY—A 28-year-old Rock Valley woman was arrested about 1:40 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 4, on charges of first-offense operating while under the influence and failure to obey a stop sign and yield the right of way.

The arrest of Ana Karen Palma Hernandez stemmed from her not stopping at a stop sign and then driving her 2015 Ford F-150 pickup on the wrong side of 14th Street, according to the Rock Valley Police Department. She had impaired balance and

She had impaired balance and the odor of an alcoholic beverage and failed field sobriety tests, according to the incident report,