



OST photo Candra Brooks

A pod of American white pelicans hang out at West Lake Monday morning while the usual Canadian geese residents remain unsure of the visitors.

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Clarke MS principal resigns

OST staff report

The resignation of Clarke Middle School Principal Alisha Evans was approved by the school board at their April 14 meeting, to be effective at the end of her 2024-25 contract, June 30, 2025.



Evans

Evans has been the middle school principal since the 2021-22 school year; the year prior she joined the Clarke teaching staff as a third grade teacher. She graduated from Grand View University with a bachelor's degree and earned her master's from Grand Canyon University. She has worked in education for more than 10 years.

In her resignation letter to the board, Evans stat-

ed it had been a privilege to serve as the middle school principal, working alongside passionate and dedicated educators. She spoke of being proud of the work the school had been able to accomplish together and being grateful for the relationships and experiences that will be carried on with her.

Activities Director

The school board approved the hiring of Kelly Winter as the new activities director. Winter will replace Derek Van Blarcom, who tendered his resignation in December, effective at the end of his 2024-25 contract.



Winter

Winter is originally from Boyden and attended the University of Northern Iowa for

JOB | 3 ▶

Old hospital brings new headaches

Candra Brooks
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After years of sitting empty with an uncertain future, the former Harken Hospital is one step closer to coming down. At the April 15 meeting of the Osceola City Council, council approved city staff moving forward with getting quotes for an asbestos survey for the building located at 216 S. Fillmore St.

Background

In October 2022, the hospital was on the council's agenda for proposed demolition. Though the building had never formerly been given a dangerous building notice, it was known to be a dangerous location and one that kids would get in trouble for when going inside. It had been privately owned for many years, with the most recent sale recorded as Feb. 4, 2022.

At that meeting, a



OST photo Candra Brooks

The Harken Hospital is inching closer to demolition by the city.

member of the Historic Preservation Commission was present to talk about the hospital separate from the agenda, and after learning about the proposed demolition, appealed to the council to give the commission time to come up with a way to save the building. The result was a six-month extension of demolition for the commission to explore if the building could be

registered as historic, having a structure assessed for salvage and to find a viable funding stream.

An architect came to the hospital later that fall and was able to identify original architecture from the 1910s and from a remodel in the 20s. Structurally speaking, however, the building was not eligible to be on the National Register of Historic Places. Once repairs were

made, then the process could begin on having it added to the register, as well as open up grant opportunities for further restoration.

In May 2023, the building was back on the docket for another discussion about demolition. The Historic Preservation Commission spoke to council again about their desire to save the building

HARKEN | 3 ▶

CCDC Pillars Grant brings innovative P.E. technology to Murray Schools

clarkecountyilife.com

At their April meeting, the Clarke County Development Corporation awarded a grant of more than \$17,000 to the Murray Community School District to support the acquisition and implementation of an exciting new technology-enhanced physical education system called Lü. This high-tech, interactive solution is designed to boost student engagement and participation not only in physical education, but across a broad range of learning experiences.

"By integrating technology into physical education and extracurricular activities, we aim to cultivate a culture of innovation and adaptability for students," Jeanie Bower,

Technology Integrationist for Murray Community Schools, said.

The Lü system transforms traditional gymnasiums and learning spaces into dynamic, immersive environments. Using wall projections, 3D cameras, lighting and audio, Lü creates an interactive, larger-than-life experience that enhances physical, emotional and intellectual development. Its robust software empowers educators to create custom activities and monitor student progress in a meaningful way.

According to the Iowa Department of Education, "Physical education is essential to a student's overall education experience and builds a foundation for lifelong healthy living."

However, a recent National Institutes of Health study reports that "81% of youth (ages 11-17) do not participate in the recommended 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity."

With the integration of the Lü system, the Murray district hopes to increase the engagement of all their students beyond the gymnasium.

Conversations with the CCDC board highlighted enthusiasm for the initiative, noting the system's potential for sustainability, long-term student engagement and integration into extracurricular programming. There was also discussion around its ability to provide measurable feedback and expand educational opportunities

LU | 13 ▶



A comparison of water levels at West Lake over the early parts of 2023-2025.

Revisiting West Lake Water levels

Osceola Water Works

As Osceola Water Works closely monitors the water levels at West Lake - Osceola's only water source, it's important to reflect on the past and to keep the future of Osceola's water supply in focus. This week's lake level

measured 1070.37-feet above Mean Sea Level, which is 5-feet higher than it was at this time last year - but is still more than 2-feet below full pool level, 1072.7-feet above MSL.

In April 2024, West Lake Level was at 1065.00-feet and Osceola was in "Section 3 - Water Emergency - Restrictions

of the Water Conservation Ordinance."

In May 2024, the Level of Conservation was lowered to "Section 1 - Water Watch - Voluntary Conservation" and in June 2024, the Water Conservation Ordinance was lifted.

As we get farther into

WATER | 2 ▶



OST photo Candra Brooks

Tour de Osceola: The bikes are back! Clarke County Public Health is hosting a contest to see who can ride the most miles on the above bikes, located on the east side of the courthouse, from April through June. Contact Public Health for more information.

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Index

Church Directory.....6	Obituary.....3
Classifieds.....13	Public Notices.....11-12
Editorial.....4	Record.....2
Neighbors.....5	Sports.....7-10



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Youngsters wait patiently to gather eggs at Saturday's annual Easter Egg Hunt on the square. See more pictures from the morning on page 14.

Don't Forget Prom weekend

Friday and Saturday are prom nights. Murray's walk-in begins at 6 p.m. on Friday at Murray Schools. Clarke's is 6 p.m. on Saturday at the Clarke County Fairgrounds.