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\$1

Early birds get the donuts

Amish bakery, market attracts large crowds

By Katie Hammond
Wapello Morning Sun

If you want fresh donuts from Sarah's Bakery in Wapello, you'd better arrive early.

On most Saturdays, the made-from-scratch treats sell out fast

Business Spotlight

See ad on 2A

drawn steady crowds eager for homemade breads, pies, cookies and the donuts that have quickly become a local favorite.

Yoder's Market, an Amish-owned grocery that opened Jan. 10, offers a wide variety of bulk foods including noodles, beans, spices, cereals, flour and sugar, along with other baking staples. But on Saturdays, Sarah's Bakery is the main attraction.

The bakery operates the same hours as the store, but the most popular items often disappear quickly. Lines frequently form before opening as customers hope to secure fresh pies, cookies, breads, fry pies and Sarah Yoder's

from-scratch donuts.

On Feb. 28, the bakery sold 300 homemade donuts in less than an hour. The 78 fry pies that day were gone in just 20 minutes.

"We sell about 80 percent of the bakery items in the first couple hours," Sarah said.

That same Saturday, she baked 40 loaves of bread, 26 pies, 51 pans of cinnamon rolls and 54 dozen cookies. By the end of the morning, only four loaves of bread remained.

"I want it all to be as fresh as possible," Sarah said. "I don't use any preservatives — it's all baked fresh."

Preparing the baked goods is a multi-day process. Sarah begins baking on Thursdays.

"It takes about three hours just to make all the cookie dough, and another four hours to bake and frost them," she said.

On Fridays she wakes at 3 a.m. to bake pies and bread. Saturdays begin even earlier.

"I'm up by 1 a.m. to make the donuts," she said.

Sarah does most of the baking herself, which she admits can be challenging.

"It is a lot of work," she said.

The Yoders also travel weekly to Stringtown in Kalona to pur-



Photo by Katie Hammond
Fresh homemade donuts cool on racks at Sarah's Bakery inside Yoder's Market in Wapello. Sarah Yoder begins making the donuts at 1 a.m., and the 300 she typically prepares often sell out within the first hour.

chase bulk ingredients for the bakery and store.

Despite the long hours, the family hopes the business will continue to grow. Their goal is to eventually expand into a larger

Amish market offering products made by several members of the Amish community.

Currently, another Amish woman contributes a variety of fry pies. In the future, the Yoders

"We sell about 80 percent of the bakery items in the first couple hours."

— Sarah Yoder

hope to add items such as jams and jellies, angel food cakes and homemade noodles. They would also like to eventually offer fresh meat, fruits and vegetables.

"We will need a bigger space before we can add all of that," Sam Yoder said.

The couple moved to Wapello one year ago with their 4-year-old son after a 12-hour trip from Punxsutawney, Penn.

Their move was part of a larger effort by several Amish families seeking farmland and opportunities to raise their families in a rural setting. In their Pennsylvania community of roughly 600 Amish families, farmland had become scarce.

In August 2024, several young families traveled to the Midwest to explore potential new communities in southwest Wisconsin, eastern Iowa and northeast Missouri.

Louisa County wasn't originally on their list.

"We were driving through and I said, 'What's wrong with here? It's beautiful,'" Sam recalled.

See Business on 6A

City celebrates long-awaited fire station

Cornerstone ceremony and community gathering highlight decades-long effort to replace 1969 station

By Jim Rudisill
Wapello Morning Sun

After more than 20 years of work, the city of Wapello and especially Wapello Fire and Rescue were finally able to celebrate construction of a new fire station in the community during a combined March 7 event at the station.

The day kicked off with a cornerstone dedication ceremony led by state officials of the Iowa Grand Lodge of AF & AM (Freemasons). Leading the time-honored ceremony was Iowa Grand Master Wade Sheeler, Newton,

who was assisted by a cadre of other state leaders and local Masons.

Since the nearly \$1.6 million facility did not incorporate any actual stonework, the nearly 300-year-old Masonic ceremony focused on a plaque that will eventually be mounted on the station grounds located along U.S. Highway 61 in the Patrick's Subdivision.

Using the traditional tools of masonry, including a square, level and plumb, which also represent the various virtues and principles of Freemasonry, different officers of the Grand Lodge de-

termined the plaque/building had been properly constructed.

City officials and local firefighters who had struggled since at least 2005 to replace a building built in 1969, were quick to agree.

Wapello Fire and Rescue Chief Josh Michel, who in addition to his official fire department responsibilities also served as the unofficial project architect during the 45-minute ceremony, described how past and present firefighters viewed the new 80' x 208' station.

"What you are seeing is the reality of a dream that occurred over 20 years ago by (WFR) members

who came long before me," he told the estimated 75 people who attended the dedication.

"Our previous fire station served us very well. It was utilized almost daily, but we outgrew it. It was time to move on to a new place, a better place, that would serve our members; serve our community better," he continued.

Michel closed by thanking the Masons for hosting the dedication and extended the department's appreciation to the community for its support.

"Thank you for our community and we hope you continue to sup-

port our fire station and our community throughout the future," he said.

Wapello City Councilor Troy Mitchell, along with other city officials, attended the meeting at the request of Mayor Brett Shafer, who was unable to attend but had provided written comments for Mitchell to deliver.

Reading from Shafer's address, Mitchell thanked everyone for attending and then immediately stressed the importance of the new station.

"A fire station is more than a See Ceremony on 2A

Publisher's Note

Turning the page

By Jeff Abell
Owner/publisher

In the short time I've owned the Wapello Morning Sun, I've come to appreciate the history that fills the building the newspaper has called home for more than 60 years. Generations of journalists have worked within these walls, documenting the life of this community.

After next week, however, the newspaper will no longer operate from this location. This was not our choice.

The building has been sold, and the new owners have other plans for the space. While it marks the end of a long chapter for the newspaper, it does not change our commitment to Wapello, Louisa County, and the readers we serve.

The future of the newspaper remains bright. We are actively working to secure a new office in Wapello because being part of the community we cover matters.

In the meantime, subscriptions and other payments may be mailed to P.O. Box 286, Wapello, IA 52653. Our email address will remain the same, and we are working to keep our phone number active as well. You can also call (319) 750-0965.

We'll keep readers updated as plans move forward, and we appreciate the continued support of our community.

Supes set March 23 hearing on proposed county tax levy

By Jim Rudisill
Wapello Morning Sun

A March 23 hearing on the first of two state-required public hearings on Louisa County's Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget was set by the county board of supervi-

sors during its March 3 meeting.

The first hearing, which will provide local residents with an opportunity to provide comments and ask questions on the county's proposed FY 27 property

See Levy on 5A

Louisa County's first roundabout? Wapello officials discuss possibility

By Jim Rudisill
Wapello Morning Sun

Louisa County residents are often quick to point out to visitors, especially those from larger urban areas, that there is no permanent traffic spotlight anywhere in the county.

While there has been no final decision yet, during the March 5 meeting of the Wapello City Council, city officials discussed the possibility that a roundabout, another relatively modern traffic control feature also not found in the county, could become a central feature in the U.S. 61 realignment around the community.

According to officials and apparently with support from Louisa County Engineer Adam Shutt, the creation of a roundabout intersection at the corner of County Road G62 and the current U.S. 61 would improve traffic flow in that area.

The officials suggested

that the area could become congested once G62 becomes the more northern of the two exits serving the community when the realignment is completed sometime within the next decade.

Mayor Brett Shafer explained that Mediapolis is already dealing with congestion following the completion of its bypass.

"I'm in Mediapolis three or four times a week, and until you come off the (bypass) and go into town, then you really start thinking - man, we need to do this; or we don't need to do this. That's when it shows you what you have to do. I don't like their four-way stop (intersection of Wapello Street (Old Highway 61 and Main Street) in the morning and in the afternoon," he said, explaining he has seen traffic backed up 12 vehicles deep at times.

"We don't want that," he added, suggesting the roundabout was a possible

solution.

According to the preliminary design distributed at the March 5 council meeting, the proposed roundabout would be located between K Avenue and the existing Highway 61, with entrances/exits serving G62, State Street/Highway 61N, and Townsend Avenue/Highway 61S.

Officials conceded any roundabout would likely require the acquisition and removal of an existing car wash at the intersection and possibly a former restaurant property in the intersection's southwest corner.

The current design shows that an existing curve on G62 is expected to remain, which prompted council

See Roundabout on 5A

