

Updated: Vote for Morning Sun citizen of the year

Editor’s note: Morning Sun citizen of the year information is being re-run due to some incorrectly submitted information. See the updated information below.

MORNING SUN — The 2025 Morning Sun Citizen of the Year nominees are Jim Harbison, Bill (Scrappy) Rice and Kelse Truitt. Nomination letters will be in this week’s paper, msJuly4 website and Morning Sun 4th Happenings on Facebook.

The Morning Sun Citizen of the Year election will be on Thursday, June 19.

Those eligible to vote must be 18 years old. You also must meet one of these conditions:

- Be a resident of the Morning Sun School District,
- Be a patron of Morning Sun Mutual Telephone Co. (with an 868 prefix) or
- Have an address with Morning Sun’s zip code (52640).

Your votes can be cast in one of these ways;

■ Go to Mellinger Library on June 19 from 4–7 p.m. and fill out a ballot

■ Absentee ballots will be available at the Mutual Telephone Co. office from Thursday, June 12 until 3 p.m. Thursday, June 19.

■ Vote online June 19 from 6 a.m.–7 p.m. The link will be located on the msJuly4 website and Morning Sun 4th Happenings on Facebook.

Following are the 2025 nominations printed as submitted:

Jim Harbison

I would like to nominate Jim Harbison for 2025 Citizen of the Year. Jim has been

very active in the youth sports programs in Morning Sun throughout his adult life. He has acted as a coach and an organizer. He has been especially active in the Morning Sun Tiger Wrestling Tournament and the Morning Sun Beginners Tournament, keeping the wrestling legacy of Morning Sun alive.

During the Fourth of July celebration, Jim volunteers his time to organize the toilet bowl races and also to announce various activities uptown. Jim is definitely a very dedicated community volunteer.

Please consider voting for Jim as Morning Sun’s 2025 Citizen of the Year. —*Beth Shenpolk*

Bill (Scrappy) Rice

This year, I would like to nominate Bill (Scrappy) Rice. People that get nominated are people who love our community and help in any way they can to make our town a better place to love and grow our families.

Bill moved to Morning Sun in the early ‘70s. He raised three children and two step-children. Bill retired from J.I. Case after 30 years, but upon retiring he was very active in Morning Sun’s Youth League for 10 years.

He had some of the best baseball teams in the area, and many of those teams won league titles. Some of those young people from his leagues went on to play at college levels. He taught the kids the fundamentals of the game and also encouraged them to work hard and go the extra mile to achieve success.

He was always a fair coach and was always there to help any child who might

have been struggling to have confidence in themselves. One thing that stands out to me is that he made sure every team had uniforms to wear proudly and always made sure each child had the equipment they needed.

While coaching, he was the man that made sure the dirt fields were in great shape every day, to make sure our playing fields were the best around. That’s how much pride he gave to the game of baseball and the confidence in his teams.

He also helped on many slow pitch tournaments over the years that helped raise money to help different organizations.

Bill also served a term on the city council with pride and a good mindset for our community.

When folks in our town mention Bill’s name, it’s associated with the mowing of our city hall lawn, the adjacent church lawn and the fire station lawn. He’s the guy that used to keep our school yard and Elmwood Cemetery looking very immaculate.

He spent countless hours weed eating, mowing and getting everything in its place for Memorial Day and especially for the 4th of July, which is one of our community’s biggest events.

As the years have gone by, Bill has had to slow down some, but he still keeps uptown mowed and beautiful. This man cares about our town and is always making sure it continues to stay that way.

I sincerely hope the rest of our community sees the importance that one man can make by just caring for the place we

proudly call home.

Bill always has a smile, and it’s not beyond him to stop to see if anyone needs help in any way.

This is what a Citizen of the Year means to me and my family. I hope you feel this way also. He’s very deserving of this honor. When you vote this year, take a long look around how things here are neat and tidy and give thanks to the man who does this.

This is how legends are made: having the heart of caring.

Happy 4th of July Morning Sun!
Pam Kerr and Family

Kelse Truitt

I feel Kelse Truitt is a wonderful example of Morning Sun’s 2025 Citizen of the Year. When Hometown Pride took over a lot of the responsibilities that the Lion/Lioness’ Club had done, Kelse stepped up! She is a mainstay in the kitchen preparing meals for BINGO, the Holiday Stroll, and concession stands. She has written numerous grants that have helped with funding of activities in Morning Sun for instance, the sidewalks along Division Street and improvements at Locust Grove Park, and has spearheading the drive for the splash pad.

During the summer months, you will also find her at the community garden, helping with the planting, watering, or harvesting the fruits of the garden, so that other people can stop and enjoy the many vegetables and fruits on the stand.

A person who definitely deserves the title of Morning Sun’s 2025 Citizen of the Year is Kelse Truitt.

Sue Anderson

‘Huge’ field trip attendance tops 5,000

LCCB plans weekly library summer programs

By JIM RUDISILL

Staff Writer

WAPELLO — Naturalist coordinator Lana Artz-McComb said the Louisa County Conservation Board (LCCB) had provided 113 school field trip programs in fiscal year 2025, mostly to in-county pre-kindergarten through sixth graders.

She presented the report to the LCCB at its June 2 meeting. Staff also gave middle and high school presentations, plus a few programs to out-of-county students who came to Louisa County.

Artz-McComb said over 1,400 students had been served, with total field trip attendance of over 5,030. LCCB naturalists had met at least twice with most grades.

“It’s huge,” Artz-McComb said. The total attendance figure is approximately half of the county’s total population.

LCCB summer camp programs started that day, Artz-McComb told the board. Staff are also planning to attend an outdoor jamboree at the Des Moines Conservation Board’s Big Hollow Recreation Area and events at Burlington’s River Days later this summer.

Artz-McComb said staff will be holding weekly programs at each of Louisa

County’s four library sites throughout the summer. “I’m excited,” she said.

Maintenance shop bid taken

LCCB accepted a low combination of bids from a Wapello firm to install a new roof, siding and other renovations on LCCB’s Wapello maintenance shop.

The LCCB accepted the \$22,610 proposal from Shafer Construction during its June 2 meeting, held at the maintenance shop.

The Shafer bid included options for a drip protection layer, higher quality doors and other alternatives, which the board accepted.

LCCB Executive Director Jacob Ewart reminded the board that the county supervisors had added \$40,000 to the conservation board’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget for facility improvements.

Ewart said LCCB members had agreed to use some of that money to renovate the maintenance shop, which was built more than 50 years ago.

Evolve Contracting of Morning Sun also submitted a total bid package with options totaling \$37,485.

Brett Shafer, owner of Shafer Construction, attended the June 2 meeting and said he could begin work in July and expected to finish it within two weeks.

Chinkapin Bluffs vandalized

Operations supervisor Tanner Holling-

sworth reported on recent vandalism to a railing on the new observation deck at the Chinkapin Bluffs Recreation Area.

Hollingsworth said he had replaced some damaged spindles using surplus spindles from the original deck construction. Anyone with information on the vandalism can contact the county sheriff’s office.

Frisbee golf course nearly done at Eden Park

The Frisbee golf course at Eden Park should be completed later this month, Hollingsworth told the board. He said workers from the company installing the course worked with LCCB staff to clear more trees. They are expected back June 10 to install baskets. Then the course should be ready for play.

Combo hire expected by July

Ewart said advertising for a naturalist/technician position would begin this week, with interviews being held near the end of June. He indicated a candidate may be chosen in time for board approval at the next meeting on July 7.

The person hired for the combined position is expected to shift between naturalist and resource technician duties depending on the need, time of year and other factors.

The position is being created from two previous full-time positions. Prior to being named executive director, Ewart had served

as the LCCB’s resource technician. Shortly after Ewart’s appointment to the executive director’s position in early 2024, operations supervisor Noah Robb announced he had accepted a job offer with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Hollingsworth was then hired to fill Ewart’s old position, and the operations supervisor’s position was left vacant. Earlier this year, Ewart announced plans to move Hollingsworth into the operations supervisor position and leave the technician’s position vacant.

At a May 19 special meeting this year, naturalist Sarah Martinez submitted her resignation, saying she planned to pursue a master’s degree.

Because of countywide budget cuts beginning in 2023, the LCCB would not be able to fill both positions, prompting Ewart to propose the creation of a combined position.

Eden Park shelter possible

Board member Joellen Schantz also reported she had contacted some companies about constructing a small shelter at Eden Park but had received little response.

She suggested, if there continues to be few responses, the best option may be to develop a materials list and use in-house staff or go through a local contractor.

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