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## 4 Newton residents rescued from house fire

### Firefighters saved occupants, including three children, by ladder from second floor

**By Christopher Braunschweig**  
Newton Daily News

Four residents were rescued from a house fire March 30 in Newton. The Newton Fire Department announced in a press release that a res-

ident had called 911 saying the house in the 200 block of East Seventh Street South was full of smoke and that they were on the second floor. When the police department arrived on scene there were no occupants of the home outside. As soon as firefighters arrived, crews

immediately rescued the caller and three children by ladder from the second floor. Crews remained on scene until approximately 12:45 a.m. to completely extinguish the fire. The home received significant smoke and minor damage from the fire.

In addition to the Newton fire station and police station, the Kellogg Fire Department and Baxter Fire Department responded to the scene. Newton Fire Department said the fire appeared to have been caused by an appliance on the main floor of the residence.

## SAME TOYS, BIGGER SPACE

### Dalton's Farm Toys gets new storefront off First Avenue, Iowa Speedway Drive



Jason Dalton, owner of Mow Power Dalton's Farm Toys, shows off the different kinds of tractors on display at his new storefront at 3362 Highway 6 East in Newton. Dalton's Farm Toys hosted its grand opening recently that attracted close to 700 people.

**By Christopher Braunschweig**  
Newton Daily News

Jason Dalton turned an FFA project from high school into one of the largest farm toy businesses in the world in the span of 28 years, although for the longest time the storefront had been hidden away from passersby along Newton's main arteries. Some people that Jason has known for years had no idea it existed. "We sold a mower to some-

body last week that I know very well," Jason said during a recent sit-down interview with the Newton Daily News. "He lives just outside of town, and he was like, 'So, new business? Where were you?' I'm like, 'really?'"

When the toy shop wasn't operating out of a room in Jason's mower business, it was selling toys from an additional space across the street where boxes upon boxes of miniature tractors were nearly stacked to ceiling. It

was only a matter of time before Jason and his wife, co-owner Melissa Dalton, ran out of room. It was by sheer chance Jason and Melissa were able to secure the former Theisen's building, 3362 Highway 6 East, as their new storefront for both the toys and the mower business, which now has an impressive showroom of Ariens- and Gravely-brand zero-turn mowers lining the floor

TOYS | 2A

## Funding disagreement leads to division between city and NDC

### Both entities duked it out at council retreat but want to move forward and work through challenges

**By Christopher Braunschweig**  
Newton Daily News

Heated exchanges between the city administrator and the executives of Newton Development Corporation during a city council retreat last week showed a clear rift between the two entities, but both parties have since decided to move on from the quarrel and continue searching economic development opportunities.

The council retreat was requested by NDC in an effort to reestablish communications between the organization and the city.

However, the argument derived from the significant reduction in city funding to NDC, which was recommended to council by Newton City Administrator Matt Muckler. Although the council has yet to fully approve the fiscal year 2024 budget, NDC is expected to see its funding reduced to \$77,000 from \$110,000.

Tanya Michener, associate director of NDC, said the organization was told the reduction was because of the city's focus on tourism. The city council has since followed through with this emphasis by allotting \$20,000 for a new tourism grant program, which would offer grants to event organizers.

At the city council retreat, Muckler said the reduction was also the result of "poor

DIVISION | 3A

## 'WE HONOR YOU'

### Jasper County veterans commemorate the 50th anniversary of the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam War

**By Christopher Braunschweig**  
Newton Daily News

There wasn't an empty seat in the house. Every chair in American Legion Post 111 was accounted for during a ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the United States' withdrawal from the Vietnam War; the last of the American troops were shipped off the battlefields and sent home on March 29, 1973.

Doug Bishop, chairman of the Jasper County Veterans Alliance and a speaker of the National Vietnam War Veterans Day ceremony, pointed out that the welcome party for those soldiers was neither glamorous nor respectful. But Bishop was happy, on this day, to see every seat filled in the post to honor local

veterans. The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act was officially signed in 2017, which designated every March 29 as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. In addition to marking the departure of combat troops from Vietnam, it is also the day Hanoi released the last of its acknowledged prisoners of war.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates there are still more than 7 million Vietnam veterans living in America and abroad to this day.

In the ceremony commemorating the many veterans who fought and died during the Vietnam War, Bishop shared a number of stories and anecdotes to illustrate why he still honors those who served. On more than a few occasions, Bishop's booming voice



Veterans and guests of the National Vietnam War Veterans Day ceremony on March 29 in the American Legion Post 111 bow their heads to respect the soldiers who were killed in action.

tapered to a raspy choke as he was overcome with emotion.

When the Honor Flights and Freedom Flights were established in 2019, he said, Jasper County was one of the first

counties in the nation to start sending large planes full of Vietnam veterans to Washington, D.C. Bishop recalled when

VIETNAM | 3A

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