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TELEGRAPH HERALD

WEDNESDAY

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Iowa bill bolsters robotics in schools

Local educators say students gain valuable experience participating in the programs.

BY ELIZABETH KELSEY
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Over the past four years, Michael Wloch has wondered whether some of the lessons he's learned in the classrooms of Dubuque Senior High School are truly applicable in the real world.

But when he joined the Dubuque Community School District's high school robotics team, he found himself using geometry to perfect the length of a robotic arm or physics to calculate the torque of gears on the machine that he and his teammates constructed for competitions each year.

His interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects was piqued, and Michael enrolled in machining and computer science classes at Senior. After he graduates in June, he plans to study computer science in college.

"(Robotics) has given me the opportunity to explore and use what I've been taught in class, as well as learning a lot of new skills," he said.

A bill that recently passed the Iowa Senate would bolster state recognition of and funding for high school robotics teams such as Dubuque's. Local students and coaches say the proposed legislation is an important step toward expanding robotics and launching it in schools that do not currently offer a team.

"These students are getting a chance to practice their future careers in a



STEPHEN GASSMAN • Telegraph Herald

Thomas Feyen (left) and Isaac Bodensteiner, both seniors at Senior High School in Dubuque, control their robot, ShellBot, in the school's library on Monday.



Ann Arnold

We need to get as many students to participate in robotics as we can, just to give them a head start after high school."

Dubuque Community Schools' high school robotics team, which competes

safe setting," said robotics team coach Ann Arnold, who teaches math at the Dubuque district's Alta Vista Campus. "They're learning to communicate with adults, meet deadlines and work in high-pressure situations ...

in FIRST Robotic Challenge competitions, currently has 31 members, who attend both Senior and Hempstead high schools. The team has grown in recent years, particularly through strong incoming classes — 13 freshmen joined the team this year, according to Senior sophomore Ella Meyer.

She said the growth is due in large part to the team's outreach sessions, where members visit the district's

See **ROBOTICS, PAGE 3A**

New Dubuque bank planning to open doors next week

15 former employees of DB&T and HTLF join Tut Fuller at Capra Bank.

BY KAYLI REESE
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A new local financial institution is set to begin operations next week, and a team of established Dubuque banking officials will start new positions at the bank.

The Dubuque branch of Capra Bank, which will also be Capra Bank's headquarters, will open Monday, April 3, at 955 Washington St., in the former Dubuque Food Co-Op

space. The full-service branch comes after Tut Fuller — who will serve as the bank's CEO and chairman — acquired a bank in Montezuma, Iowa, last year with his brother Thomas J. Fuller, who will serve on the bank's board.

"We think great clients deserve great bankers," Tut Fuller said. "We think great bankers deserve a great bank. Our version of banking, Capra's version of banking, is a

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Tut Fuller



DAVE KETTERING • Telegraph Herald

Dan Walsh, senior vice president-commercial banking at Capra Bank, gives a tour of the bank's new location in the Historic Millwork District on Tuesday.

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Dubuque adding 22 full-time positions

Van Milligen says several of the roles were created to address administrative workloads.

BY JOHN KRUSE
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The number of approved Dubuque city staff positions is increasing by the net equivalent of 17.29 full-time city employees with its most recently approved budget.

While the overall number of approved part-time positions is decreasing by the equivalent of 4.49 full-time positions, and seasonal positions will decrease by

0.22, the city's budget for fiscal year 2024, which begins on July 1, will see a net increase of the equivalent of 22 full-time positions over the previous fiscal year, bringing the city's total staff to the equivalent of 769.01 full-time positions.



Mike Van Milligen

Some of these positions were previously created by the city through budget amendments during the current fiscal year, while others are part-time positions that are being upgraded to full-time in order to make them more attractive for prospective employees.

Four new public safety positions were created, including one firefighter, one fire department administrative assistant and two crisis intervention team patrol officers. Additionally, a part-time public safety dispatcher position was upgraded to full-time.

City Manager Mike Van Milligen said several of the new positions were created to directly address administrative workloads compounding on some city departments.

"We still do have a very challenging time recruiting employees," Van Milligen

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