



6th Annual NE Iowa Diecast TOY SHOW

Saturday, March 28th • 8:30am - 4pm

Winneshiek County Fairgrounds
2 Buildings of Toys • Diorama Contest

900 East Main Street • Decorah

AgFarmToys/Iowa Diecast Toys

Dealers from around the Midwest will be selling Farm Toys, Semis, Construction Toys, Hot Wheels, NASCAR, Cars, Memorabilia & More!

Show is sponsored by Iowa Diecast Toys/AgFarmToys.com in Clermont

ADMISSION

Adults \$5
Ages 13-17 \$3
12 & Under Free

TRIBUNE

New Hampton Chickasaw County

Your Community. Your Team. Your Media.

www.nhtrib.com • Thursday, March 26, 2026 • 24 pages • Issue 13 • Volume 152

Fall election races shaping up

No contested primary races but supervisors, recorder facing challengers

BY BOB FENSKE
editor@nhtrib.com

This June's primary election, at least when it comes to county offices, will be, simply put, quiet.

The same, however, can't be said for the general election this fall as three incumbents — two supervisors and the county recorder, are facing challenges. That number could grow,



of course, but after the primary filing period closed on Friday, it appears we'll have some honest-to-goodness

races when voters head to the polls in November.

That's because District 2 Supervisor Scott Cerwinski, District 5 Supervisor Travis Suckow and Recorder Shirley Troyna all have challenges on the other side of their party lines.

Cerwinski and Suckow both filed candidate papers as Republicans while Troyna filed her papers as a Democrat before the Friday deadline.

But so, too, did Democrat James G. Ashley in District 2, Democrat Jason Byrne in District 5 and Republican Gina Fangman for recorder.

County Attorney David Laudner, a Republican, and County Treasurer Matt Ysbrand, also a Republican, so far have no challengers in either the primary or general elections.

Immaculate Conception Church
North Washington, Iowa

ANNUAL SWISS STEAK DINNER

Drive Thru Only- Watch For Sign Directions
SUNDAY, MARCH 29 Serving from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

SERVING SWISS STEAK, POTATOES & GRAVY, CORN, COLESLAW AND A SLICE OF PIE

\$16 PER MEAL ADVANCE SALES
\$17 PER MEAL DAY OF MEAL

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM ANY PARISHIONER, PARISH OFFICE OR THE DAY OF THE DINNER.

Proceeds from meal go towards Church Maintenance

RAFFLE TICKETS:
Tickets \$1.00 each
Items: Gift Certificates, Cash, Craft Items & More
Raffle Tickets available now or the day of the event

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Still, the final ballot for November county races is not set because non-party political organization (NPPO) candidates and other

SEE FILING, 5

SWORDS AND MORE

NEW HAMPTON MAN CREATES UNIQUE BUSINESS IN HIS HOMETOWN

BY BOB FENSKE
editor@nhtrib.com

It's really an amazing story when it comes to the young man who freely admits he's one of the biggest — if not the biggest — “Lord of the Rings” nerds on the planet.

And Carver Gage, a 2019 graduate of New Hampton High School, is living his dream, even if the path he's taken has been winding at times.

Here he is, though, today, the owner of his own business — creating swords, knives and daggers that are beautifully ornate that combine his love for both history and art — in a small shop located on his parents' property just south of the New Hampton Golf and Country Club.

Welcome to Nordland Forge, the business that young Mr. Gage is beyond passionate about and where he creates swords that are used at everything from weddings to wall art to entertainment company giveaways.

“How'd I get here? That's a great question,” he said during a recent interview in his shop. “I don't know if I can tell the story, but for me, it's just been a fascinating journey, and I'm not even close to where I want to be yet. I don't even know how I'm going to get there, but I know I am going to get there.”

SEE GAGE, 2



Check out our Progress in the Heartland sections in today's edition of the Tribune!



Carver Gage carefully works on manufacturing a sword in his Nordland Forge shop that is located just to the east of New Hampton.

Photo courtesy of Carver Gage

Residents share concerns about school tax levy

During hearing, superintendent presents an alternative levy — 93 cents less than max — but school taxes are in all likelihood going up

BY BOB FENSKE
editor@nhtrib.com

Several New Hampton Community Schools residents expressed frustrations during the district's maximum tax levy public hearing Monday night, and while Superintendent Erik Smith and board members certainly understood their concerns, they also said in many ways local school boards have relatively little control when it comes to setting tax-levy rates from year to year.

And they did offer up some good news during the hearing when they said, they believe they can dramatically reduce New Hampton's tax levy rate, at least compared to the max-levy rate that was the subject of Monday's meeting.

The maximum levy rate published by the district was \$13.2321 per \$1,000 valuation, an increase of 11 percent from this year's rate of

SEE SCHOOL BOARD, 2

After 'no-show' max levy hearing, supervisors cover plenty of ground

Board members follow through with reducing number of 'deputies' in county

BY BOB FENSKE
editor@nhtrib.com

Just three Chickasaw County residents showed up for Monday's Chickasaw County Board of Supervisors meeting and none of them had nary a word to say during the county's annual public hearing on its maximum tax levy.

In other words, unlike some years in the past, this was a quiet max levy hearing.

SEE SUPERVISORS, 3

All-State Speech Festival dream becomes a reality

NHHS junior to perform in Cedar Falls Monday

BY BOB FENSKE
editor@nhtrib.com

Skyler Bugenhagen may not have been the most focused soccer manager in the history of the world back on March 16.

Let's be honest, the New Hampton High School junior's mind was elsewhere, for two days before, Bugenhagen had nailed her solo musical theatre piece titled “Pretty Funny” from the musical “Dogfight” at the state individual speech contest, earning Division I ratings from all three judges.

And then she, like speech competitors from all around the state, settled into what seemed like a forever wait for the announcement of the nomina-

tions to the All-State Speech Festival, where only the best of the best get invited.

“I'm not going to lie, I was so nervous because you never want to get your hopes up because you never know what the judges are going to think,” she said. “I knew I had all of these things that went super well. The judges loved it. I loved it. Everything was great, but if you get your hopes up, then you can get disappointed, get crushed.”

So this year, the speech star tried to keep an even keel as Monday afternoon approached.

“I didn't want to get my hopes up like I usually do because it's so hard

SEE ALL-STATE, 9



New Hampton High School junior Skyler Bugenhagen will take her powerful solo musical theatre performance to the All-State Speech Festival next week.

Bob Fenske/Tribune

FFA president set to tackle mental health at fundraiser

BY BOB FENSKE
editor@nhtrib.com

Jennifer Eichenberger remembers that day years ago when her family lost its swine barn, but what really sticks in the New Hampton High School senior's mind is what came next.

And it's one reason the outgoing president of the New Hampton FFA chapter is excited to host a unique fundraiser this evening (Thursday) at the Waucoma Event Center.

“Mental Health: The Most Important Crop” will kick off at 5:45 p.m. and include a pork loin dinner from the Ionia Locker, a silent auction and two guest speakers — Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig

SEE FUNDRAISER, 3

What's up with the bunnies?

Play our game — details are on Page 5 — and have a little fun as Easter nears

Musical time!

Check out our photos from the annual middle school musical, “New Sheriff in Town”

Page 11

Running well

New Hampton track coaches see a lot to like at latest indoor meet

Page 12



\$1.25 Single Copy