



From left along the fence, Paul Skrade and Mikel Brown of Goats on the Go in Fayette and also of Upper Iowa University, and Todd Fails, director of facilities and materials management at Floyd County Medical Center, watch the herd of goats munching on the weeds and brush in an overgrown part of the Charles City hospital property on Thursday afternoon, May 30. – See more photos with this story at www.charlescitypress.com.

# 'Bleatment treatment' the cure for FCMC overgrown grounds

## Goat group takes task of gobbling up weeds and brush from site

#### By Bob Steenson bsteenson@charlescitypress.com

It's not uncommon for a rural critical access hospital like the Floyd County Medical Center to have visiting specialists help fill specific needs. But that tradition went in a whole new direction with the arrival Thursday afternoon of a couple of dozen goats.

The herd of 25 is now munching its way through overgrown weeds, brush and grass on a few areas of hospital property south and west of the Medical



# **Sandy situation** takes Charles City project by surprise

City Hall makeover cost increases almost \$100,000 with faulty foundation revelation

#### **By Travis Fischer** tkfischer@charlescitypress.com

The Charles City Council held a special meeting in lieu of its regular workshop on Wednesday, May 28, to approve two time-sensitive change orders for the City Hall/Police Department Renovation Project.

Behind both change orders is the revelation that City Hall is, literally, built on a foundation of sand. While plans for the original building indicated that there was supposed to be a layer of compressed soil under the building, instead it turns out that the building is sitting on about seven feet of sand.

'That's led to some issues when it comes to putting in sewer and pipes under ground," said City Administrator Steve Diers.

As a result, plans for the outer wall running alongside the pedestrian mall need to be changed to allow for the addition of new footings and support pieces at a cost of \$82,426.92, which is the least expensive option out of the alternatives of removing the roof trusses and recalibrating the wall entirely or mixing an epoxy into the sand to solidify it.

A second change order was approved to change the plumbing for the police garage to include a pit and submersible pump for the garage's floor drain, at a cost of \$16,203.01.

Underground conflicts were an issue last year as well as the council accepted the final pay request from Wicks Construction for the 2024 Permeable Paving Project, which placed permeable pavers along Howard Street. Coming in at a total of \$770,373.10, the project encountered about 5% overrun due to unanticipated conflicts with the

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## **School Board views** two possible CCHS renovation options

Design firm offers preliminary plans with or without removing some of the 'circles'

**By Travis Fischer** tkfischer@charlescitypress.com of the building's immediate needs, the board has also decided to get

Center and clinic.

"It's not standard, but it's going to be worth it," said Todd Fails, director of facilities and materials management at FCMC, when asked if goats are common tools in hospital grounds maintenance.

"Originally we had intended on clearing it out with like a skid loader and brush cutters," Fails said. "But we looked at doing something that was a little more eco-friendly and had some entertainment value to it. And this fit the bill."

The goats are coming from Goats on the Go, a northeast Iowa/southern MinA goat grabs some tender leaves close but not too close to the electric fence keeping 25 goats from Goats on the Go contained in an area of the Floyd County Medical Center grounds on Thursday afternoon, May 29. The goats are clearing weeds and brush from the area.

nesota regional franchise of a national network of targeted grazing and clearing specialists by the same name.

This particular affiliate is based in Fayette, and owned by Paul Skrade, who is also a science professor and wildlife biologist at Upper Iowa University. His associate in Goats on the Go is Mikel Brown, who is also an Upper Iowa grad student.

"We use Kiko goats," Skrade explained. "They're a variety breed that

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The Charles City Community School District has two new ideas to consider to renovate the high school building.

During a special meeting on Tuesday, May 27, School Board members met with representatives from FEH Design to look at preliminary plans for an extensive high school project.

Earlier this year the board approved a \$4-5 million plan to address the aging high school building's heating, cooling and electrical needs.

While that plan addresses some

an immediate start on a much more extensive renovation with the inten tion of holding a bond referendum this November.

For the last several weeks FEH has been consulting with administration staff, educators and members of the community, collecting feedback to guide proposals to address the high school's infrastructure needs.

"There have been more than 200 people involved in this thus far," said architect Christopher Wand.

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## Abandoned Hartwood Inn foreclosed, sold at sheriff's sale

### Original lender and property purchaser are sister companies

### By Bob Steenson

bsteenson@charlescitypress.com

The Hartwood Inn property in Charles City was sold Tuesday, May 27, under court order at a Floyd County Sheriff's sale to satisfy a foreclosure judgment. CCC Real Estate Holding Co.

submitted the winning bid of \$306,000 for the property, located at 1312 Gilbert St., according to records filed in Floyd County District Court the same day.

Newtek Small Business Finance LLC had filed a district court foreclosure petition in October 2024 after the property allegedly defaulted on a loan that

had been made in August 2021. The property, consisting of 36 hotel rooms and other offices in three buildings, had been vacant for more than a year and was allegedly abandoned. Even while operating, the property had been plagued by state and local regulatory violations.

A \$400,000 Small Business Administration loan had been made by Newtek to Hartwood Hospitality Labs Inc. with Gilbert Starble as president and

sole stockholder, and to NC One Trust, with Starble as trustee.

Starble, of Charles City, was listed as the personal guarantor of the loan.

The lender, Newtek Small Business Finance LLC, and the purchaser, CCC Real Estate Holding Co., are both subsidiaries of NewtekOne Inc., a publicly traded financial holding company headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida.

It remains unclear what the

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Press file photo by Bob St

Gilbert Starble, then owner of the Hartwood Inn in Charles City, talks to the Press in an interview in October 2022.



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Vol. 128, No. 43 1 section, 16 pages ISSN:1049-7242

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