

Bakken Briefs

Divide to have big land sale

Twenty-one recently foreclosed properties in Crosby and Noonan are up for auction by the Divide County Auditor's Office on Nov. 18.

Auditor Gayle Jastrzebski said the number of foreclosed properties this year is unusually high.

"Normally we only get a couple back, if any," Jastrzebski said.

Of the properties up for sale, 16 are in Crosby and five are in Noonan. The Crosby properties comprise eight houses, five undeveloped lots and two lots with unclassified buildings. The Noonan properties are five undeveloped lots.

The owners of the properties, foreclosed because they have three years of delinquent taxes, have the opportunity to reclaim them up until the day of the auction, Jastrzebski said. All three years of overdue taxes must be provided.

--The Journal, Crosby

Baptism tradition in Burke

Magdalene Loete traveled all the way from New Mexico to be baptized at Tonset Lutheran Church in rural Lignite in July.

Loete, the infant daughter of Payton and Jordan Loete, is the sixth generation of the Gustafson family to be baptized at the church.

Her great-grandfather, Mike Gustafson, helped organize the event, as the church holds a special place in Gustafson family history: When the church was formed in 1905, Mike's grandfather Joe helped to construct the building.

Weekly services were held there until 1968, when the church closed and merged with two churches in Lignite. But the building has been preserved and maintained, and Mike Gustafson knew he wanted to coordinate an event there to commemorate his great-granddaughter.

--Burke County Tribune, Bowbells

Tioga has new police chief

The city of Tioga has promoted its interim police chief to the full-time position.

Cody Hallin received the promotion at a special city commission meeting Nov. 3 after having served as interim police chief since previous chief Josh Nelson resigned on Sept. 18.

"I had a good month and a half to prepare to take on the full role," Hallin said.

Hallin was born and raised in International Falls, Minnesota, graduated from Bemidji State University in 2018 and came to Williston to work for the Williams County Sheriff's Office.

"In Minnesota, it's hard to get a job in a good area with no experience," Hallin said.

After shifting to a role at the county correctional center, Hallin wanted to get back on the road and became a patroller in Tioga in 2024.

--Williston Herald

Watford unveils new brand

Months of discussion and investment has led to Watford City launching its rebranding campaign Nov. 1, with a new logo and a new tagline: "Where Freedom Meets Fulfillment."

The \$18,500 project, which included extensive community surveys and workshops, was spearheaded by the city in partnership with Bismarck-based brand agency The Good Kids, which also created the North Dakota state icon.

City officials stated the comprehensive rebrand is an essential step in solidifying a unified, forward-looking identity for one of the fastest-growing microcommunities in the U.S.

According to a news release, the core message of the new identity is "Rooted Innovation," a blend of the community's "warm, rugged authenticity" with its "bold, forward momentum."

--McKenzie County Farmer, Watford City

Pierce pig farm voted down

After more than two hours of testimony, the Pierce County Planning and Zoning Board voted 6-0 on Nov. 5 to recommend denying Dakota SAO's application for a commercial pig farm.

The additional testimony came on top of two hours of previous testimony on Oct. 16.

A key piece of information that helped sway the board was a map showing Hurricane Lake within a mile of the proposed hog operation.

Jeff Kenner, from the Devils Lake area, pointed out the Hurricane Lake Waterfowl Production Area lies within the setback established in ordinance for animal feeding operations near recreational, residential or commercial uses.

Testimony at the meeting reiterated concerns about odor, water contamination and draw on an aquifer that supplies regional drinking water.

--Minot Daily News

Mercer talks energy projects

Vision West ND's public workshop in Beulah on Oct. 29 featured speakers on area energy projects ranging from rare earth metals to iron to jet fuel, as well as panels on natural gas pipelines, regulatory action and landowner rights.

Natural gas has been a major discussion topic in the Beulah and Hazen area for years, with previous attempts at bringing a gas pipeline to Mercer County having proven unsuccessful.

One panel at the workshop discussed the Bakken East Pipeline project, which would carry gas from McKenzie County all the way across the state to near Fargo. The proposed route goes through Mercer and Dunn counties.

Granville Brinkman, the Beulah economic development director, said the project could create nearly 900 jobs in Mercer County.

--Beulah Beacon

School Board Meets:

Board To Offer Business Manager Position

By Mary Kilen

Stanley School Board held their regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 13. Highlights of the meeting included one of the two annual superintendent evaluations, project updates and a recommendation to fill the business manager position.

Financial Report

Superintendent Tim Holte reported the district has received another large payment from the county from unpaid taxes from last year. This payment of around \$100,000 continues to make up for the shortfall from last year's budgeted amount.

Student Council Report

Student council members Erika Littlefield and Jessa Longmuir reported they are planning a unity tree project for the hallway by the cafeteria. Every student will be able to put their handprints on the boards used for the project.

They are holding a food drive in November. They are working on the Snoball dance on January 10. They also reported that Red Ribbon Week activities went very well.

Superintendent Evaluation

The board held one of two required annual superintendent evaluations. The evaluations rate the superintendent with a satisfactory or unsatisfactory in each of the categories. The categories included relationship with school board; relationship with community; recruitment and retention of staff; relationship with students and parents; supervision of staff; identification and implementation of school board policy needs; financial management skills; educational leadership; effective records management; and supervision of buildings, grounds, transportation, and student safety. Holte received one unsatisfactory rating in recruitment and retention of staff. The board moved to approve the evaluation as a whole.

Request To Destroy Records

The board moved to approve the request to destroy bank statement and reconciliation reports prior to fiscal year 2019-2020. The district is required to maintain those records for five years beyond any fiscal year.

Close School Store Account

Superintendent Holte was requesting permission to close the checking account for the school store. The school store has not been used in two years and the account is accruing fees for inactivity. The board moved to close that account at BNC.

Project Updates

Superintendent Holte reported that materials for the greenhouse in the new addition should be delivered and they should be able to finish that. There will be a change order for additional electric work that was not accounted for.

The district is still waiting for other change orders, including for the extension of the meat rail system, paint peeling near emergency lights, costs for renovations on the

old greenhouse, and credit for the countertops.

Building Committee

The building committee received quotes for a sand spreader and a v-plow for the pickup. With the newly purchased skid steer, they do not believe they will need the v-plow. The sand spreader would be used for the parking lot and sidewalks. The district will also check with the city, state or county to see if they could secure the sand/salt mixture. The board moved to approve the purchase in the amount of \$11,000. The budget set aside \$110,000 for equipment. They have previously used \$80,000 for the purchase of the skid steer.

The committee is waiting on change proposals as well. The first is the extension of the meat rail and winch in the new addition meats lab. They are exploring alternatives and asking that the two items be separated in the \$18,376 quote before making any recommendation to the board. They are also waiting on a change proposal regarding the old shop/greenhouse area. They are looking at options to do the work internally rather than accepting the \$6,000 quote.

Superintendent Holte reported there is still \$174,000 in the contingency fund for this building project as they near completion. They also know that there are funds that were not spent for snow removal and temporary electricity during construction.

Policy Recommendation

The board held second reading and adoption of ABBA - Comprehensive Tobacco Policy.

2026 Meeting Dates

The board reviewed proposed board meeting dates. Most of the meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. The March meeting is set for March 11 to hold the superintendent evaluation. June is set for June 22 because the board must meet thirteen days after the election to certify results. They currently have also changed the dates for October and November, but those dates may be adjusted due to conference schedules and the second superintendent evaluation.

District Office Request

The board gave approval to close the district office on November 28 and December 26 if all staff want to take the day off.

Park Board Request

The district received a request from the Park Board to use the south end of the practice football field for an ice rink. They had made the same request last year, but it was not set up. The board moved to approve the request using the same basic contract they had in place last year.

Resignation

The board moved to accept the resignation of Crystal Hayden from her counselor's position effective immediately. They also moved to approve her request to waive the

fees for ending her contract early.

Superintendent Report

Superintendent Holte reported enrollment is at 781 with 447 students at the elementary and 334 at the junior/senior high.

Holte reported the district had not yet received their monthly oil and gas production payment. The district has received \$394,000 this year with the annual loan payment at \$454,000.

The schools auction with Stefes Auction will start on December 4 and run through December 11. Successful bidders will have until January 9 to claim their items. Holte reported there has already been interest in some of the items they are selling.

Holte discussed an email from the City of Stanley requesting a letter of support for a transportation grant. The city will be applying for grants that would fall under the safe routes to schools options. The board approved submitting the letter of support.

Holte reported that former business manager Barb Reese has helped out from time to time and will be helping with payroll this month. The board moved to compensate her at what her hourly rate would have been for hours she has helped.

Principal Reports

Elementary Principal Brooks Stafslie reported the elementary school is doing a change drive to support the family of a student who recently passed away. They are participating in a food drive with the student council. The flu shot clinic was rescheduled for Friday, Nov. 14. Some activities from Red Ribbon Week were rescheduled. The fourth and fifth grade winter concert is set for December 9 at 6:00 p.m.

Assistant Elementary Principal Jenn Tronset reported the Title night went really well. Teacher classroom observations are underway.

High School Principal Alecia Pulver reported they are still collecting stats from the new flex time and they will share those at the end of the semester. Staff surveys were done as they look to make sure they are getting things accomplished efficiently. She said they feel they are the right track with this.

She reported that KMOT was at the school to do a story on the new addition. NDDPI also came to highlight the use of fresh fruits and vegetables at the high school.

Assistant High School Principal Paula Brown reported that she has also been doing the classroom teacher observations, hoping those are completed before the Christmas break.

Board Comments

Board president Matt Ruland said he received a letter from the region two school association business managers association. Former business manager Barb Reese received a certificate of merit and diamond award certificate at their recent meeting. She also received recognition for 25 years of service. He thanked her for her service to the

school district.

Business Manager Position

The board thanked the committee for setting up the interviews for the business manager position. They said that all three candidates the board interviewed had strengths that set them apart. After the interviews held on Monday, Nov. 11, the board now moved to offer the position to Elizabeth Hall. The board then held an executive session to discuss negotiations and set a wage range to offer.

Card of Thanks

The Mountrail Community Food Pantry would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to many wonderful donors this past week. We posted the pictures on our Facebook page, if you'd like to know more. There are some very happy faces in those pictures.

Thank you to Mountrail Williams Electric Coop for their amazing donation and delivery of a LOT of food to our pantry. This was from MWEC and their employees!

Thank you to ConocoPhillips for their very appreciated donation and delivery of food to our pantry, all collected by their employees in New Town.

Thank you to the Women of Today for their thoughtful donation and delivery of their own canned items.

Thank you to the Stanley Lions Club for their generous donation of money to our pantry, via their World Series raffle. The Lions find so many ways to raise money to help their community.

And lastly, but certainly not least, thank you to the dedicated preschool teachers, the delightful preschool children and their fantastic 6th grade buddies for all of the foods they collected and delivered to our pantry. How fun that was! They brought a big wagon full of food, twice, in addition to all of those little backpacks, with items in them! Thank you to the very considerate 6th grade class of Mrs. Wenger, who presented me with one of the gift cards celebrating World Kindness Day! I certainly love the idea of November being Kindness Month! I would say that the contents of this thank you note demonstrates perfectly the fact that kindness is flourishing in this community! Thank you for all your determination to help feed those that might not have enough for their families.

God bless each one of you.
c Mary Dennis and the amazing food pantry crew



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PUBLIC NOTICE

No hunting, trespassing, or carrying of firearms or weapons of any kind is allowed on the following property in Mountrail County,

legally posted with no hunting signs, described as,

Township 156 North, Range 90 West of the 5th P.M.

Section 1: SW1/4
Section 2: SE1/4NE1/4, Lots 1 & 2, SE1/4, SW1/4 less ROW
Section 2: SW1/4NW1/4 Less ROW; Lot 4 less ROW
Section 3: Lot 1

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The Indoor Gun Range at The Pines in Stanley

OPEN FOR THE SEASON

Range Hours will be:
Tuesdays & Thursdays: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Sundays: 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

You can find us on Facebook at Stanley Indoor Gun Range.

If you have questions, contact us through messages, email stanleyindoorrange@gmail.com or text Michele Webster, Stanley Indoor Gun Range Manager at 903-932-1563



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CITY OF STANLEY - NOTICE OF REMOVAL

Please remove **campers/RVs, boats, buses, trailers and/or utility/job trailers** and **any abandoned vehicles off city streets immediately** so that the city can facilitate snow removal as needed. Also, remove any obstructions, such as planters, from boulevards and street intersections that could hinder snow removal.

TIME LIMIT FOR PARKING ON CITY STREETS AND ALLEYS

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to leave standing, either attended or unattended, any motor vehicle or motorized vehicle for more than **seventy-two (72) consecutive hours** on any public street or alley.

It is unlawful for any person to cause, create or maintain any obstruction of any street, alley, sidewalk, or other public right of way. Anyone in violation of this will be subject to fines and towing fees.