



A special hi, hello & how are you doing to our

Subscriber of the week:
Dallas Grundstrom
West Fargo, ND

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REGION: Fire breaks out at a mechanic shop in Grafton. PG. 2



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EDUCATION: FFA and ag students celebrated National Ag Week. PG. 11

By Hilary Nowatzki

For a large portion of winter, an elusive interstate vagabond was spotted by countless community members roaming the fields and ditches between Highway 17 in Grafton and along I-29 near Drayton.

After months of adventure and hardship, the stray German shepherd, now fittingly named 'Freeway' has found a freeway to freedom from a life of fear, hunger, and pain.

On Jan. 13, Jeremy Praska and his daughter were headed to Grand Forks when his daughter spotted a dog. A few years prior, Praska said he and his daughter narrowly avoided hitting a stray dog, and instead loaded the pup into the vehicle to take it to safety.

Praska hoped this dog would do the same; instead, the German shepherd would lead Praska, and numerous others, on quite the chase that spanned months.

"When I found out that he'd been out there for months at that point already, I was like yeah, I don't want to give up on him at all," stated Praska. "I just really didn't want him out there in the country running around like he was. I just knew there was a better situation for him."

As Praska and others would later find out, getting Freeway to a better situation would take some tenacity.

"He's a smart dog - there's no doubt about that," said Greg Andreen of Grafton, who would later team up with Praska to get Freeway to safety.

Andreen's daughter is also the family member who spotted Freeway first, right along Highway 17 where Praska's daughter first spotted him. Greg's daughter immediately called her father to report her sighting, as the family has a German shepherd who looks much like Freeway.

Andreen returned several times to that location on Highway 17 to look after hearing about numerous sightings from fellow residents. He also called the Highway Department to ask them to call him if they spotted the dog.

"Everybody I talked to, I said, 'if you see a dog over there, you call me and I'll come over right away,'" said Andreen.

Soon, Andreen would see a post someone had shared from Praska on Facebook, detailing his own search for the stray dog wandering Highway 17.

"I reached out to Jeremy because both of us were doing the same work



Jeremy Praska (left) and Greg Andreen (right) pose with Freeway at The Animal Elskan Inn last Friday.

to do the same job. So let's all team up," explained Andreen. "He [Praska] got a trap from Grand Forks Circle of Friends. And that one, it didn't work - he's just too big of a dog."

Andreen went about building a custom live trap.

He was happy to do so, recalling how his grandfather had taught him how to make live traps as a boy for catching raccoons and other critters. It would take three models, and certainly test his engineering skills, but Andreen was eventually successful.

The team was worried for a period after going a couple weeks without seeing the dog. They knew he had been out for around four months at this point, and feared the worst due to his prolonged exposure.

Turns out, Freeway just wanted a change of scenery and decided to call rural Drayton his new 'home.'

"Once he made it to Drayton and we heard that he was going into somebody's dog kennel and eating their food. So I thought, well, if you're

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Successful Anything hosted last weekend



Stacey Van Camp manned the Bible School bake sale booth.



Goes Sale

By Hilary Nowatzki

"I couldn't have asked for a better sale," said Jamie Mattice, organizer of Drayton's first ever Anything Goes Sale.

Drayton High School's gymnasium was filled with vendors, shoppers, and students for most of last Saturday. Vendors offered items ranging from baked goods to second hand sales to crafts made by local artisans.

All of the funds raised from booth rental and admission fees are slated to assist the Class of 2025 for a senior trip they are planning next year. In total, Mattice reports over \$700 was raised for the class from admission sales alone on Saturday.

"It went very, very well for our first sale. I'm very pleased," she stated. "It was our first year, so I did learn a few lessons, but we'll just make next year even better."

The junior class students were Mattice's main helpers, and of course brought along some of their friends to assist as well.

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Photos by Lyle Van Camp

Some of Liz Linster's beautiful pottery that was available Saturday.

The gym was jam packed with treasures and treasure seekers.



Walsh County continues plans to replace aging jail

By Mike Alan Steinfeldt

For the better part of the past two years, the Walsh County Commission has been attempting to tackle the issue of a new or renovated jail at the Walsh County Law enforcement center in Grafton.

Walsh County Sheriff Ron Jurgens says the old jail was built nearly 50 years ago in 1975 and has developed several plumbing problems over the years. He said the state has basically mandated that something has to be done.

"The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is our licensing agency and they come in every year and do an inspection on our jail," Jurgens said. "They've been working with us for about the past five years about some of the plumbing issues in our jail and we've been written up for those issues. The only reason at this point that they've been allowing us to remain open is that we are working on planning for the future and maybe building a new facility."

According to Jurgens, the Walsh County Commission and his department have been searching for a range of solutions. Those solutions have included renovating the current jail located within the Walsh County Law Enforcement Center or using an existing building within Walsh County and renovating it.

"We've looked at the vacant Wells Fargo Bank Building, we've looked at the State School (Life Skills and Transition Center) and other facilities and by the time we looked at the cost of renovating those buildings, the most cost-effective option is to build a new facility."

Jurgens said they have looked at various sites for a new building and the most feasible location is the area between the current Walsh County Administration building and the Walsh County Courthouse at 638 Cooper Avenue.

Jurgens said the current jail is almost at capacity on a daily basis. He said in addition to that, the current jail does not house female prisoners, because they don't have the space needed for them.

"So we really need to study what are [the] needs are in Walsh County and where do we go from here and come up with a plan," he said.

Jurgens said that after the completion of a needs study and space assessment with a company in Wisconsin, it was determined that the best plan of action is to upgrade from a 16 bed facility to a 48 bed facility.

"That seems like a huge jump from our current 16 beds, but if we're going to properly classify our prisoners and have the space to hold prisoners in Walsh County now and in the future, that's the size they recommend us to build," he said.

In the case of female prisoners who are charged with crimes in Walsh County, the ability to house them in the new jail would be a cost savings in the long run. Jurgens said that as it stands right now, female prisoners are transferred as far away as Williston, depending on where there is available space.

"In the past year, we've had female prisoners in eight different facilities in North Dakota, including Williston, Bottineau, Rolla, Rugby, Devils Lake,

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