

Storm winds flatten rural Thor barn

By PHIL MONSON

Jerry Dencklau of rural Thor was welding just outside of his garage on the evening of April 14 when a loud deafening sound like a roaring train accompanied by the snapping and splintering of wood, startled him.

A minute later when he walked around the outside corner of the garage, the massive roof of the nearby old white barn over 100-years-old, was propped up against the garage and an old windmill, ripped from the old structure.

An old building that stood for over a century through Iowa's extreme weather, looked like a pile of rubble.

"I was in the garage and

all of a sudden you could hear the wind coming. It kept getting louder and louder. It almost sounded like a train and then the dirt started flying in the air," Dencklau said.

"The next thing that happened was a corner of the barn roof broke off and came blowing around the corner and landed between the car and the garage, right by where I was welding. At first I thought just a small piece broke off of the barn. When the wind calmed down a little bit, I walked around the corner and saw the barn roof leaning up against the windmill and west side of the garage," Dencklau said.

"It was around six or 6:30 p.m. The sky was full

of dark clouds. We didn't get any rain or hail from the fast-moving storm like some other areas got, but we sure had the powerful winds that came with it," Dencklau said.

"You could just hear the loud snapping and cracking of wood inside the barn and of course the roar of the wind," Dencklau said.

Fortunately, Dencklau didn't have anything of value inside the old white barn.

"The barn is at least 100 years old or more. It was being supported by bolts to help strengthen it. I knew it would come down sometime, but I didn't expect it to happen this year," Dencklau said. "Not just yet."



The roof of a century old barn ripped off the structure, rests against a garage and windmill on the Jerry and Marian Dencklau residence north of Thor. The barn was leveled when high winds moved through the area on April 14. Independent photo.



Jerry Dencklau, who resides north of Thor, tosses a loose board back into the pile of rubble that once was part of a barn, over 100-years-old, that blew over when high winds moved through the area on April 14. Independent photo.

Sanchez to represent Midland Power during annual Youth Tour in D.C.



Mia Sanchez

Humboldt High School junior Mia Sanchez has been selected to represent Midland Power Cooperative during the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour taking place in Washington, D.C., this June.

Sanchez will join roughly 40 other students from around Iowa, along with hundreds of students from across the country, on the week-long trip to the nation's capital to learn more about electric cooperatives, American history, U.S. government, and to meet with their members of Congress.

All area high school sophomores and juniors are eligible to apply for Youth Tour, and applications for next year's trip will be available this fall at www.MidlandPower.coop/YouthTour.

Kossuth County deputies arrest scammers

On Feb. 24, the Kossuth County Sheriff's Office took a report of a subject from the Burt area that was the victim of a scam.

The Sheriff's Office and Algona Police Department put out information regarding a grandparent scam where the victim is told over the phone that a grandchild is in some type of trouble and needs bond money to be released from jail.

The caller then scams the victim into believing that the only way they can help their grandchild is by paying a cash bond to a bondsman that will stop by the victim's house to collect the money.

In the Burt case, the victim was told a bond amount of \$10,000 was needed. A person came to the residence and collected the cash. Deputies collected video evidence and statements and worked with local and state agencies in Iowa.

With assistance from the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, Kossuth County deputies were able to secure GPS tracking warrants on two suspects in the Burt Case.

On February 27th, 2025, the Kossuth County Sheriff's Office released a report that an individual by the name of Eddie Benitez, age 33 of Miami, FL, had been arrested for Theft in the First Degree regarding a grandparent scam that occurred in Kossuth County.

On April 16, 2025, Kossuth County Deputies took custody of a second suspect in the case. A nationwide warrant was issued for Carlos Garrido Guzman, age 29 of Homestead FL. Guzman was arrested on April 11th in Miami, FL and extradited back to Kossuth County on April 16th for Theft in the First Degree, a class C felony and is being held in the Kossuth County Jail on \$75,000 cash bond.

Both Benitez and Guzman are also being held on other warrants from agencies that also had victims of the scams. All persons arrested are presumed innocent until proven or found guilty in a court of law.

The Kossuth County Sheriff's Office would like to remind all citizens to use extreme caution if you are contacted by phone or through social media regarding an individual or persons identifying as a business or government agency that claims you will need to pay money or purchase gift cards.

The scammers will use numerous scenarios to try and convince you that your money is needed to help someone in trouble or in need. Do not provide any of your personal information and contact your local law enforcement so they can confirm this a potential scam.

Humboldt City Council adds police officer, approve budget

By PHIL MONSON

Humboldt's police department continues to get closer to full force after the Humboldt City Council approved the hiring of another officer at their regular meeting on Monday night, April 21.

The council approved hiring Stephen Hale as a full-time officer. Hale comes from Lake City, where he has been the police chief. He has four years of experience in law enforcement. Hale was sworn in by Humboldt Mayor Dan Scholl.

Hale, who will begin in Humboldt on May 7, will be paid a non-probationary rate of \$30.98 per hour.

"I've done all the background checks and everything that needs to take place for him to come up here," Humboldt Police Chief Jacob Miller said.

The department now has four full-time officers, not including

Miller, along with one part-time officer. Miller will work to add another full-time officer to the department.

Hale and his girlfriend, Courtney Matthews, a Humboldt native, have a combined five children. They were in attendance to watch him get sworn in Monday night.

"I grew up in Auburn, southern Sac County, and joined the Army when I was 17-years-old," Hale said. "I was in the Army for 12 years and joined law enforcement four years ago when I was hired on at Lake City."

"Courtney and I have bought a house in Humboldt and have moved up here. Our oldest child is 12 and our youngest is 7 so we have a fun, active household," Hale said.

After a public hearing with no objectors, the council approved the budget for fiscal year 2025-

26.

Total expenditures are estimated to be \$11,236,864 with total revenues anticipated to be \$10,973,874 with a property tax rate of \$15.8934 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. It is down slightly from the current rate of \$16.1869 for the 2024-25 budget.

Humboldt City Administrator Cole Bockelmann reported on proposed bills in the Iowa Legislature aimed at revamping how property taxes are generated. One effort is to eliminate the 47 percent rollback and capping at 2 percent the amount cities and municipalities can increase their tax asking.

During their discussions, lawmakers have proposed changes each week.

"We had a good legislative meeting with representative Mark Thompson in Clarion last Friday. Quite a few other

city officials were able to join us. There are two new property tax bills being introduced based off of feedback from the first round," Bockelmann said. "The 2 percent cap on growth has now been changed to the CPI (Consumer Price Index), but that's still basically two percent, so that change is not overly helpful."

"And TIF (Tax Incremental Financing) is still in a flux because of the way the bill is written. That is a major concern for myself and Alissa (O'Connor, executive director of the Partnership for Economic Growth of Humboldt County) because TIF has provided a good chunk of our development funding over the last 20 years," Bockelmann said.

"In talking to representative Thompson, it sounds like the lawmakers are going to pump the brakes and continue on to



Stephen Hale

the next session while they take more time to look at the tax overhaul. It's the most substantial change in 50 years," Bockelmann said.

Councilman Joel Goodell asked Bockelmann if the proposed changes would affect past development projects in Humboldt.

"I think it has a good chance to impact past projects. They are changing the levies for the schools, cities and counties, which would decrease our abilities to capture TIF for existing projects, unless they write in an



Stephen Hale (right) is the newest addition to the Humboldt Police Department. He was sworn in by Humboldt Mayor Dan Scholl at the Humboldt City Council meeting on Monday night, April 21. Hale has four years of law enforcement experience, most recently as chief of the Lake City Police Department. Independent photo.

exemption. As of today, that's not in there," Bockelmann said. "One of our major concerns is businesses that we've pledged

rebates to, I don't know if we would be able to fulfill the debt service on projects."

"I don't know how we would make those payments if the levies are cut in half or more," Bockelmann said.

Bockelmann reported Blacktop Service Company will begin its road paving projects. Several blocks of 3rd Street South and 12th Street North will be included in the paving.

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