

Matching up on the mat

State-qualifying district wrestling tournaments will be held today at sites across Iowa following a week of preparation. See SPORTS Section C



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2023

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Rock Rapids Care Center closes doors temporarily?

Residents moved to Hull nursing home

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 temporary.

Arborea Healthcare on Friday, Feb. 3, moved the residents of the Rock Rapids' facility to Pleas-

ant 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 Rapids.

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 safe 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



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 ASCHAT@NWESTIOWA.COM

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 comes."

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-

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 children.

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

See THERAPY on A8

“ In looking at the list, it appears that the accidents happen for a variety of reasons, but one issue that we see a lot of is speed and distractions — with the rear end and pulling out in front of traffic collisions especially.

Nate Huizenga SIOUX COUNTY CHIEF DEPUTY

OVERDRIVE

BY TOM LAWRENCE NEWS@NWESTIOWA.COM

16 PEOPLE died in the four-county region in 2022

- 8 SIOUX COUNTY
- 5 O'BRIEN COUNTY
- 2 OSCEOLA COUNTY
- 1 LYON COUNTY

REGIONAL—There were more than three times as many fatal vehicular deaths in 2022 in NWest Iowa than in 2021.

Sixteen people died in the four-county region, up from five the previous year. There were six fatal crashes in Sioux County, four in O'Brien County, two in Osceola County and one in Lyon County — with two of the crashes resulting in two deaths — according to Iowa Department of Transportation figures, local law enforcement and NWest Iowa REVIEW research.

This increase in deadly incidents varies from the state, where fatal crashes declined from 356 to 338, according to the DOT.

Seven of the deaths in the region involved collisions with semis. There were five such crashes; two resulted

N'West Iowa 2022 traffic deaths up dramatically from 2021

in a pair of deaths. The semi drivers were not injured.

Four of the crashes involved a single vehicle, nine involved another vehicle and one was a single all-terrain vehicle. Two of the drivers involved in the fatal crashes were cited; neither case has reached a courtroom yet.

Sioux County chief deputy Nate Huizenga said there was not a single cause to blame for the spike in deaths. "In looking at the list, it appears that the accidents happen for a variety of reasons, but one issue that we see a lot of is speed and distractions — with the rear end and pulling out in front of traffic collisions especially," Huizenga said. "In Sioux County, I also think we have more and more traffic with people coming in to work and many schools."

He said Sioux County sheriff Jamie

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SUNDAY

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LOW: 18

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