

Ackley World Journal

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Up for discussion

Ambulance merger taking shape

BECKY SCHIPPER
EDITOR

The Ackley council was updated on the proposed merger between Ackley Volunteer Ambulance Service and Eldora EMS into Greenbelt EMS during their Wednesday evening meeting. Details, as presented in an updated financial merger proposal, were approved by a three-to-two vote by the Ackley council. Voting in favor of the proposal and its terms were Judy Crawford, Dan Scallon and Mike Abbas. Opposed were Joe Wessels and Chuy Flores.

Flores noted on Thursday that his vote against the proposal was twofold, based on concerns about Ackley volunteers having to apply for their roles with the crew of the new service, as well as concerns regarding winter roadways.

"Highway 57 between Iowa Falls and Ackley is a priority roadway, plowed first; the blacktop between Eldora and Ackley is a county road without that same priority," Flores said. "That fact is something that needs to be taken into consideration before any decision."

"I'm not convinced this is the right decision," he explained.

Prior to the council vote, clerk Malena Dennis explained that the financial agreement needed to be accepted by both the Eldora and Ackley councils. Both would then need to approve a contract which before being accepted would need to be looked over by each community's city attorney.

On Feb. 1, a subcommittee consisting of Judy Crawford, Dan Scallon and AVAS president Joan Fra-

zier, along with representative from Eldora - Carrie Callaway Morton, Jerry Kramer and Maile Carter, met to discuss financials of a proposal, choosing to break the merger into phases, effectively slowing down the merger and allowing Ackley time to secure sleeping quarters for the crew which will be stationed in Ackley.

Details of Phase 1 include providing direction on future service employees, noting that AVAS members will need to go through the process to become employees of the City of Eldora and that the new EMS service (Greenbelt EMS) will assume the assets of the current AVAS. During this phase, there would be a crew in Ackley, but not one providing 24/7 service. Greenbelt EMS will provide that backup as needed from Eldora.

Financials during Phase 1, which includes roughly the first year of existence, would allow each entity to keep their own account receivable revenue through the end of June 2023. Call/run revenue, beginning on July 1, 2023, would be provided to Greenbelt EMS.

The details also include that there may or may not be a Greenbelt EMS crew in Ackley and that members of the crew would respond from Eldora as needed. Currently, AVAS does not always have a crew available, mostly during daytime hours, and relies upon backup provided by Eldora.

In Phase II, a full-time staff, 24/7, would be stationed in Ackley. The delay, as mentioned above, allows time for Ackley to find and secure sleeping quarters for that crew. Roughly in the second year of the agreement, the split financial agreement would be revisited,

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While the rest of us are dreaming of what will be planted in our gardens, Stan Siems of Ackley has been harvesting various types of lettuce and other produce grown in his greenhouse.

Thankfully, Stan has enough of the lettuces available for those who want to purchase it. Currently, he's harvesting head lettuce, leaf lettuce, and romaine.

Soon there will be cucumbers, tomatoes, pole beans, green peppers and jalapeño peppers ready to go. Stan is making plans to deliver his produce to residents of Ackley each Friday, and to Iowa Falls on Saturdays. To check out what's ready, or to make an appointment to pick some up at the greenhouse, contact him directly. ●

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PHOTO SUBMITTED

Ackley's Xi Zeta Sigma members provided funding from their annual craft fair to the Friends of Prairie Bridges park shelter construction project. Members contributed \$2,000 towards the project. Construction is slated to begin this summer. On hand for the presentation were members of Prairie Bridges Park Board and Sorority members. Left to right they included: Jeff Hesnard, Theresa Krull, Bo Schipper, Jessica Schipper, Mike Fistler, Ginger Williams, Paul Williams, Machel Eichmeier, Michelle Bartling, Brynn Brass and Taylor, Angie Risius and Kathy Enslin.

Funding the future

Sorority makes donation

BECKY SCHIPPER
EDITOR

Xi Zeta Sigma sorority of Ackley is a non-profit service organization with a strong history of supporting the Ackley community over their past 40 plus years of existence.

Best known locally for their annual craft fair, held each November, the members allocate admission fees plus additional funds to non-profit organizations within the community. Members vote as a group to determine the organization which will benefit.

The funding raised through the 2022 Craft Fair was allocated to the Friends of Prairie Bridges and will be used towards the construction of the new shelter house in the Back Forty.

"We are very grateful that the

shelter was chosen by the sorority to receive the funds this year," said Jess Schipper, park board representative. "This project will benefit many and will be a wonderful addition to what we can offer at the park, as well as hopefully, bringing others to our community as they use it for weddings, reunions and the like."

Angie Risius is the current president of the sorority, a member for the past 25-plus years. She says the group has made similar donations to many organizations in the community, including the Ackley Volunteer Ambulance Service, Fire Department, Ackley Medical Center, Dollars for Scholars, the Ackley American Legion Auxiliary and others.

"Our goal is always to meet the needs of the community," Risius explains. "We provide as much funding as we possible can, the better we do, the more that goes back to the community."

The 17 members also provide funding to annual events such as the Children's Toy Drawing, Santa's Helpers, After Prom, and others, along with providing donations of time to things like the AGWSR concession booth and countless others.

Members meet monthly from September to May, providing support for each other and their community as they proceed through each year.

Dates for the 2023 Craft Fair have been set. The event is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 18. Mark your calendars to take part as a vendor or to attend. Vendors interested in having a booth may contact Angie or Tammy Hofmeister.

Officers of Xi Zeta Sigma, a chapter of Beta Sigma Phi, include Risius, Carlene Bergeson as vice president, Lori Johnson as treasurer, and Tammy Hofmeister as secretary. ●



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Take a closer look. This fake bill made its way to an Ackley business recently. Ackley Police Chief Gerry Frick urges residents and businesses to examine money they may receive or spend.

Counterfeit bills spotted in Ackley

BECKY SCHIPPER
EDITOR

Ackley Police Chief Gerry Frick has been investigating some funny stuff in Ackley. Funny money, to be precise.

His warning to residents and businesses came on Monday, following a report from an Ackley business. In this instance, a transaction was paid with at least one counterfeit bill, which is normally used by filmmakers.

Rather than reading 'The United States of America' in the top right

corner, it instead reads 'For Motion Picture Purposes'. Another difference in the bill is rather than reading 'Federal Reserve Note' at the top, it reads 'Motion Picture Purposes'.

Anyone who discovers the bills should contact the Chief. In addition to looking at those spots on any bills that might pass through your hands, Chief Frick notes that the serial numbers on the bills are the same and is another way to check.

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Pleasant Hill Change

The large pine trees which until recently surrounded Pleasant Hill Cemetery, north of Ackley, have been cut down. A call to the cemetery committee secretary, Nancy French, confirmed that several of the large trees were diseased, while others were damaging stones in the cemetery. The committee chose to have the trees taken down and will replant as finances allow. Those wishing to contribute toward the cost of replanting may contact Nancy, or any of the committee members.

PSB announces promotions

Peoples Savings Bank would like to announce the promotions of two employees effective Jan. 1.

Sara Blackstock has been promoted to BSA and Compliance Specialist at PSB Corporation, the bank's holding company. Blackstock has worked at Peoples Savings Bank for over 11 years, most recently serving as Vice President & Operations Manager.



Blackstock



Hunt

Alayna Hunt has been promoted to Consumer and Real Estate Loan Officer. Hunt has worked at PSB since March of 2022, previously in the role of Loan Administrator & Universal Banker. Hunt continues to serve on the bank's marketing team as well.

Community Endowment Fund Program

Nonprofit organizations within Hardin County have the opportunity to receive funding from the County Endowment Fund Program (CEFP) and Hardin County Arts & Culture Endowment through the Hardin County Community Endowment Foundation (HCCCEF). These two opportunities will provide grants in the following areas of interest: Arts/Culture/Humanities, Education, Environment/Animals, Health, Human Services and Public/Society Benefit. Application forms are

available on the Hardin County Community Endowment Foundation's website, <http://endowhardincoiowa.org/> along with HCCCEF Guideline and Policies.

To be considered for a grant, nonprofits must complete the application provided. The application deadline is 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24, by emailing Tam Elerding, HCCCEF Program Director at endowhardinco@gmail.com. The HCCCEF Affiliate Advisory Board will meet on March 16 to consider the grants and determine recipients.

Scallon recognized

Lori Scallon of Ackley, an H&R Block franchise owner, has been recognized as one of the top 100 franchises for the organization. Scallon has offices in Parkersburg and Eldora where she provides services such as preparing taxes,

bookkeeping for small businesses, invoicing, payroll, and others.

Each year H&R Block recognizes the top franchisees for business performance across a series of key metrics. Scallon has 24 years of experience.

It's almost spring

I took the Tunes for a walk on Tuesday. Remember last Tuesday? Sun shining brightly, temperatures reaching 37 degrees, melting snow and slush on every sidewalk and puddles at every street corner? Yeah. Tuesday.

We headed east on Park Avenue where we discovered a doe munching in the flower gardens of a home. She couldn't have cared less that we were walking a few yards away. Barely raised her head, and only flickered an ear when I reached for my phone to take her photo.

The experience got me thinking about the damage deer can do to gardens and trees in residential areas. Of course, I headed straight to the University of Iowa Extension to see how to deter them. I quote, "Living with wild-life like white-tailed deer requires patience and taking action early to prevent damage."

Deer, the article said, can damage plants through browsing on or trampling plants, prefer branches less than one inch in diameter, and that to determine whether damage is caused by deer or rabbits, one needs to look at the plants closely.

Deer typically don't leave tooth marks on bark, they have no upper incisors and branches, leaves or twigs will have a rough, or torn appearance. Rabbits, on the other hand, leave tooth marks when gnawing.

There are several ways to combat the damage done by deer. First suggested are deer-resistant



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Warm weather on Feb. 7 led to the discovery of these sedum buds (stonecrop) in an Ackley flower bed. Who knew they'd be up so early and giving hope that spring is on its way?



BY BECKY SCHIPPER | EDITOR

plants such as yarrow, ageratum, columbine, coneflower, alyssum, peony, poppies, geranium and marigold. Of course, fencing was mentioned, as were repellents, which are only a short-term solution. It was also suggested that frightening the deer away from the area can be accomplished (by using motion-activated lights or sprinklers), but again, it is only a short-term solution.

I have a slightly different problem. In my garden there is a cat, and about a dozen rabbits, neither of which I welcome. For many reasons. Two exactly. Number two. The rabbits I can deal with (except that they nibble off

all the new growth in early spring). But cat two is an awful experience in the gardens.

So, said cat is on my list.

Enter my adult daughter, who has more of a heart for animals than anyone I've ever known. She caught said cat shortly after realizing it had hurt its foot. (She actually noticed blood on her deck and trailed the creature to my other neighbor's shed. Said daughter is now searching for the first cat's friend, who she knows is 'lonely' and will have two cats to get to a shelter.

Both cats are new to our neighborhood, appearing only recently, and both are relatively tame. Which leads me to believe that some fine individual dumped them off. Instead of doing the right thing, they've instead dropped the issue in our yards.

Until next week, we're taking part in a cat relocation program. Only, we won't be dropping them off in someone else's neighborhood.

EMS MERGER > CONT'D

and shed maintenance, utilities, and liability expenses would be taken on by Greenbelt EMS as Ackley would no longer be receiving revenue. The financial split would be based upon run numbers from each community.

The approved proposal also includes establishment of a seven-member advisory board for the new service. Members would meet monthly. The board will include a Greenbelt EMS Service Director, a crew member residing from within the AGWSR School District (appointed by the Mayor of Ackley) and a second residing in the Eldora-New Providence district (appointed by the Mayor of Eldora).

Mayors of the Ackley and Eldora would additionally be charged with appointing two residents from within their respective city to serve on the board.

The board would be charged with presenting semi-annual reports to each council, approve any large-ticket purchases - anything greater than \$5,000. Members would be required to attend the monthly meetings and those missing two meet-

ings in a row would be removed from their position.

While the proposal was approved by the Ackley council members in the vote, councilman Joe Wessels voiced that he wouldn't 'buy into this merger' and questioned if the votes of Crawford and Scallon, in favor of the proposal, were a 'conflict of interest'.

Ackley councilwoman Judy Crawford said on Thursday that like Flores, she too has a passion for Ackley and explained that the council needs to support keeping a service here for residents who have a strong commitment to it.

"This is a fluid document, nothing is etched in stone and changes can still be made," Crawford said.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, discussion on the topic of the merger continued as Justin Bartling, a former member of the AVAS an current paramedic with the Iowa Falls service, explained that it was his belief that Iowa Falls could respond to Ackley emergencies within 12 minutes.

Councilman Dan Scallon suggested that the travel time would be more realistic at 20 minutes.

Bartling continued, "As a paramedic, there have been zero times that within the first five minutes on scene that I have

used a paramedic skill. My concern is that paramedics are expensive and not cost effective." He explained that services cannot bill at paramedic rates if that skillset is not used on a call and suggested that a 24/7 ambulance service was sufficient for the community, adding that a first responder service could be considered.

First responders do not transport patients, rather, they identify conditions and comfort patients until an EMT or paramedic service arrives on scene. They can perform AED and airway maintenance, and can prepare patients for transport or provide lift assistance as needed.

AVAS president Joan Frazier was out of town and unable to take part in the conversations which took place.

The City of Ackley still holds funding from the 2020 GO Bond in the amount of \$336,000. Those funds had been slated for the construction of a new AVAS shed. The amount was not close to the single bid received in April of 2022 at \$491,000. Bid specifications sent out at the time did not include completion of the office area for the shed, leaving studded walls and without electricity and plumbing to that area. Those expenses were estimated to be an additional amount between \$100,000 and \$200,000 for completion.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

ETNA township meeting

The ETNA township trustee meeting will be held Saturday, Feb. 18 at 11 a.m. at the Ackley Public Library (401 State Street), Ackley. The meeting will include the Annual

Proposed Budget and is open to the public.

Craft fair

A craft and vendor fair is planned for Saturday, March 25 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Franklin County Convention Center, Hampton.

Forty-Five different crafters and vendors will fill up the space.

Food and beverages will be available for purchase along with door prizes and a silent auction.

Burger fry

The Ackley Sons of the American Legion will host their next burger fry this Saturday, Feb. 18.

Serving takes place from 4:30 to 8 p.m. Plan now to attend.

FAKES > CONT'D

"While I can't get your money back for you, I can start a trail of where it came from," Frick said.

The Chief also noted that he is aware of counterfeit \$100 bills as well. These bills have been known to pass the counterfeit detector pen - a

chemical test which distinguishes the type of paper it's been printed upon. Frick explained that some ATMs even miss these particular counterfeit bills.

"People get busy. And a clerk, for instance, can get in a hurry - there's ten people in line and they're moving fast to get everyone out as quickly as

possible. It's not hard to miss these details until it's too late."

While he can't provide further information on the investigation, Frick says the larger bills have a foreign language, believed to be Chinese, writing on them.

If you discover the counterfeits, call the Ackley Police Department non-emergency line at 641-847-2222.

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Sides/Beverage
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RURAL ACKLEY**

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SHOWING FEBRUARY 17-23

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