



### Rotary Scholars

Recipients are not The Knoxville Rotary Club presented 16, \$500 scholarships to KHS Seniors. Recipients included: Natalia Schneider, Hannah Dunkin, Jensen Finnegan, Marlea Cox, Ella Pelong, Janie Maasdam, Marley Larson, Josephine Strohhahn, Payton Horn, Kyl Bauer, Kaeding Phillips, Landen Norris, Joseph Finnegan, Rylan Robinson, Rilyn McCarty, and Ethan Russell. (photo submitted)

### Council approves next round of façade grants

The Knoxville City Council approved the next round of façade grants at Monday’s regular meeting. They included:

112 E Robinson, \$2,747.50 for Brick Repairs	Brick/Stucco Repairs 108 N Second, \$3,050 for Painting/Awning	for Windows/Lighting
319 E Main, \$3,650 for Brick Repairs	116 N Second, \$775.75 for Awning	These improvements have a total cost of \$78,178, of which the grants will provide \$35,253. Approximately \$54,000 remains available for façade grants.
109 E Main, \$2,549 for	613 W Pleasant, \$10,000 for Windows/Doors	
	913 W Pleasant, \$10,000 for Windows/Lighting	
	909 W Pleasant, \$2,480.38	

### Public Safety Complex plan coming soon

The architects of Knoxville’s new public safety complex/city hall are expected to bring their plans before the city council in June.

“The architect and the engineers were given the green light right about a month ago, that we’re ready to move forward,” City Manager Heather Ussery said. “They have gotten those updated and I think the first meeting in June is what we’re planning on for them to be on the agenda.”

Ussery said that the plan is to go out for precast bids before the rest of the project to secure materials. The City does not want to wait for those materials when it is time for construction.

“Our hope would be to go out for bid early fall/late summer,” Ussery said. “That’s where the time frame is now, so we’ll update council with all of that.”

### Miller-Meeks invites Pope to Congress

Washington, D.C. – Congresswoman Mariannette Miller-Meeks (IA-01) is leading a formal letter to Speaker Mike Johnson requesting an invitation for Pope Leo XIV to address a Joint Session of Congress.

The letter comes just days after Congresswoman Miller-Meeks joined a historic congressional delegation to the Vatican for the (inaugural) Mass of Pope Leo XIV—the first American pope—alongside Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and nearly 20 members of Congress.

“Pope Leo XIV represents a profound moment in both American and world history,” said Miller-Meeks. “His life, leadership, and message of faith are already uniting people across the globe. Whether you’re Catholic or not, his message is one of human dignity, responsibility, and truth. It would be an incredible honor for Congress and the American people to hear directly from him. At a time when the world is searching for moral clarity and renewed purpose, Congress should welcome that message.”

If accepted, Pope Leo XIV would become only the second pontiff in history to address a Joint Session of Congress.

### The Knox Collective preparing to launch

**By Steve Woodhouse**

Sundance Realty’s Sara Roberts and Hannah Vander Veer are collaborating on a new initiative to welcome people to Knoxville, known as the Knoxville Collective.

“We call it a new spin on the Welcome Wagon,” Roberts said. “We’re calling them Knoxville starter kits, but it’s the same premise. We’ll have a bag, full of coupons and or swag from our local businesses. And really, the idea came from just my own experience. When I first moved to Knoxville, I was not from here. Ryan and I moved here 25 years ago, and I was visited by a lady named Virginia Rayl, who did the Welcome Wagon for Knoxville.”

Roberts was touched by Rayl’s visit and it really helped her. She was expecting her son, RJ, at the time and it helped her get to know the community.

“As a young mom, it was helpful, just to get to know things. She visited us again when we had RJ so she also did new baby baskets too,” Roberts added.

She and Vander Veer have been discussing this service for “several” years now. As realtors, they offer gifts to clients when the new homeowners move in. The two have identified a disconnect among old and new residents, regarding what the community has to offer.

“We’ve kicked it around, and finally, this winter, I just said, ‘We need to. Let’s do it. Let’s figure out a way to get this done. We need to get this going.’ So we just started working and putting the plan together, and here we are. We launched last week, and we anticipate starting our deliveries in June.”

Local businesses can advertise or include swag/goods by registering through the group’s website. There are low fees to do this, and the renewal fee is also low.

For more information, visit [www.theknoxcollective.com](http://www.theknoxcollective.com).



### Muether earns doctorate

May 15 marked Heidelberg Theological Seminary’s Annual Commencement at Trinity Reformed Church (Sioux Falls, SD). Rev. Chuck Muether of Pella, Iowa, received his Doctor of Ministry degree. It was a special occasion for Dr. Muether as the graduation speaker was Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg, his former student whom he had taught ten years ago at the seminary. Rev. Schwichtenberg’s address, “Take Heed, Brothers” was drawn from the text, Acts 20:8. President Maynard Koerner presented Rev. Muether his degree.

Dr. Muether had taught language arts and drama for over ten years at Pella Christian Grade School before resuming his seminary training. He had previously earned a Master of Education degree at Dordt University. He planted Hope Reformed Presbyterian Church in Pella and then taught New Testament Studies and Apologetics at Heidelberg Theological Seminary in Sioux Falls, SD. The church plant bug bit again with Dr. Muether starting Immanuel Reformed Fellowship, which began in Oskaloosa and then moved to Pella.

Dr. Muether has served the Pella Ministerial Association as secretary for five years and in recent years has formed Mariaska Ministries, an independent chaplaincy organization that serves the spiritual needs of the elderly living in residential communities.

### Branderhorst praises first responders

Nick’s Greenhouse had several occurrences recently that brought the quality of Pella’s first responders to the forefront.

Councilor Lynn Branderhorst praised the ambulance, fire and police departments at the close of Tuesday’s city council meeting, saying, “We have the most amazing first responders.”

In a short span of time, there was an active automobile fire, the car vs. motorcycle accident that was reported in last week’s edition and the business had received a bad check from an out-of-town patron. In that case, the Pella Police Department quickly found the person responsible and the business was made whole.

“We are a very blessed community,” Branderhorst said. This was also National EMS Week.

### City of Knoxville briefs

The Knoxville City Council met in regular session Monday night. Here are a few updates about actions taken by the council and more.

A subdivision for the next phase of the Veterans District is being designed and is expected to come before the Board of Supervisors in June. No comments were received during the public hearing regarding the annual budget amendment, which was approved. The amendment is required by the state. Changes included adjustments for the purchase of the gym heater for the Recreation Center and taking the planned bond proceeds for the public safety complex out of this fiscal year, as the money won’t come in until after June 30.

Expanding the recreational trail, including possibly connecting it to Volksweg, is another priority identified in the comprehensive plan. The County has reportedly received funding to help cover the planning costs for an extension of the trail from Knoxville to Ivan’s Campground.

### Actions taken to issue bonds

**By Steve Woodhouse**

The Pella City Council took actions at Tuesday’s regular meeting to issue \$17 million in general obligation bonds for the Recreation Center project.

Those included a resolution to engage Ahlers and Cooney as bond attorneys for the project. The firm will be paid a bond counsel fee of \$50,321. Coupled with fees the firm has already earned, the Ahlers and Cooney costs will be \$95,000.

As a municipal entity, the City of Pella can issue the bonds tax-free. Resolutions were passed to be compliant with the IRS for this, including one pertaining to the private funding assistance the City will receive for the project. The center’s costs will be \$35.1 million and of that, \$18.1 million will come from sources outside of City government.

A public hearing on the bond issuance is scheduled for June 3 at 6 p.m. The City hopes to close the bonds on July 17.

In a separate action, related to this project, the council agreed to engage Greenwood Consulting to provide oversight of upcoming projects. The principal of Greenwood is Bob Veenstra, who has helped the City in the past.

“I think Mr. Veenstra is one of the best of the best,” Councilor Lynn Branderhorst said.

“I would concur,” Mayor Don DeWaard added. “We’re blessed to be able to have someone like that.”

Greenwood Consulting is being engaged as the City’s Public Works Director position is currently vacant, due to the recent retirement of Denny Buyert. The search process for a new director has been underway.



### Peace Officer Memorial Day ceremony held

Members of the Pella Police Department and Marion County Sheriff’s Office were joined by friends and family of fallen police officers at the Pella Public Safety Complex Thursday morning, May 15, for Peace Officer Memorial Day. The day is part of National Police Work, to remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice while in the line of serving the public.

Speakers included Sheriff Jason Sandholdt, Chief Shane McSheehy, Captain Paul Haase and a family member of John E. Van Haaften, who was killed in the line of duty in 1980 in Pella. The ceremony also recognized the sacrifices of Knoxville Policeman Bert Conrey, who died from injuries sustained in an attack from a drunk couple in 1938, Deputy Harold Gates, killed in 1967 and Virgil Behrens, who was killed in a car accident on his way to training in 2008.

## Mobile Home For Sale

**Welcome to this stunning home priced at just \$25,000! With over 1,200sq. ft. of spacious living. Located at Colonial Terrace, 1610 E. Robinson St, Lot 103, Knoxville, IA. This home is designed for both comfort and style. The open floor plan seamlessly connects the expansive living area to the kitchen, which boasts ample cabinet space and a convenient breakfast bar. Brand new carpeting installed throughout. Appliances include stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, washer and dryer. Outside you will find a large deck and storage shed. This home won't last long call Melanie at 515-249-3828 to schedule your showing today.**

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