‘He was my best friend’: Teen driver charged in New London crash

Months after the accident, Owen Neff now faces charges in the death of Gavin Browning, the same classmate he would later name as his most special person

By AnnaMarie Kruse,
Southeast Iowa Union

NEW LONDON — Nearly eight months after a late-night pickup ride ended in the death of New London High School student Gavin Browning, prosecutors have filed charges against the teen driver, Owen Wesley Neff.

Neff, 18, faces multiple charges in connection with the Sept. 27, 2024 crash that killed Browning and injured Graden Weber, who suffered a fractured wrist and blunt force trauma to his head, according to criminal complaints filed Tuesday, May 27, in Henry County. These charges include Homicide by Vehicle — Reckless Driving, a Class C felony, and Serious Injury by Vehicle, a Class D felony,

Gavin Browning, 16 of New London, died as the result of a motor vehicle accident, Friday, Sept. 27, 2024. The driver of the vehicle, Owen Neff, has now been charged with vehicular homicide. (Photo Submitted)

On the night of the incident, the teen driver was operating his father’s 2011 Ford F-350 pickup truck with one passenger in the front seat and four passengers riding in the open bed of the truck. The front passenger was identified as Rhys Nelson, while the rear passengers were Gavin Browning, Graden Weber, Alaura Sickles, and Cadance Mortimer.

Around 11:28 p.m., Neff allegedly turned suddenly from E Cleveland Street onto E Adams Street while en route to Nelson’s residence. According to investigators, the abrupt maneuver caused Browning and Weber to be ejected from the bed of the truck. One of the passengers made contact with the rear passenger-side fender flare during the fall, causing a piece of it to break off.

Browning landed in the roadway and sustained significant head trauma. He died at the scene. Weber landed face-first, resulting in a fractured wrist and head injuries.

Cellphone video recovered during the investigation, along with witness statements, indicated the teen driver was operating the vehicle “with a wanton disregard for the safety of the passengers,” the complaint states.

“Owen was allegedly en route to [Nelson]’s residence,” the criminal complaint claims. “As they traveled down E Cleveland Street, Owen made a sudden left turn down E Adams Street. The abrupt turn caused rear passengers Gavin Browning and Graden Weber to fall from the vehicle.”

“[Browning] landed in the roadway, sustaining significant head trauma from this incident, resulting in his death,” the complaint continues. “[Weber] landed face first in the roadway, resulting in a fractured wrist and blunt force trauma to his head.”

The complaint further details that after Browning and Graber were thrown from the vehicle, the remaining rear passengers yelled for Neff to stop.

According to the criminal complaint, “[Neff] then brought the truck to a stop. He and the passengers exited the vehicle. [Neff] then pulled [Weber] out of the roadway and sat him down in the grass. Owen observed Gavin appeared to be deceased. Panicking he got back into his truck and drove off. [Neff] pulled over at the next intersection and stayed there until first responders arrived on scene.”

Neff did return to the scene later and made contact with law enforcement.

A preliminary hearing for the teen driver is scheduled for 9 a.m. on June 6 at the Henry County Courthouse. Prosecutors have not yet released the full list of charges.

► CRASH, PAGE 6K

YAK ATTACK scheduled June 21 at Lake Geode State Park

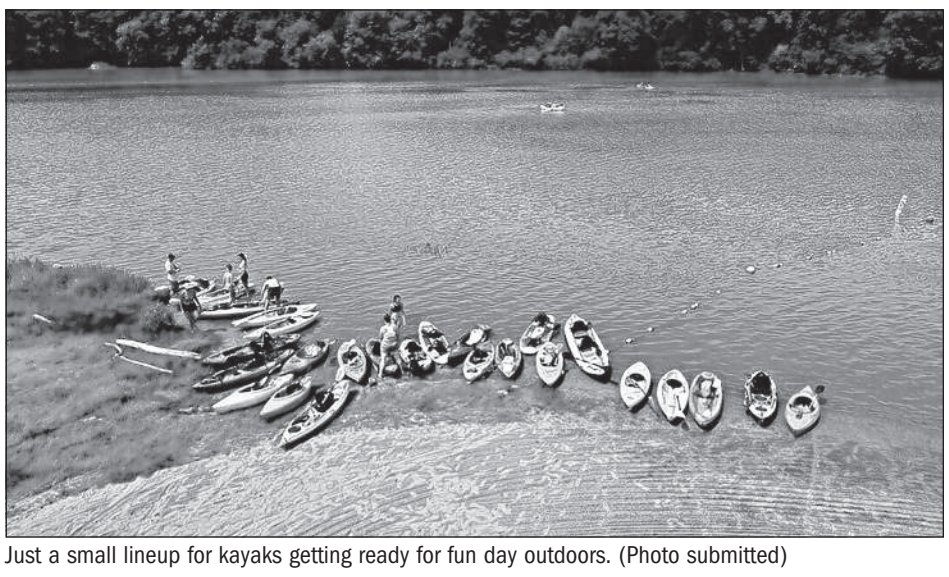
By Virginia Ekstrand

The 2025 Lake Geode Yak Attack is becoming a very popular summer event. Friends of Geode host the paddle which is sponsored by the Danville Lions. The 2025 event will be held at the beach area on Saturday June 21st. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. under the canopy of the Beach Shelter House. at the beach area in beautiful Geode State Park! A group photo of the participants will be taken just ahead of the shotgun start of the attack at 12:30 p.m.

There are three launch sites around the lake that can be used but Friends of Geode will again help registrants get their kayaks from the parking lot to the beach if desired. Use the method that best suits your equipment. Canoes are also welcome.

The event began as a fundraiser for renovating the concession building at Geode State Park. Volunteers have been working hard on the building. The Executive Council is in the process of scheduling finishing work. As soon as the electrical work is done and the windows and doors installed, insulation ban be added. Then dry wall and “VOILA.” Everyone is excited. The funds raised in this years Yak Attack will be used to obtain rental kayaks, canoes and other fun water gear. The Friends also support many other projects at Lake Geode such as tree planting and park care.

► YAK, PAGE 6K



Just a small lineup for kayaks getting ready for fun day outdoors. (Photo submitted)

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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING - AMENDMENT OF CURRENT BUDGET
City of NEW LONDON
Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

The City of NEW LONDON will conduct a public hearing for the purpose of amending the current budget for fiscal year ending June 30, 2025

Meeting Date/Time: 6/16/2025 06:00 PM | **Contact:** Kasi Howard | **Phone:** (319) 367-7702

Meeting Location: City Office
112 W. Main St.
New London, IA 52645

There will be no increase in taxes. Any residents or taxpayers will be heard for or against the proposed amendment at the time and place specified above. A detailed statement of: additional receipts, cash balances on hand at the close of the preceding fiscal year, and proposed disbursements, both past and anticipated, will be available at the hearing. Budget amendments are subject to protest. If protest petition requirements are met, the State Appeal Board will hold a local hearing. For more information, consult https://dom.iowa.gov/local-gov-appeals.

REVENUES & OTHER FINANCING SOURCES		Total Budget as Certified or Last Amended	Current Amendment	Total Budget After Current Amendment
Taxes Levied on Property	1	624,128	0	624,128
Less: Uncollected Delinquent Taxes - Levy Year	2	0	0	0
Net Current Property Tax	3	624,128	0	624,128
Delinquent Property Tax Revenue	4	0	0	0
TIF Revenues	5	20,000	0	20,000
Other City Taxes	6	255,919	0	255,919
Licenses & Permits	7	3,025	0	3,025
Use of Money & Property	8	65,920	0	65,920
Intergovernmental	9	375,130	0	375,130
Charges for Service	10	3,496,270	0	3,496,270
Special Assessments	11	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	12	98,450	0	98,450
Other Financing Sources	13	30,000	0	30,000
Transfers In	14	836,205	200,000	1,036,205
Total Revenues & Other Sources	15	5,805,047	200,000	6,005,047
EXPENDITURES & OTHER FINANCING USES				
Public Safety	16	481,825	60,000	541,825
Public Works	17	320,750	0	320,750
Health and Social Services	18	0	0	0
Culture and Recreation	19	262,997	20,000	282,997
Community and Economic Development	20	400	6,000	6,400
General Government	21	147,867	30,000	177,867
Debt Service	22	58,905	1,000	59,905
Capital Projects	23	3,000	700,000	703,000
Total Government Activities Expenditures	24	1,275,744	817,000	2,092,744
Business Type/Enterprise	25	3,587,595	600,000	4,187,595
Total Gov Activities & Business Expenditures	26	4,863,339	1,417,000	6,280,339
Transfers Out	27	836,205	200,000	1,036,205
Total Expenditures/Transfers Out	28	5,699,544	1,617,000	7,316,544
Excess Revenues & Other Sources Over (Under) Expenditures/Transfers Out	29	105,503	-1,417,000	-1,311,497
Beginning Fund Balance July 1, 2024	30	3,500,645	0	3,500,645
Ending Fund Balance June 30, 2025	31	3,606,148	-1,417,000	2,189,148

Explanation of Changes: Repairs to fire truck, painting the library, wages, subdivision loan payment, engineering/construction of the third addition to the Pine St. Subdivision.

LEGAL NOTICES

May 22, 2025
Mt Pleasant, IA

The Board met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. Members present: Chairman, Marc Lindeen, Vice Chair Chad White, and Steve Detrick.

Attended the meeting, Asst. County Attorney Steve Giebelhausen, Deputy Treasurer Kellie Sloan, Recorder Lynnae Buffington and members of the public attended the meeting.

It was moved by Detrick and seconded by White to approve May 22, 2025, Agenda. Motion carried. 3 ayes.

It was moved by White and seconded by Detrick to approve May 15th and May 20, 2025, the minutes that were presented. Motion carried 3 ayes.

County Engineer Jake Hotchkiss, Permits: Sanitary Sewer: 310th Street. Maintenance Update: Blade Operators – blading roads. Seeding & Mulching – Quincy Ave & 305th St. Spot rock hauled various locations. Signs – replaced signs on 305th Ave and Quincy St. Mowing shoulders on gravel roads. Hickory Avenue – between 140th St and 150th St will be closed next week dependent on schedule for culvert replacement and work will take approximately 1 week. Miscellaneous & Construction: · Norris Asphalt: Franklin Ave (W-55) – contractor wrapped up topsoil waiting on seeding and mulch. · Old HWY 34 – rock placed for interlayer and waiting on sealcoat. Douds Stone: continues crushing operation completed crushing yesterday shy of 125,000 tons processed. Concrete Patching Tools – working with Washington County on shared agreement for tools and trailer.

Northland Securities, Heidi Kuhl presented a detailed overview of Henry County’s general obligation debt and bonding capacity. The county’s growth has grown steadily over the past five years, with an average annual increase of 6% in total valuation and 2% in Taxable value which has been impacted by the changes in state-set rollback rates.

Sheriff Rich McNamee met with the Board to discuss and request the use of Outside Counsel. The Board will revisit Sheriff McNamee’s request.

The Board reviewed revisions to the second reading of the Alternative Energy Overlay District Ordinance, with legal guidance provided by Assistant County Attorney Giebelhausen. Amendments Approval, A motion was made by Detrick and seconded by White to approve the amendments from the first reading. Motion carried with 3 ayes. Planning & Zoning Director Joe Buffington made a recommendation to the board on Section 6-2-11-2: the removal of the entire paragraph which pertains to district boundaries. Motion to approve this recommendation was made by White and seconded by Lindeen. Motion carried 2 ayes and Detrick 1 nay. Road Use Agreement: A motion was made by Detrick and seconded by White to approve that the road use agreement be implemented under the direction of the County Engineer, Motion carried, 3ayes. Roll call vote: Detrick -ate, Lindeen – aye, White – Aye.

The Boards approved claims,

General Basic Fund
Access Energy Cooperative Util -Henry County $134.91
Access Systems Supplies $269.18
Agrineed Inc Construction & Maint. $300.00
All American Pest Control Exterminator $85.00
All God's Creatures Pet Care $1,680.00
Garry Allender Mow $556.64
Amazon Capital Serv Billing De Office Supplies $961.23
AMN Healthcare Language Language Services $18.31
Bailey Office Outfitters Office Supplies $397.64
C&D Cleaning Window Cleaning $2,565.00
Cedar Creek Cemetery Assn Vet Graves $81.00
Charm-Tex, Inc. Clothing & Dry Goods $786.00
Marion Conner Med Exam $324.00
Cyber Security Source Household & Instit. Equip $377.80
Douds Stone LLC Grounds Maintenance $161.67
East End Automotive Car Expense $674.23
Electronic Engineering Co Car Expense $490.00
Elliott Bulk Services, LLC Vehicle Fuel $299.62
ESI Building-Repairs & Maint $230.00
Family Medicine of Mt Pleasant Med Exam Fees/Autopsies $425.00
Fellowship Cup Food & Prov $500.00
Gall's Inc Wearing Apparel & Uniform $311.24
Grant Cem Assn Jeff Murph Care of Graves $333.00
Henry County Sec Road Dept Fuel $3,482.81
Iowa Department of Revenue April HTL/MTL Tax $200.15
J&A Multi cleaning Services Custodial $735.00
JJ Nichting Company Parts $29.01
Kemper’s True Value & JAR Maintenance supplies $11.87
Kings Lawn Service Ground Maintenance $2,295.00
Lambirth Cemetery Care of Graves $211.50
Lance Refuse Serv Sanitation & Disposal $157.50
Mail Services LLC May MV Renewal $774.36
Mark Haan Mark Haan IT Contr. IT Contract $350.00
Mastercard Pilot Grove Mastercard Needs $5,352.91
Amanda McArtor-Morin Mileage $177.00
Mediacom Wireless Internet $229.95
Medico-Mart, Inc. Vaccine/Meds $1,432.18
Mt Hamill Elevator/Lumber BLDG Repairs & Maint $24.36
Mt Pleasant Correctional Facil Food Preparation Services $16,644.00
Mt Pleasant Electric Contractor Maintenance $1,052.80
Mt Pleasant Utilities Utilities -County $6,686.82
Pep Stop Maintenance Supplies $27.94
Roger Pittsenbarger Mileage $46.60
Robin Poole Tele/Mlg $58.00
Quadient Finance USA, Inc Post - Cths $3,103.27
Quadient, Inc Dept 3689 Postage - Cths $387.18
Radar Road Tec Car Expense $752.00
Rathbun Regional Water Hotel Motel Tax $115.50
Katie Reuter 468 Miles- PH $379.59
Richwood Cemetery Assn c/o Vet Cemetery $139.50
Rock Valley Physical Therapy Employment Test $350.00
Sector, LLC Car Expense $10,000.00
Shield Technology Corp Data Processing $13,062.50
SIACC Sheriff Transport $17,585.10
Stericycle Shred It Shred-It $173.06
T-Mobile Telephone $321.90
Truax Company Inc Parts $93.25
US BANK Office Needs $2,638.55
Verizon Telephone $7.02
Westwood Pharmacy Outpatient $238.13
Wilson Distributor Serv Customer supplies $2,153.75
WMPF Group LLC Bd Proc $1,182.65

General Supplemental Fund
Martha Allen Precinct Election $205.00
Amazon Capital Serv Billing De Office Supplies $9.95
Amy Boecker Precinct Election $206.50
Robert Griffith Special Election $1,160.00
Charlene Hinrichs Special Election $48.00
Iowa Secretary of State Activity Cards $286.10
Cheyenne Patterson Precinct Election $238.00
Kelly Patterson Special Election $1,354.50
Marlene Pittsenbarger Precinct Election $320.00
Penny Rauenbuhler Special Election $48.00
Bobbi Jo Salzer Precinct Election $200.00
Heidi Shilling Mileage for Election $45.50
SIACC Sheriff Transport $674.21
SIADSA Lee/ Lucas Detent - Juvi $8,550.00
WMPF Group LLC Bd Proc $2,394.00

Pioneer Cemetery Fund
Garry Allender Mow $900.00
David Gates Grave Repair $233.50
Ted Klopfenstein Mowing $50.00

American Rescue Plan Fund
Fairfield Precast Concrete Conservation Project $29,258.68

Secondary Road Fund
Access Energy Cooperative Lighting Shop & Office Se $636.45
All American Pest Control Pest Control Sec Rd $60.00
Alliant Energy/IPL Lighting Sec Rd $541.73
Cessford Construction Co Granular - Resurface Sec $8,138.91
Diamond Mowers LLC Blades/Bits Sec Rd $112.78
Douds Stone LLC Rock Crushing Sec Rd $455,827.68
Elliott Bulk Services, LLC Diesel Sec Rd $26,918.22
Iowa State University Sherrie School & Meet fees Sec Rd $125.00
M&K Truck Center Parts Sec Rd $199.32
Mastercard Pilot Grove Meals & Lodging Sec Rd $690.97
Mt Hamill Elevator/Lumber Box Culverts Sec Rd $53.60
New London Utilities Lighting Sec Rd $68.47
O'Reilly Automotive Inc Parts Sec Rd $178.02
River Products Co Contract Rock Sec Rd $268,030.67
Stout Companies IRVM-Seed & Fert Sec Rd $3,966.71
Tractor Supply Credit Plan Dep Parts Sec Rd $25.97
USA Bluebook Parts Sec Rd $1,649.04
Verizon Engineer Equipment Sec Rd $40.01
Vestis Group, Inc Uniforms, Towels & Rugs S $880.46
Wilson Distributor Serv Supplies Sec Rd $151.89

Recorder Records Mgmt.
US Records Midwest LLC Covers for Books $596.40

Community Betterment Fund
LISCO Internet $5,852.46
Mastercard Pilot Grove Mastercard Needs $75.81
Menards - Burlington Office Supplies $429.99
WEMIGA Waste Sanitation $81,558.75

K-9 Fund
US BANK Office Needs $108.86

Emergency Management
Access Systems Supplies $363.54
Alliant Energy/IPL Util -County $128.12
Amazon Capital Serv Billing De Office Supplies $59.98
AT&T Mobility Phone $86.23
Henry County Sec Road Dept Fuel $147.23
Joan Dougherty Joan's Cleaning Clean Serv - EM $145.00
Mastercard Pilot Grove Mastercard Needs $303.73
Mt Pleasant Utilities Utilities -County $544.71
Rubey Lawn Care Lawn Care $300.00

Co. Assessor Agency Fund
Bailey Office Outfitters Office Supplies $132.36
Henry County Sec Road Dept Fuel $72.13
Solutions Inc, Harris Local Go Software Serv & Supp $6,468.24
Joann Vens Reimbursed $12.98

E911 Surcharge Fund
Electronic Engineering Co Car Expense $3,608.04
Iowa APCO Attn: Eric Nevins Education & Training Serv $600.00
Iowa Communications Network Radio & Related Equip $452.00
Language Link Software Service & Support $25.54
LISCO Internet $350.00
Shield Technology Corp Data Processing $6,675.00
Verizon Telephone $680.17
WINDSTREAM Telephone Windstream $1,026.26

Grand Total $1,029,905.55

Supervisor’s subcommittees, Lindeen attended Great River Regional Waste and attended Glenwood Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start Open House. Detrick attended the SEIRPC SEIBUS meeting.

It was moved by Detrick and seconded by White to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried, 3 ayes.

/s/ Robin Detrick
Robin Detrick, County Auditor
/s/ Marc Lindeen
Marc Lindeen, Chairman

ANIMALS

DOGS

PUREBRED AUSTRALIAN Shepherds, AKC registered. Merle $1000, Tri $800. Winfield, 319-201-0286

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FLEA MARKET
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