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BREMER COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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Waverly, Iowa **CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY** Tuesday, April 29, 2025

FUN FOR ALL ABILITIES



VGM Group of Waterloo presents a \$5,000 check for the Cedar River Park All-Inclusive Playground to Waverly representatives Saturday, April 26, at a grand opening and ribbon cutting for the structure. On the left and right ends are Waverly Leisure Services' Ashly Lichty and Garret Riordan. From second-left, Katie Morris, VGM; Waverly Mayor Mark Anderson; Matt Waller, Miracle League; Barb Anderson and Jenny Hughes, both VGM.



Waverly Leisure Services Director Garret Riordan speaks at the grand opening of the All-Inclusive Playground on Saturday, April 26.

All-Inclusive Playground opens at Cedar River Park

BY MIRA SCHMITT-CASH
reporter@waverlynewspapers.com

More than 50 people – many of them kids – attended a grand opening of the Cedar River Park All-Inclusive Playground on Saturday, April 26.

The community has been making good use of the All-Play Playground since it opened in December at Cedar River Park, according to Waverly Leisure Services Director Garret Riordan.

“I think every day that I drove by that it was over 50 degrees, there was half a dozen cars out here with people out here playing,” Riordan said.

Past Mayor Dean Soash echoed the popularity of the inclusive playground.

“I drive this several times a week,” Soash said. “As Garret said, there’s kids here, and the wonderful thing is, the majority of them are probably 6 or 7 years old and younger. It’s something that, regardless of physical abilities, they can handle and have fun with, as opposed to some of the large equipment that’s in some of the other parks. It’s absolutely great.”

Riordan said he was happy with the turnout Saturday.

“One of the major things for this playground is that it offers a chance for kids of all ages, all abilities to come together, play, interact, meet new people, and a chance for everyone to have fun,” Riordan said.

Riordan credited those conducting the design, engineering and construction: Modern Design Architects of Janesville designed the area. Diane Witt, who covers Eastern Iowa for with Outdoor Recreation Products, designed the play equipment and how that would sit, Riordan said. Mätt Construction of Sumner was the contractor that “built everything,

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May 1st | 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
Frederick's Sips n Eats
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What Happens When... You Try Something New?



Twin grandsons Bo (left) and Blair Breitbach were inspirations for author Julie Breitbach's eight children's books.

BY KATHY SUNDSTEDT
news@waverlynewspapers.com

Meet Julie Breitbach, author.

You may know Julie as co-owner and part-time worker at Joe's Knight Hawk, the well-established Waverly watering hole and social gathering venue. Or you may know her as a fan of college wrestling, the mom of three Wartburg grads—Jamie, Jay and Jenny—or as a member of Cedar River Readers or her church choir.

But there is more to “JuJu” Breitbach, including her writer pen name. She is the enthusiastic author of eight children's books, each bearing an important message for kids. Her books are available online, at Waverly Public Library and at Meyer Pharmacy.

See NEW, A2

A text too late: Wapsie Valley stages mock car crash Thursday

BY TAYLOR NOHRENBURG
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“It was more real than I thought,” Dallas Tissue said Thursday as the fake blood still dotted his head after the mock car crash.

Wapsie Valley High School held a simulated car crash for students to raise awareness of distracted driving and the potential catastrophic impacts to friends, students and other drivers. With collaboration among the Bremer County Sheriff's Office, Iowa State Patrol, Oran, Fairbank and Readlyn First Responders, Kaiser-Corson Funeral Home and the Wapsie Valley FFA, the car crash was rather real to some viewers of the event.

“This is the first time that we had the mock car crash at Wapsie Valley for five or six years now, and we saw a need to host this at our school due to unsafe driving practices by our students, unfortunately,” said FFA Advisor Carmen Wille. “The kids have put a lot of time and planning into it... They really saw the importance with this, so they wanted to go through with it.”

Since February, organizers have been working with local responders, the fu-



Courtney Rochette with Fairbank EMS and Nick Curley with Fairbank Fire tend to Lane Shores at the mock car crash Thursday.

neral home and community members to put on the event that is hosted every five years at the school. Two cars were sourced following crashes of their own and were used as props with makeup done by a volunteer from a local EMS department.

The victims included Tissue, LeeAnn Oltrogge, Eric Bryan, Mae Wedemeier and Lane Shores. Oltrogge was pronounced “dead” at the mock scene, a

See MOCK, A2

County sets budget after removing wage study

Countywide levy is \$177 on \$150,000 home, \$307 with rural services

BY MIRA SCHMITT-CASH
reporter@waverlynewspapers.com

The Bremer County Board of Supervisors made one change to the budget for the year ending June 30, 2026, after a public hearing on Tuesday, April 22.

They reduced funds allocated for a wage study after hearing Iowa Workforce Development was going to do the study at no charge. The change was not expected to reduce the tax levy any further.

Kassandra Johnson, county finance director, detailed the levy reduction.

The Bremer County-wide levy is being reduced to \$5.23 and change (5.23465), from \$5.55 and change (5.54862) per \$1,000 assessed valuation, which is tantamount to a reduction of 31.4 cents per \$1,000 assessed.

The rural areas, which pay a higher levy than countywide be-

See BUDGET, A3

This week in local history



BY ELIZABETH BINGHAM
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Waverly Newspapers has old issues in bound volumes going back to at least 1971. We are taking advantage of this vast historical resource to take a trip down memory lane, recalling what was once newsworthy and seeing how much things have changed over the decades.

50 years ago

Wet conditions for the 1975 spring horse sale led the Chamber of Commerce to furnish bus transportation on a route that included the sales barn, motels and shopping areas in Waverly, which drew praise from visitors to the sale, we read in the top story of the April 29, 1975, issue of

See HISTORY, A3



JAYCEE CHAMPS—“Here is the Happel-Hahlweg team that won the Jaycee basketball league crown in Waverly this season: Back row, left to right—Dale Goeke, Fred Grawe, Jeff Bergman and Joe Crawford; front row: Ray Happel, Tom Leary, Terry Goetzinger and Doug Johnson. The team went undefeated” (from 1975).