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PCM EXPLORER



Christopher Braunschweig/PCM Explorer

Steve Ashing, a reserve deputy paramedic for the Jasper County Sheriff's Office, opens a backpack full of medical supplies and equipment. Ashing is part of the advanced life support pilot program at the sheriff's office, which allows part-time reserve deputies with paramedic-level training to respond to emergency calls in rural areas and assist volunteer agencies.

'I WANT TO SHARE MY STORY'

Ukrainian refugee in Newton to share first-hand experience of Russia's invasion

By Christopher Braunschweig
PCM Explorer

Alina Poznanska, a Ukrainian refugee, is more than 5,000 miles away from home. No more air strike sirens. No more bumper-to-bumper traffic jams. No more sleepless nights in the hallways away from any windows. No signs of war. She and her two children are safe in their home away from home in Newton.

Still, she worries about her husband, who is still in Ukraine. For the past year the Eastern European country has been bombarded by Russian military forces. Poznanska can still remember the day of the invasion, and the speculation of an attack months before Russian tanks began lining up near the borders.

"We didn't want to believe in it," Poznanska said. "I remember two days before the war I listened to Biden and his speech. The night before I talked to my friend and she told me, 'You know the war will come. We have to accept it.' I can't even imagine in 21st century how it can be possible."

When the war finally started, she got a call from her friend early in the morning. What are you doing right now? "I'm sleeping! What do you think I'm doing?" Poznanska said. Wake up. The war has

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PROACTIVE APPROACH TO SERVICE

Jasper County's EMS enhancement program makes a leap of faith, but state support might still be needed

By Christopher Braunschweig
PCM Explorer

Editor's note: The following story is the final article in a multi-part series about Jasper County's efforts to improve emergency care for rural residents and assist the volunteer teams struggling to keep crews full and find

new members, many of which may not have the means or time to be certified for paramedic-level care.

Brandon Talsma wants Jasper County residents — especially those who are older and live in the more rural areas — to be assured that when they dial 911 for a medical emergency, there will be an ambulance and a paramedic on scene in

a timely manner to administer care and even save a life.

No citizen should have to wait 45 minutes to receive care, and Talsma said thankfully that has not happened in Jasper County. But it did not stop the chair of the county board of supervisors nor the

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Jasper County creates new opioid committee

Officials will review applications from local agencies requesting settlement money from the opioid crisis

By Christopher Braunschweig
PCM Explorer

To better distribute the money Jasper County will receive from nationwide opioid lawsuit settlements, the board of supervisors on Feb. 14 created a committee largely made up of department heads who would not be eligible for the dispersals and will instead be tasked with deciding which agencies can receive the funds.

In a 3-0 vote, the board decided the opioid committee will be made up of

deputy auditor of financials Teresa Arrowood, county auditor Jenna Jennings, county attorney Scott Nicholson, health department administrator Becky Pryor and county supervisor Denny Stevenson.

According to an article published by The Associated Press in November 2022, a number of United States pharmacy chains agreed to pay billions of dollars' worth of settlements over the toll of the opioid crisis. Governments and pharmacies filled prescriptions they

should have flagged as inappropriate, the lawsuits say.

Opioid-involved overdose deaths rose from more than 21,000 in 2010 to more than 80,000 in 2021, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. In 2017, there were 47,600 reported deaths linked to opioids. Three years later, the number of reported deaths skyrocketed to 68,630 and only continues to climb.

As a result of the litigations, Jasper County Supervisor Brandon Talsma said the supervisors need to formally

create a committee as there are certain guidelines the money can and cannot be used for. The committee would be responsible for distributing and overseeing applications from agencies requesting funds.

"They can define a recommendation before the board of supervisors," he said.

Nicholson explained the background of the lawsuits and how the county came up with the five members on the committee. Years ago when Mike Jacobsen was county attorney he met with the board and suggested supervisors hire attorneys to settle

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February legislative gathering brings heavy discussion on gun violence

Rozenboom and Dunwell say it is a cultural issue that may derive from mental illness, violence in media

Christopher Braunschweig
PCM Explorer



Iowa legislators Sen. Ken Rozenboom and Rep. Jon Dunwell spoke with residents during the League of Women Voters of Jasper County's second legislative gathering of the year Feb. 18 at the Newton Public Library. Although the January meeting was attended by more people, the discussions were just as lively. Discussions on gun violence led to sidebars about mental health and mental illness, traumas at home and violence in media, all of which were cited as potential factors in America's culture of gun violence. Newton News will share more coverage of the discussions that happened at the meeting in future issues.