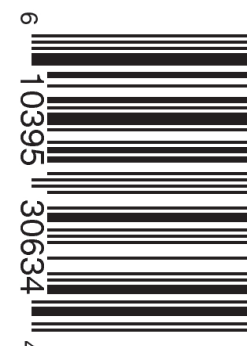


HUMBOLDT INDEPENDENT



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TWO SECTIONS



The Humboldt Wildcat Special Olympics team steps onto the track at the Special Olympics track meet on April 17. The meet was held at the Humboldt Recreation Center and the event was jam-packed with fans and athletes alike. Independent photo by Kylie Portz. To see this image or more from our gallery, visit www.humboldtnews.com.

Humboldt School Board of Directors hears from ALPHA, IJAG programs, approve tax levy

By KYLIE PORTZ

The Humboldt Community School District Board of Directors met for their regular meeting on April 21, where they covered a wide variety of topics from the Auditorium Project to summer technology purchases.

It was a different meeting as Taft Elementary Principal Ryan Fedders sat in Superintendent Jim Murray's seat, acting as superintendent as he is in the process of completing courses to one day become a superintendent himself.

School Board President Tate Satern called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the board room at the Administration Building.

During the meeting, a public hearing was held on the FY26 budget, but with no visitors in attendance to speak during the hearing, the board moved on to celebrate the Champions for Children award recipients.

The first group to receive the award included Jen Lar-

son, Katie Allison, and Rebecca Williams, who were nominated for helping monitor a student during epileptic events as well as helping all students in the special education program.

Next to receive an award was David Wirtz who was nominated for covering administrative duties at Taft Elementary, although Wirtz was not present at the meeting.

Following Champions for Children, IJAG program director Katie Talbot presented updates on the growing school program. Joining Talbot at the meeting to answer questions was IJAG regional supervisor Stephanie Coble-Day.

Talbot said, "What I think the mission is, is to ensure that future Iowans are resilient and well prepared with skills, purpose, and opportunities."

"We have developed a lot of collaborative partnerships and our vision is to empower youth, especially the Humboldt youth, to succeed

and thrive and become future-ready leaders."

IJAG or Iowa Jobs for American Graduates is a statewide nonprofit organization which focused on aiding students in the development of skills and experiences needed for success after graduation, whether it's college, the military, or the workforce.

According to Talbot, IJAG has 180 programs statewide, served 99,900 students and 74 communities across the state. In Humboldt, the program sees a 96% graduation rate with 95-96% engaging in their follow-up year.

As part of the program Talbot will meet with students at least one a month during their high school career to help guide them and meet or communicate for "follow-ups" the first year post graduation and even past that first year.

"That's the one thing they (students) like about the program, is that I follow up a minimum of one time a month. I know I follow up more times

a month, and that support, if they don't have any other kind of support, sometimes they will stop into the school."

Talbot said, "The innovative part of the program is that we really work on their (students) critical thinking, work on their civic and social contributions and try to develop resilient leaders."

Talbot, whose background is in mental health and substance abuse counselling, prioritizes the social emotional learning of her students.

She said, "One thing I like about the IJAG advantages, I do have a mental health background, is that we are hands-on. So we go out and touch fuel, do everything, learn about that stuff, but we come from a trauma-informed background."

According to Talbot that trauma-informed care comes in when approaching students about their performance in school. Instead of asking what

SEE SCHOOL, 3A

Pedersen fills empty Conservation Board seat

By APRIL KELLEY

Taylor Pedersen was approved to take the place of Tate Satern after Satern resigned from his position last month.

Will Spellmeyer was voted to take the vice chairman seat vacated by Satern.

Corn Belt Power

Corie Erickson with Corn Belt Power Cooperative attended the Humboldt County Conservation Board meeting on Wednesday, April 16 to discuss options for a small piece of land abutting the east end of the Gotch Park Trail.

The area is undeveloped on the west side of the drive that goes up to Corn Belt. The area is needed because Corn Belt needs to install a backup control center.

There is one already on the premises at the top of the hill. Now, because of new regulations, a restroom, and a new well and septic system



Taylor Pedersen

must be added to the site.

"This is all for a natural disaster. Hopefully we will never have to use it but you never know," Erickson said.

"We came up with an agreement and rather than doing a plat of survey and all that, we just came up with retaining the land for the county, excepting out this small parcel of land," Erickson said.

Once the quit claim for the land is filed and settled, Erickson can partially release the easement that was signed in 1990. This will allow there to be a clear-cut property line.

Rutland Dam

The transfer of the Rutland Dam to the City of Rutland is now complete. The only thing that remains is to remove the logs and to install the railings that had previously been damaged.

Jensen Drainage and Excavation, Inc had bid to remove the logs but has had difficulties doing so. The Board voted to give him until June 1 to remove the logs or they will have another company remove them.

Eagle Ridge Trail

The deck has now been poured for the bridge and the project is moving along.

Conservation Director Todd Lee told the board that one concern they have is on the bank on the west side of the trail. The

area has washed out on the west end of the dam within a couple of feet of the trail.

The City of Humboldt and the Conservation Department are planning to split the cost of the matching funds to apply for a grant through FEMA to add riprap to that area to stabilize it.

The match will be approximately \$6,000 leaving the Conservation's portion \$3,000. The board voted to approve the rock purchase.

Starlab

Conservation Department Employee David Erdman made the request to purchase a share in a Starlab.

The AEA in Iowa has had a Starlab in the past that is set up in a school gym. The inflatable lab projects the solar system on the roof of the dome, thus mimicking the night sky so that students can learn about the stars.

With the AEA's budget cuts, they are no longer able to offer the service and are needing to sell the lab.

Several entities are drawing up an agreement and are planning to purchase either the used Starlab or a new one depending on cost and availability.

The Board voted to approve the purchase of a share of the Starlab.

In other action:

- The first day the campground will now be set to open on April 15 each year. If campers wish to park their campers earlier, Conservation employees will work with them to complete that. However, there will not be services in the campground until April 15.
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative employees will be assisting with cleaning up the Three Rivers Trail on Friday. Approximately 50 to 60 people are expected to assist with the cleanup.



Hayden Pederson of Dakota City, a second grader at Taft Elementary School, is a picker of candy last Saturday morning at the Humboldt-Dakota City Kiwanis Club annual Easter Egg Hunt held at Humboldt High School. Approximately 160 children gathered candy and searched for prizes from the club and area merchants. Independent photo by Kent Thompson. To buy this photo and more from our gallery, visit our website at www.humboldtnews.com



Tyler Braden

'Country powerhouse' Tyler Braden to perform at Humboldt County Fair

Brad Morgan to perform in opener

Country music artist Tyler Braden will headline the entertainment at the Humboldt County Fair in July.

Braden will be the lead performer on Saturday evening, July 26. Performing in the opening act will be Brad Morgan.

Tyler Braden has the gritty powerhouse vocals, the expressive pen and the ability to deliver a lyric with complete conviction worthy of a headliner.

Braden began crafting his sound as a teenager in Slapout, AL, where he demonstrated his mettle playing four-hour cover

sets. He continued to perform between shifts as a firefighter in both Montgomery and Nashville. A set at the homegrown Whiskey Jam concert series in January 2017 paved his path to today.

His Warner Music Nashville EP, "Neon Grave," combines deep-rooted country tradition with the rollicking, high-energy instincts of a born rock and roller.

The project's flagship single, "Try Losing One" has been a No. 1 hit on SiriusXM The Highway's Hot 30 Countdown. Braden is currently making waves with viral track "Devil You Know" - a won't-back-down anthem that attracted over 10 million views across

social media in just two weeks.

In April of 2024, "Devil You Know" hit the country radio airwaves and now touts a whopping 60-plus million streams and over 45,000 'creates' on TikTok for the sure-fire hit. With 385-plus million global streams to his name, Braden is now taking stages world-round.

After wrapping his first-ever SOLD OUT, the Alabama native joined Brothers Osborne on their 'Might as Well Be Us' world tour with legs in the United Kingdom and Ireland in January.

Braden's previous list of fellow artists that he's shared the stage with includes Luke Bryan, Brooks & Dunn, Brant-

ley Gilbert, Chris Stapleton, Dierks Bentley and Mitchell Tenpenny. With studio recordings that pack the punch of his propulsive live performances, Braden's energy and emotion are connecting with fans across the world.

Brad Morgan Iowa ties

Brad Morgan, a country music artist and songwriter currently based in Nashville, TN, has a strong connection to the Midwest.

Morgan was born and raised on a farm near Manning, IA. He has a growing career with his music and performances, gaining recognition in both the Midwest and nationally.

SEE COUNTY FAIR, 5A



Brad Morgan