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Construction Class Will Build Restrooms at Linduska Field School Board Prepares for New School Year

Courtesy www.greencountynews.com

The underwhelming restrooms at Linduska Field, home of Ram football, soccer and track, will be replaced by the end of the coming school year as the uncertain housing market continues to impact the school's construction trades classes.

The school has a long history of students building entire houses over the course of a school year, but the increased cost of new construction and the risk of building a house without having already identified a buyer for it, has morphed the program into one of building needed district facilities.

During the 2022-23 school year construction students built a large storage building southeast of the high school. That project still isn't complete, as overhead doors ordered 10 months ago are still on back-order.

The Greene County Schools board of education at its July 19 meeting approved the 2023-24 class building a 553-sq ft steel post frame building with restrooms on the north end of the athletic field. Cost was approved not to exceed \$180,000, with funding from the district's PPEL (physical plant and equipment levy) fund.

The draft floor plan the board saw in June included six stools in the women's restroom, three stools and four urinals in the men's restroom, two large unisex handicapped accessible restrooms, and a storage

area. Cost for that plan was estimated at \$150,000.

The updated plan shows one fewer stool in the women's restroom and one fewer urinal in the men's restroom. The roof will hang over three feet on all four sides with paved walkways on three sides.

In other planning for the new school year, the board approved student book fees, meal prices and activity prices. Meal and book fees for students are unchanged from last year. The cost of an adult lunch is increasing from \$4.15 to \$4.85. The cost for an adult breakfast is increasing from \$2.50 to \$2.75.

The price of season activity passes also is not changing, but single game admissions are increasing. Football admissions, which are set by the football district, will increase from \$5 to \$7 for adults and K-12 students. The Heart of Iowa Activities Conference is increasing single admissions from \$5 to \$6 for adults and K-12 students. Admission to middle school events will remain at \$5 for adults and no charge for students.

Greene County admission gates are transitioning to being cashless. See related information from activities director David Wright.

The board approved the employee handbook which covers all employees.

The board approved depository limits at Heartland Bank, Home State Bank, Peoples Bank and the Iowa School Joint Investment Account. The board

appointed Teresa Hoyle as school board treasurer and Mumma-Pedersen Law Firm as the board's legal counsel.

The board approved a contract for sports medicine coverage with 21st Century Rehab at a cost of \$9,500, the same cost as last year.

The board, with directors Steve Fisher and John McConnell absent, briefly discussed placing the voted PPEL on the November school/city election. The tax must be approved by voters every 10 years. It is not a new tax in Greene County Schools.

The current voted PPEL rate is \$1.01 (per \$1,000 of taxable valuation) to a maximum rate of \$1.34. The property tax levy can be combined with a surtax on Iowa income tax, and the board changes the combination from year to year.

According to Superintendent Brett Abbotts, the PPEL has averaged \$.92 (per thousand) in the past eight years.

PPEL funds can be used to fund the purchase and improvement of grounds; purchase, construction or remodeling of buildings; major equipment purchases (including technology), and rental of land and equipment.

The board plans to promote renewal of the voted PPEL through town hall meetings, community coffees, and social media. The ballot issue must receive a simple majority of votes for approval.

Billie Jo Hoskins Into State 4-H Hall of Fame

ISU Extension has nominated Billie Jo Hoskins as the 2023 Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame inductee. She was recognized at the Greene County Fair and will officially be inducted at a ceremony at the Iowa State Fair on August 20.

Her nomination:

Billie Jo Hoskins may not have been a 4-Her in her youth but the time, energy, and dedication she put forth to Greene County 4-H displayed her love, spirit, and commitment to the 4-H organization.

Billie Jo has been a Greene County 4-H Volunteer for more than 25 years. She got involved in 4-H after running the Craft Show at the Greene County Fair for several years. Next, she became involved with the Youth Development Committee and the Greene County 4-H Foundation. She spent countless hours behind the scenes on these boards to provide the optimal experience for our 4-Hers.

While she spent time on both these boards, her two boys, Isaac, and Adam, were getting closer to fourth grade. When her oldest was old enough, she began as a leader of the Hardin Happy Hustlers Club, for 11 years. She enjoyed working with the kids and watching them grow and improve their 4-H projects every year. As a leader, she always set time aside in the fall to judge record books. Billie Jo was able to build relationships with both the kids and families that will last a lifetime.

Even though Billie Jo was a busy mom, she and her husband were able to take time to take their boys to cattle shows. They spent every year exhibiting beef at the Iowa State Fair and the Iowa Beef Expo. Year-round the family always found time to travel to all the open shows possible. She was able to meet many new friends who became family over the years.

Billie Jo enjoys her life as a grandma watching her three grandchildren begin their 4-H experiences. The boys are both active in Clover Kids and have been enjoying traveling to open exhibitions to show their cattle. Billie Jo has a passion for 4-H and it shows as her family continues the traditions that were started decades ago.

Today, having the opportunity to watch her children and grandchildren, Bentley, Hayden, and Cora grow up in 4-H is a



BILLIE JO HOSKINS

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Hoskins Appointed As County Auditor

Courtesy www.greencountynews.com

The Greene County supervisors at the July 17 meeting approved a resolution appointing Billie Jo Hoskins as auditor, but the draft minutes of the meeting don't show that she was administered the oath of office.

In a procedural error, County Treasurer Katlynn Mechaelsen jumped the gun and administered the oath of office to Hoskins prior to the supervisors approving the resolution. The agenda correctly listed the resolution first and then the oath of office, and County Attorney Thomas

Laehn wasn't at the meeting to catch the mistake before it occurred.

After Hoskins took the oath of office, the supervisors approved the resolution of her appointment. The draft minutes don't include her taking the oath of office. (Minutes can be amended by motion of the board at the next meeting.)

Hoskins fills the vacancy created by the July 14 retirement of auditor Jane Heun. Hoskins will serve the remainder of Heun's term, which expires Dec. 31, 2024.

The supervisors approved wage increases for all full-time Greene County deputies,

jailers, and dispatchers, but the raises weren't "across the board."

Williams suggested a week ago \$12,000 annual increases for the deputies, but he mentioned then that giving all deputies the same increase would make captain Shane Allen's wage more than that of chief deputy Nathaniel Chapman. By Iowa Code, the chief deputy is to be paid 85 percent of the sheriff's annual salary.

The resolution approved by the supervisors increases Allen's salary from 75 to 82 percent of the sheriff's, an increase of \$7,712. Investigator Heath Enns' salary increases

from 65 to 72 percent of the sheriff's, also an increase of \$7,712. Deputies Christopher Frehse, Cale Crowder and Ashley Wilson all received annual increases of \$12,000. Annual salaries now range from \$75,738 to \$90,340.

Four fulltime jailers received increases of \$6,000 each, with the range now from \$45,750 to \$55,140. Four full-time dispatchers also received increases of \$6,000 each, with the range from \$45,520 to \$53,340.

Williams a week ago also suggested hourly wage increases for part-time jailers and dispatchers. He said Mon-

day those increases would need to wait until next July.

The resolution increasing the wages notes that the sheriff has been hindered in efforts to attract and retain quality candidates for open positions "due to a shortage of applicants and competition from surrounding counties" and that surrounding jurisdictions are offering "significantly higher wages" than Greene County.

"Time will tell if this is a competitive wage," Board Chair John Muir said.

Treasurer Mechaelsen reported on the county's investments. As of June 30, 2023, the end of the fiscal year, the county had \$14,201,498 in interest-bearing accounts, certificates of deposit and bonds. Total interest income was during FY23 was \$282,113. Mechaelsen said she had been aggressive with investments and is "super proud" of the interest earned.

The county has \$2,293,000 in CDs that could be used for the upcoming HVAC project at the courthouse, she said.

She also reported the county's share of Wild Rose Casino revenues for the year ending June 30, 2023, was \$176,582. That's about \$5,000 less than last year, but still \$16,000 more than received in FY2021.

The supervisors approved a request from the Bell Tower Community Foundation for Mahanay Maestro Rick Morain to play "traveling" music - songs with lyrics about traveling - from the bell tower on Tuesday while RAGBRAI@riders go through Jefferson. He'll play two tunes after the hour chimes and two tunes after the half-hour chimes, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. He'll play some of them live and some he will have already recorded on the carillon.

Aug. 9 Deadline For Veterans to Get Backdated PACT Act Benefits

The PACT Act of 2022 expanded VA health care and benefits for military veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances while serving. It is the largest healthcare and benefit expansion in VA history.

Veterans who file a claim for benefits under the PACT Act prior to August 9, 2023, can receive benefits backdated to the date the bill was passed, August 10, 2022.

With the PACT Act, Vietnam, Gulf War and post-911 veterans are eligible for benefits if they have developed any of 11 respiratory-related conditions, reproductive cancers, kidney cancer, brain cancers, or some other forms of cancer. Other presumptive illnesses include asthma diagnosed post-service, COPD, emphysema, chronic rhinitis or sinusitis, and more. Complete information is available at <https://www.va.gov/pact>

Greene County veteran service officer Mike Bierl urges veterans to contact him via email at mbierl@greencounty.iowa.gov or by calling him at 515-386-5673 with any questions about PACT Act benefits or any other possible benefits, or to make an appointment.

"My mission is to inform Greene County veterans of every entitled benefit and give periodic VA and local veteran information," Bierl said.

He asks all Greene County veterans to provide him with an email address so he can efficiently share information.



Incentive Funds to Murphy Farm Meat



Murphy Farm Meats owners Dennis and Terry Murphy accepted a ceremonial check from Jefferson Matters. Shown are, from the left, front: Murphys, Tina Beaman, Amy Milligan

and Matt Wetrich of Jefferson Matters: Main Street. Back: Scott Weber, Jamie Daubendiek and Peg Raney, also of Jefferson Matters.

A new business in Jefferson has been awarded \$5,000 in Jefferson Wants You Incentive Funds for a new start up. Murphy Farm Meats, LLC is owned by Dennis and Terry Murphy of rural Jefferson. The new butcher shop will be located at 201 W Washington in Jefferson. A retail area for fresh meat cuts will be in the front of the building with custom butchering in the rear area. The Murphys have been raising their own beef which

they will butcher with plans to also sell pork, lamb and goat. Watch for opening information of their shop in the near future.

The Murphys currently host a Facebook page and a website murphyfarmmeats.com with opportunities for purchase of meat.

New business start ups in Jefferson are eligible to apply for one time start up costs of up to \$5,000 through the Jefferson Wants You Incentive Fund. The Small Busi-

ness Development Center (is a partner offering free business consultation with North Central Iowa regional director Justin Faiferlick at iowasbdc.org This is a project of the Economic Vitality Team of Jefferson Matters with local committee members reviewing applications and conducting interviews.

Remote workers who already live in Greene County or are locating here are eligible

to apply for a one year membership of flexible seating at Gravitate Coworking at 202 E State, Jefferson.

Find the applications at experiencejeffersoniowa.com under Grow Here; Entrepreneurial.

This project started as a Rural Return project funded in 2022 through local utilities, financial institutions, and a grant from Grow Greene County.

Fred Long Takes Charge As AL Commander



Incoming American Legion Post 11 Commander Fred Long, left, is congratulated by outgoing Post Commander Kenneth Arbuckle.

Arbuckle received a certificate of appreciation from American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard for meeting 100 percent of the post's membership goal for 2023. The certificate was presented to Arbuckle at the post's regular meeting July 10.

At the same meeting, Arbuckle passed the command onto incoming commander Fred Long.

Post 11 meets the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Welcome Center at Thomas Jefferson Gardens. All veterans are welcome to attend a meeting. Persons who want more information can contact Post Vice Commander Elvin Thompson at 515-386-2072 or Post Adjutant Barb Labate at 515-386-5547.

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