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# THE AFTON STAR ENTERPRISE

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The conversation pit at the Afton Lake has been completed with a fire pit. The Afton Development Corporation has more plans for this family friendly area so near to our town. Keep watch to see what it in store for the area next.

## East Union News

by K'Lea Johnson, the Afton Star Enterprise

The East Union Board of Education met on June 16th for their regular monthly meeting.

K'Lea Johnson, president of the Afton Development Corporation, addressed the Board during the Public Comments time of the meeting. She expressed concern about the cars that have been seen parking on the walking trail along the west side of the parking lot and asked if the ADC might be able to help create a barrier so that visitors to the school are aware that it isn't part of the parking lot. Superintendent Kuehl stated that he would contact Johnson to discuss possible remedies to the situation.

Principal Joan Gordon presented the Spring Student Achievement Data for the 2024/25 school year. The I-Ready Reading assessment is used to determine the progress of the EU elementary students.

The 2024/25 Spring data showed that 61% of the students were meeting their goals compared to the 64% in the preceding fall to midyear time frame. She concluded, "In late April, we received our 2024-2025 Iowa State Assessments of Student Progress (ISASP) results, which provide one piece of evidence of the successful teaching and learning that occurs each and every day. These tests are completed by our third, fourth, and fifth grade students, and the results are as follows: 76% of our students scored in proficient or advanced ranges in Reading and Language Arts, 73% in Mathematics, and 71% in Science (taken in grade five only). While these results reflected slightly lower proficiency rates than last year's, we

were encouraged by our students' performance, particularly when one considers that 23% of these students have Special Education Individual Education Plans with academic and/or behavioral goals. We also noted some very nice growth in the performance of many of our fourth- and fifth-grade students."

Secondary Principal Riley reported a staff update as they have approved an ELA instructor to replace Ms. Miller, who has taken a sabbatical, but her ELL role remains open. He explained that there is still a High School Special Ed position that remains open, but they have been planning since May with the remaining instructors who have been preparing to fill the spot themselves.

There were 49 students taking online courses during the second semester who completed 128 online courses. Mr. Riley stated, "The amazing benefit that we've had is that kids are choosing incredibly interesting classes. They have chosen Astronomy, Professional Sales and Promotions, Forensics, German, Careers in Allied Health and Construction, all kinds of classes that they wouldn't have been able to take."

Mr. Kuehl reported that he, Buffington, and Tallmon have been in contact with Jake Hayes and the Muscle Mat Club about renovating the west wing of the old Care Center building. The Board-approved schematic design has been returned, and they are getting quotes and looking for ways to pay for it. Kuehl stated that he will be reaching out to Dekko in the near future, as there is little excess in PEPL and SAVE due to

computer and bus costs.

Kuehl and Peggy Hardy, Early Childhood Center Administrator, were to meet with Joyful Sparks to determine if there is a way they can work together for the continuum of care aspect required for grant funding.

There will be a special meeting for a change in the school calendar in an attempt to fit the last day of school in before Memorial Day 2026. The recommendation is to add classes on Monday, on September 15th, and the first Monday in December to ensure the correct number of hours, with Graduation being on the Sunday before Memorial Day.

Mr. Kuehl reminded Buffington and Tallmon to submit the appropriate paperwork if they intend to run for re-election in November.

Student fees for 2025/26 will remain the same as last year. Registration Fee: \$50, Student Activity Fee: \$60, Family Activity Pass: \$250, and Driver's Education Free: \$375.

**East Union will share**

- Superintendent with Murray 50/50;
- School Business Official with Diagonal 60/40;
- Transportation Director with Murray 70/30;
- Maintenance Director with Murray 80/20;
- Social Worker with Green Hills AEA 40/60;
- Food Service Director with Murray 80/20;
- School-Based Interventionist with Iowa Juvenile Courts 50/50;
- ELL Teacher with Murray, and
- Spanish Teacher with Murray;

Mr. Riley and Mrs. Gordon have been updating the Student Handbooks; changes will be reviewed and approved at a later date.

The next meeting will be on July 21st at 6:30 p.m.

The Afton Development Corporation met on June 26, 2025, at the Afton Community Center. Members K'Lea Johnson, Dennis Brown, Mary Hill, Retta Ripperger, Jeanne Bryson, Dixie Shinkle, and Jane Eklund were present. The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m.; the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The agenda, the Secretary's minutes, and the Treasurer's report were approved. Jerod Eklund was paid \$20 to build the fire pit at the Afton Lake.

### Committee Reports: Tourism and Revitalization:

- Bike racks - ADC has purchased bike racks to be placed in Afton, Lorimor, Arispe, and the Paul & Becky Kelley Family Natural Wilderness Area outside of Afton. The bike racks are built, picked up, and ready to be placed. People from each location volunteered to put their racks up for the ADC.

- Tree Grant - The City Council was unable to secure a grant for the trees.

- Shelter House at Afton Lake - ADC would like to have a shelter house placed at Afton Lake. We are currently researching the use of a grain bin as the shelter. Johnson talked with T&S Industries about the price of moving a grain bin from the Jeanne Pettit farm to the Afton Lake. Ripperger will get a quote on concrete for the floor of the shelter. Hill will look into grants for the shelter and concrete materials. Johnson also talked with a guy who was advertising that he delivers grain bins and sets them up for \$5,500.00 for an 18' bin. A decision was not made at this time, and further discussion will be had.

- Fire Pit at Afton Lake - Jerod Eklund and Hill completed the construction of the fire pit ring inside the conversation benches at the Afton Lake.

- Pit Toilet at Afton Lake - Johnson gathered information about placing a pit toilet at Afton Lake and presented the idea to the City Council, which voted in favor. The City Council will work in conjunction with the ADC on this endeavor as well.

- Tin Pictures for Downtown Building Exteriors - Johnson found an old picture of the Bluegrass Highway that members would like to use, and Hill found several more pictures.

- Bingo - The Lions will hold Bingo with cash prizes on Tuesday, July 8th at 7:00 p.m. in the community building during Tuesday Night in the Park.

- Afton Lake Walking Trail Signage - Podium ink has finished the signs. ADC will hire someone to set the signage. There are 10 interpretive signs as well as 13 plant identification signs. Hill priced posts for the signage at \$62.00 for 15 three-foot posts, and the eight-foot posts are \$37.00 each, of which we need four. ADC moved to buy the 15 three-foot posts and four eight-foot posts for the signage.

- City Wide Clean Up - was once again a success. Five ADC members, along with 22 other volunteers from the community, picked up 8.13 tons of refuse. Wes Gilbert and two of those volunteers picked up an additional 3 tons of metal and appliances. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed a delicious meal prepared and served by El Ranchito.

- Mural on Amos Grocery Building - The building has been sold to Ryan Bryson. Bryson has expressed possible inter-

est in agreeing to have a mural painted on the side of the building. Further discussion will be had on what he would like.

- Walking Trail from Talmage to Lorimor - Hill will send a letter to landowners along the Chicago Great Western RR asking for donation, sale of, or easement to their piece of land along the RR for the purpose of creating a walking/biking trail from Talmage to Lorimor.

- Tuesday in the Park Meal - ADC will serve the meal on August 5th starting at 6:00 p.m.. Fried chicken, a side dish, and dessert will be served. ADC moved to have Shinkle purchase the chicken.

- Walking Trail at the School - Cars have been parking on the walking trail at the west parking lot. Students and faculty have been made aware by the school administration not to park on the trail, as the trail is not rated to hold that much weight. The weight is causing the surface to break, and divots are being formed by the tires. While students and faculty are aware of the problem and are making an effort to stay off the trail, visitors to the school are unaware of the issues. Repairs will be costly, so Johnson and school superintendent, Mr. Kuehl, have agreed to work together to find a solution. The walking trail was placed there prior to the school parking lot being expanded up next to the trail.

### Membership:

T & S Industries and Powers Funeral Home renewed their membership with monetary

Donations. Dave and Connie Cunningham, as well as The Landers Agency, also made