

GHV 5th Grade rocks to the
Fabulous '50s

By Rebecca Peter

CLEAR LAKE - Garner-Hayfield-Ventra 5th graders traveled to the historic Surf Ballroom at Clear Lake on Wednesday, Jan. 26 for some fun, music and a dose of North Iowa history. The Winter Dance Party Kids Show was held prior to the Surf's 2025 Winter Dance Party held Jan. 30- Feb. 1. The Winter Dance Party celebrates the music of rock 'n roll legends Buddy Holly, Ritchie

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GHV 5th graders at the Surf's Winter Dance Party for Kids. Photo courtesy of Spencer Paulson



Students from GHV, Clear Lake and Mason City danced to the music of Richie Lee & the Fabulous '50s at the Surf. Photo courtesy of Spencer Paulson

News at a
Glance

Leader Office
Closed, Feb. 6

GARNER - The Leader office at Garner will be closed this Thursday, Feb. 6, so staff can attend the Iowa Newspaper Association convention in Des Moines. The office will be back open for business on Friday. Thank you.

Britt City
Election Results

BRITT - Unofficial results from the special election on Jan. 28 to fill a vacancy on the city council at Britt are as follows: Layne Mosher won the election with 211 votes. Brad Hiscocks received 52 votes. Seven write-in votes were also cast. The election was canvassed by the Hancock County Board of Supervisors on Monday. An election audit was held on Tuesday. The council seat was vacated by Curt Gast, who resigned on October 23.

Fire Hazard

The Garner Fire Department is asking for help from the community to please not leave fires unattended due to wind and dry conditions. "Although there isn't currently a burn ban in place, it may be something to consider as we are seeing an uptick in these kind of fires which is generally very rare for this time of year as we normally would have snow cover or at least some moisture in the ground from winter precipitation," said fire chief Brad Upmeyer.

Garner Chamber
Annual Meeting

GARNER - The Garner Chamber of Commerce annual meeting and dinner will be held Saturday, Feb. 8 at the new Up 4 Celebrations Events Center, 300 N. State St., Garner. Cocktails are at 5 p.m. with dinner at 6 p.m. An awards program will follow.

Boone River bridges to be completely redone

County engineer Jeremy Purvis spoke to the Hancock County board of supervisors during their January 27 meeting about upcoming bridge projects for 2025. Three bridges found along the Boone River, northeast of Corwith, are set to be completely redone. All three will become box culverts. The three bridges are all near each other on the Boone River. The first can be found on Crane Avenue south of 190th Street. The second is on 190th Street between Crane and Deer Avenue, and the third can be found on Deer Avenue north of 190th Street. Construction is likely to begin in late Spring, and the projected cost is set at \$878,326.96. Purvis also reported that the road between Sage Drive and Sage Ave on 340th Street that Hancock County and the City of Forest City share will be patched in anticipation of Ragbrai 2025, which plans to use Forest City as an overnight stop. The estimated cost for Hancock County is around \$85,000. The board will have to finalize a separate project 28E agreement with the city on the project in the near future. Andrea Evelsizer, the Executive Director of Healthy Harvest of North Iowa, gave their yearly update on the non-profit organization's endeavors. According to the report, the team provided education and food samples on three farmer's market days in Forest City, serving around 120 samples of seasonal recipes highlighting the farmer's market vendors and their products. They also listed 5 producers and the FC farmer's market in their local food guide, both printed and found online. The producers mentioned were Brown Family Farms, North Forty Gardens, P&P Honey and Bee Supply, Purple Ribbon Beef, and Red Shed Gardens. Healthy Harvest's board of directors formally requested that the board of supervisors would consider contributing \$2,125 to support local food, farm outreach, and farm education in Hancock County. The board will consider the agreement at a later date. A resolution appointing board member Bud Jermel and to the Iowa Community Trust (ICT) board of directors was approved.

West Hancock Speech to bring all groups to State

BRITT - The West Hancock high school speech team surprised everyone when, after their performances at their District large-group speech competition at Hampton Dumont High School, all 23 students across 6 events performed well enough to go to State. While West Hancock consistently gets groups to State, having every single student on the team make it is a rare opportunity. The six groups that competed were the Reader's Theater group, performing "Children of the Dust," the Choral Reading group, performing "Governing Alice," the Acting ensemble, performing "Dibs," and three different Radio groups referred to as WCCA, WIA, and WIC. The groups are excited to represent West Hancock at the Iowa Speech and Debate State Convention in Des Moines. See **SPEECH:** Page 5A

The members of West Hancock's high school Speech team. From left to right, top to bottom: Christian Bachman, Aiden Bell, Carson Fox, Kenadee Brown, Jaxon Peterson, Sophia Cassels, Isabelle Aitchison, Ava Keiper, Wyaff Eekoff, Katrina Ross, Jesarela Martinez, Addysen Prime, Claire Hiscocks, Meara Kudej, Brinley Hiscocks, Olicia DeWaard, Julia Hill, Sienna Weiland, Brandon Peterson, Ellie Christensen, and Damaris Guido. absent from the picture are Ammy Mendoza and Samantha Stenberg. Ben Hassebroek | The Leader

Ventura City Council begins budget review

By Rebecca Peter
VENTURA - Work on the city budget for fiscal 2025-26 is underway at Ventura. At their Jan. 27 meeting, City administrator Donna Powers reviewed the FY25-26 proposed budget and property tax levy rate with the council. The current general levy rate is \$6.91 generating \$498,598. A proposed 1% decrease, coupled with valuation increase would set the property tax levy rate at \$6.84 generating \$509,837. The property tax rate, debt service and permissible levy rates combined total \$10.61. The Property Tax Levy Hearing is set for March 24, 2025. Powers informed Council the insurance settlement for the fire hydrant accident on Hwy. 18 has been received. Public Works Director Bill Bredlow is working with a contractor to have the hydrant replaced.

City receives Hotel-Motel Tax revenue funding request

By Rebecca Peter
GARNER - The Garner City Council heard a request from the Garner Chamber of Commerce for continuance of Hotel-Motel Occupancy Tax revenue for 2025. Jennifer Malek, Chamber of Commerce director, presented the request to the council on January 28. "On behalf of the Garner Chamber of Commerce, we respectfully request the council's consideration to continue allocating 50 percent of the Hotel-Motel Occupancy Tax revenue to the Garner Chamber of Commerce." Malek said the Hotel-Motel funds have been instrumental in enabling the Garner Chamber of Commerce to promote tourism, economic growth and community development. Examples of this include:

- Driving tourism: The Chamber markets Garner as a destination, attracting visitors to local events, businesses, and cultural activities, which in turn boost hotel occupancy and generate additional revenue in the city.
- Support local businesses by initiative that foster

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Volume 153
Number 6
USPS214-160

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Mid-America Publishing
& Printing, 2025



NEXT WEEK IN WEATHER

Thursday



Wind
Hi 34° Low 19°

Friday



Cloudy
Hi 29° Low 15°

Saturday



Snow
Hi 29° Low 15°

Sunday



Partly Cloudy
Hi 25° Low 13°

Monday



Cloudy
Hi 15° Low 6°

Tuesday



Partly Cloudy
Hi 11° Low 4°

Wednesday



Cloudy
Hi 22° Low 5°