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City approved studies target new North Y development

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Two studies for Spencer's economic development have received approval from city officials. A traffic study for the area known as the Spencer North Y, and a hotel study for a potential hotel were both given the green light by the Spencer City Council on Monday.

The city of Spencer broke ground by the intersection of U.S. Highway 71 and U.S. Highway 18 this May after months of discussion, planning and finding contractors to develop the area. With a goal of expanding commercial development at the North Y, city officials were hoping the two recently approved studies would make way for some business opportunities.

The traffic study will be done by Kwik Star, a company who has been interested in developing a convenience store at the north end of town. The city will be reimbursing Kwik Star \$21,500 for conducting the study, which was requested from the city by the Department of Transportation.

"The DOT recently informed us they would like to see this traffic study in order to determine whether or not turning lanes will be required as part of the project," City Manager Dan Gifford said. "They are concerned about the overall development, not just the Kwik Star property."

Because Kwik Star had previously done a traffic study with the firm Kimberly Horn, Gifford said the quickest way to get the project started was to have them hire the firm while the city would reimburse them.

The study will look at the entire North Y development, not just the area where the Kwik Star property will be located.

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Kayden Harle, Keegan Leth-Engelkes and Terrance Harle have spent the last week-and-half using refreshing lemonade for the Shayla Bee Fund until a collection of alleged bullies tried to disrupt things. Their plans backfired as the local community, after learning of last Friday's event via a Facebook post, rallied around the boys. (Photo by Randy M. Cauthron)



'BULLYING' DEFEATED BY COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Local boys' lemonade Shayla Bee fundraiser headed to Axaholics

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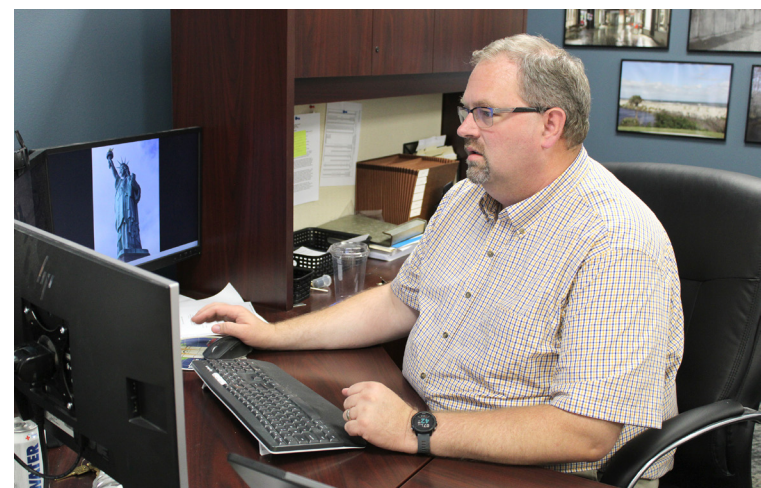
Friday night, Axaholics in south Spencer, will host a lemonade stand, under a white tent — with cookies and bracelets also available — designating all proceeds to the Shayla Bee Fund. It's the culmination of two weeks of hard work, fundraising for the local nonprofit which serves families of ill children. But the 14 days were not without hurdles.

Kayden Harle, Keegan Leth-Engelkes and Terrance Harle have manned the stand at the corner of West 11th Street and Fifth Avenue West since Monday, July 10. At the time, they planned to donate 10% of all proceeds to Shayla Bee. Spending more time in the hot sun than many employees do in an air-conditioned building.

Jerry Faulkner, a founder of the agency and board member, said, "Shayla Bee has so many people from all walks of life that have come together to support Shayla Bee families. We are especially proud and honored that these boys have chosen to give so much of their time to make a little difference in our little corner of our world."

LEMONADE STAND BOYS, Page 5A

City finance director to leave this summer



Finance Director Brian Weuve will be leaving his position at Spencer City Hall after 11 years of service. (Photo by Celia Brocker)

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Former Spencer city manager to serve interim role

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After almost a decade of serving the Spencer community, Finance Director Brian Weuve will be leaving his position toward the end of August. He will be moving on to the role of finance director for the city of Pella.

Weuve has been serving in local government positions for over 20 years. The benefit of working in local government, he said, is being able to make an impact on the communities one lives and serves in.

"You see the results of the decisions being made, whether they're positive or negative, so it's always an exciting thing to do," Weuve said. "You can go by city a project, and you can say that you had a part in that."

The finance director grew up in the city of McCallsburg. After earning his undergraduate degree from the University of Northern Iowa and his master's degree from University of Nebraska Omaha, Weuve started his career in city management.

Initially Weuve had never intended to work with numbers, but he was ultimately intrigued by finance. Working with finances from the city, he said, is like putting a puzzle together. "Being able to figure out how

WEUVE, Page 5A

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FAGEN, Page 5A

Local restaurant to be nationally featured

McCreary's picked as one of 'America's Best Restaurants'

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A small film crew walked into McCreary's at The Dock on Wednesday afternoon, but they had a larger objective than grabbing a bite to eat. As part of the national media and marketing company America's Best Restaurants, the roadshow team was capturing footage to feature on

their website and social media.

Based in Florence, Kentucky, ABR uses its platform to bring attention to local and independently owned restaurants. The ABR Roadshow travels across the country telling restaurants' stories and highlighting their unique food offerings.

"It's a multipronged way that a restaurant can be selected," said Theo Williams, host of the episode featuring McCreary's. "Either we find the restaurant through our own deep research and knowledge of the restaurant industry, the restaurant will reach out to us and we'll deem it a good fit or sometimes

people just get nominated."

Cassie McCreary, who owns the restaurant along with her husband, Mark, revealed she had reached out to ABR. Upon finding the company's ad on Facebook, Cassie was curious and ended up filling out a questionnaire.

"About a week later I got a phone call," Cassie recalled. We talked about our background, history, what we do, where we are and what our business entails. They said we fit exactly what they were looking for and they would love to feature us."

MCCREARY'S, Page 5A



"America's Best Restaurants" will feature McCreary's at The Dock. (Photo by Celia Brocker)

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AREA & STATE

LEMONADE STAND BOYS

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Generating \$150 on Wednesday, July 12, their biggest day yet, they are hoping to surpass the amount on Friday in front of the ax-throwing business — committing 100% of all money raised to Shayla Bee.

Starting eighth grade in the fall, 13-year-old Kayden; Keegan, a 12-year-old, sixth grade student; and Terrance, a 10-year-old, fifth grader, all worked together to raise money for the cause in front of a neighbors home. Last Friday, another group of youth — five in all — arrived, seeking some of the lemonade. After a couple of cups were paid for, it became apparent the boys were not really interested in lemonade, but seemed more focused on causing trouble for the young entrepreneurs.

The young “customers” began throwing cups on the neighbors lawn according to Kayden and Keegan’s recollection of the day.

“We had our lemonade stand like usual,” the oldest member of the team said. “Five kids came up and ordered lemonades. Then they started pouring them on the ground, throwing cups (on the neighbor’s lawn), and putting their hands under the lemonade jugs.”

“One of them claimed we scammed them,” Keegan said. Other boys took more cups of lemonade without paying.

The boy’s mother, recognizing what was going on while home for lunch, raced outside and the troublemakers fled.

Kayden admitted, “We were kind of mad and angry.”

The setback didn’t discourage the young salesmen who worked to clean up the mess, get more cups and return to business. The incident, when posted on Facebook Monday, backfired on the alleged perpetrators, as it brought out the crowd which rallied around the aspiring businessmen.

Axaholics reached out, after the “bullying” incident, offering their parking lot space for the fundraiser on Friday, from 3-7 p.m., where the refreshing drink will be coupled with cookies and bracelets for sale.

T-shirts, with lemonade slogans for the boys, were created by Becky Caswell, with Craft Girl Creations Becky Caswell, in approximately an hour. McDonald and The Butchery, along with Axaholics, will be aiding the boys with cookies, ice and lemonade on Friday.

“It is a sad fact of life that there are people that are mean,” said Lindsay Wilson, director with Shayla Bee. “In fact, sometimes otherwise good people do mean things. We all have two choices, let that defeat you, pack it in and become the victim or you can overcome and persevere. Continue with your plans or mission. We are proud of these young people that have chosen to help others, in spite of the obstacles before you.”

Wilson continued, “In this case these kids are learning an incredible lesson, there are more people in this world willing to support you than try to defeat you. I hope the kids that did this ‘naughty’ thing are taught and learn a lesson too. You can be bad or you can be good, there are consequences. You can also apologize and help make this right again. That is on you, do that and all maybe forgiven.”

Keegan said he and his friends plan to continue lemonade sales next week near their home address, with a new target for their generosity, local law enforcement different fundraiser — doughnuts for police and sheriff’s deputies.

Kayden, a member of the Kiwanis Builder’s Club at Spencer Middle School, indicated the three boys will try and host the stand three times a week until schools start in August.

“It’s a good cause and it makes me feel good,” he said. “It’s good for my resume too, but it’s a good cause.”

Keegan added, “I like putting smiles on peoples faces.”

NORTH Y

From Page 1A

“They look at the potential zoning of the property to generate traffic volumes from the zoning,” Gifford said. “It will be their projections of what the traffic is going to be for our fully developed development in the future, so we’ll be able to use this for other stuff.”

The city manager asserted he did not foresee the traffic study delaying Kwik Star’s development project.

“Kwik Star is moving on this as quickly as possible, and the DOT assures everyone that this is just going to look at turn lanes and is not going to affect any access or anything like that,” Gifford said. The last I heard from Kwik Star is they’re shooting to close by Aug. 12, that’s their goal. Things pop up all the time so I can’t predict what may or may not happen, but it looks like right now they’re moving that way.”

It is the hope of the city to continue developing the North

Y area, which is where the hotel study comes into play as well. According to the city manager, hotel developers who may be interested in the North Y area for a hotel have communicated with city officials and requested the city fund a hotel study.

“I know from past experience that any time you are recruiting a hotel they always require a hotel study,” Gifford said. “It’s basically a market study to see how what the demand is for rooms and that sort of thing.”

The study will be conducted by Patek Hospitality Consultants for approximately \$13,000. Once completed, the city will own the hotel study and may be used for any new hotel looking to develop in the area or the city’s current hotel owners.

“(The study) will last until there’s a significant change — like another hotel coming in, or if we would lose something big that fills hotel rooms,” Gifford said. “There’s no firm date on how long they last, it just depends on the people who are looking to build a hotel.”

WEUVE

From Page 1A

do we fund this project or that project, how do we make sure the departments have the resources that they need. It’s kind of always a puzzle, and putting that together can be challenging at times, that’s what’s kind of unique about it, no two years are the same in everything. It’s been exciting in that way.

He added, “It is a challenge at times with an ever-changing landscape on how budgets are put together and where resources are coming from. You always have to stay up on things and try to see how this new puzzle piece will fit in the existing puzzle.”

Serving as Spencer’s finance director has been the longest

position Weuve has held throughout his career. The finance director can recall working behind the scenes on many community projects to ensure they were financed. It was fun for Weuve to assist with company expansions, bringing new retail to the city and other projects allowing the community to grow and prosper.

Though looking forward to his new position in Pella, Weuve has been happy to live and work in Spencer, stating the town is built on a great community.

“When you need it, the community rallies to get things done,” Weuve said. “We’re always looking forward, and the council has been really great to work with for all these years. (Spencer) has been a great place to live and to work.”

MCCREARY’S

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The Dock is unique in that it is located inside the Iowa Lakes Community College building in Spencer. The restaurant is one aspect of McCreary’s Hospitality business, which also features catering and a food truck.

Cassie estimated she and Mark have approximately 60 years of experience in the food service industry between them.

“We’re pretty proud of where we’ve come from and what we’ve done and what we’ve accomplished,” Cassie said.

Mark added, “We’ve come a long way and we’ve learned a lot.”

The McCrearys first entered the food service business to-

gether with their restaurant The Golden Leaf Steakhouse in Lester in the late ‘90s, which they ran for three years. They started their business in Spencer by catering out of their home in 2008. They added the food truck in 2014, which Cassie described as a “leap of faith.”

“At the time it just seemed like a natural progression for us,” Cassie said. “At that point, we had no intention of brick and mortar.”

Plans changed once the McCrearys opened The Dock, the cafeteria for Iowa Lakes Community College, in 2018. One year later, the restaurant was opened to the public.

“One of the things about McCreary’s that I find unique is that the owners had a previous restaurant, then built them-

selves back up to have this restaurant,” Williams said. “And now it’s not just a restaurant — it’s also a catering business and it’s also a food truck. They’ve really expanded it themselves and really upped their game to several different aspects of the food industry.”

During the ABR Roadshow’s visit to The Dock, the McCrearys cooked up some of their signature dishes for the camera, including their jalapeno bacon cheeseburger, pulled pork grilled cheese and steak breakfast burrito.

“I was nervous, but I wasn’t overly nervous,” Cassie said. “It was just like sitting and talking to a friend and just telling our story, where we are and where we’ve been. I thought it was pretty comfortable and easy-

going.”

The feeling was mutual, as Williams enjoyed talking to the McCrearys and their staff as well.

“I had a great time meeting everybody,” Williams said. “They’re an awesome bunch of people, and we really appreciate them inviting us here.”

The restaurant’s finished episode premiere date will be announced on their Facebook page and will be featured on ABR’s website at <https://americasbestrestaurants.com/>. It was estimated production for the McCreary’s episode would take approximately six to eight weeks. Once the episode is completed, the McCreary’s plan to have a screening party at The Dock, which will be open to the public.

FAGEN

From Page 1A

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The role of Spencer finance director will be temporarily filled by a familiar face. As the city searches for a new director upon Brian Weuve’s departure in August, former city manager Bob Fagen will be the interim director. Fagen’s appointment was approved Monday by the Spencer City Council.

Mayor Steve Bomgaars and City Manager Dan Gifford both came up with the idea to reach out to the former city manager separately, which encouraged the two leaders their idea had merit.

“We felt that we needed to get somebody in that chair in the interim because the finances of a city the size of Spencer are pretty complex,” Bomgaars said. “We almost simultaneously mentioned Bob’s name as somebody we might want to

contact.”

Gifford added, “He did a lot of the financial work (for the city), and so he still remembers some of this. He should help us get over the hump until we can get a little farther down the road in the very tough job of finding Brian’s replacement.”

Fagen will take on the role of finance director for eight weeks. The former city manager will work a couple of days a week on site and for the rest of the time he will be working remotely from his home office.

Though his interim period is eight weeks, Fagen would be willing to step away at any time should the city hire a new finance director during that time.

“He’s not holding us to those eight weeks, he just can’t go over that because of his retirement,” Gifford said. “He’ll leave any time before that eight weeks if we need him to.”

Fagen is retired, but did serve as interim city manager in Marshalltown for about five or six weeks this summer.

The city intends to use the resources of search firm Hinson Consulting to search for a replacement finance director. The proposal to contract with Hinson Consulting for up to \$4,250 was approved by the council on Monday.

“Planning, vetting and hiring a finance director is pretty specialized as it’s a small pool,” Gifford said. “(Our human resources) is very capable, but the search firm has quite a few more contacts to reach out to. We can get some top candidates this way.”

The city manager believed the price Hinson Consulting requested was reasonable for the job it will do. The search firm will reach out to qualified candidates and bring them to the city’s human resources department, who will handle them and handle the rest of the process.

“There’s a lot of who you know in this kind of business, and so these guys need to know people that are already out there working,” Gifford said. “I think they’ll do a good job for us, and I am looking forward to what candidates they bring to us.”

Gifford cautioned council members the search process could last outside of the eight-week interim period before ideal candidates are found and selected.

“It will depend on what the pool looks like when (Hinson Consulting) starts looking,” Gifford said. “It could go really fast, or it might extend out. It’s kind of hard to tell until they get out there looking and making inquiries.”

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