

Justin Trees appointed as Mitchell County Sheriff

BY SHAELY ODEAN
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The Mitchell County Board of Supervisors took formal action Tuesday to fill the upcoming vacancy in the sheriff's office, unanimously appointing Deputy Justin Trees to succeed outgoing Sheriff Greg Beaver.

The appointment, finalized via resolution 1354-26 during the March 24 board meeting, will become effective at 12:01 a.m. on June 1, 2026. Trees' selection followed the retirement of Sheriff Beaver, which is effective May 31. The board moved forward with the appointment after a published notice period, noting that the public still has a 14-day window from the date of appointment or publication to file a petition for a special election.

Supervisors expressed high confidence in the department's current personnel during the discussion. One supervisor noted that while multiple deputies were capable of the role, the decision to appoint Trees was influenced by his long-term commitment to the position.

"The concern that I have is that Deputy Trees has decided that he wants to have the sheriff's position, and I also feel that he's very capable of doing that," Su-

pervisor Jim Wherry said. "It would be concerning for me to not approve him for this position. I don't want to send a signal to the electorate in regards to why you didn't appoint a candidate that wants to be the sheriff."

The board also addressed a request from Zoning Administrator Amanda Baer regarding a contract for a data center ordinance. Baer noted that while a moratorium on cryptocurrency and data centers remains in place through the end of the year, locking in a contract now would ensure the county is prepared once the current focus on solar ordinances is complete.

The board ultimately approved a quote from NIA-COG to draft the ordinance, despite concerns from some members about the current lack of state-level legislative guidance after a recent bill regarding data center water and grid usage died in the legislative funnel in Des Moines. Thorson clarified that the county's current data centers use closed-loop systems, but future regulations would ensure better oversight of water and energy consumption.

Maintenance of the Mitchell County Courthouse remains a high-priority concern following



The Mitchell County Courthouse in Osage is shown. Deputy Justin Trees was unanimously appointed to succeed outgoing Sheriff Greg Beaver with his new role officially beginning on June 1.

reports of leaks in the building's cupola. Supervisors discussed the potential need for an architect and engineer to draft specifications for repairs. The board is currently seeking additional quotes to determine if the project will exceed the \$100,000 threshold, which would trigger a formal public bidding process.

"We want to fix it right so that it's the last time there's a fix," Supervisor Pam Marzen noted.

She added the county may investigate whether the original construction met specifications after photographs suggested potential defects in the initial build. The matter was tabled until the next meeting

to allow additional contractors to inspect the site.

In other business, the board approved a service agreement with Johnson Controls, with the funding to be drawn from the county's building fund. County Engineer Richard Brumm provided a brief update, noting he is working on the DOT program budget and monitoring bridge conditions as spring weather approaches.

The board concluded with updates on regional meetings, including a report on the St. Ansgar School District's property tax hearing.

The Mitchell County Board of Supervisors meets every Tuesday at 8:30 a.m.

what's for LUNCH

<p>Breakfast and lunch menus for the Osage Community School District. Juice is served with breakfast. Milk is served with every meal. *High school only</p>	<p>Wednesday, Apr. 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast: Cereal, toast, mandarin oranges • Lunch: Hot ham and cheese, hash brown, peas and carrots, peaches
<p>Monday, Mar. 30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast: Yogurt/cereal, blueberries • Lunch: Corn dog, tater wedge, baked beans, cooked carrots, pears 	<p>Thursday, Apr. 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast: Pancakes/sausage, peaches • Lunch: Chicken noodle soup, cheese stick, veggies and dip, applesauce
<p>Tuesday, Mar. 31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast: Egg/cheese patty, toast, pears • Lunch: Chicken fajita, gr. cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, onion, peppers, mandarin oranges, refried beans, lime rice 	<p>Friday, Apr. 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Friday, no school

what's HAPPENING

<p>FRIDAY, MAR. 27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 p.m. - Boys Track & Field North Iowa Indoor Championships, Clear Lake Athletics & Wellness Center • 7 p.m. - High School Musical, Cedar River Complex - Auditorium 	<p>MONDAY, MAR. 30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5:30 p.m. - Learning Connection, Osage Lincoln Elementary School
<p>SATURDAY, MAR. 28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 a.m. - Easter Egg Hunt, Prairie Lakes Church • 7 p.m. - High School Musical, Cedar River Complex - Auditorium 	<p>TUESDAY, MAR. 31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4:30 p.m. - Boys / Girls Track & Field, St. Ansgar High School - Track
<p>SUNDAY, MAR. 29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:30 p.m. High School Musical, Cedar River Complex - Auditorium 	<p>THURSDAY, APRIL 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 p.m. - Trap Shooting, Garner Hayfield Ventura • 4:15 p.m. - Boys Tennis vs Webster City, Osage High School • 4:30 p.m. - Boys / Girls Track & Field, Central Springs High School



Marlin Duren (center) is honored for 20 years of service with the Osage Fire Department during the department's annual Awards and Spouse Appreciation Night.



Jon Eagan (center) receives recognition for 20 years of service with the Osage Fire Department at the annual awards event.

Osage Fire Department honors years of service at annual awards night

The Osage Fire Department recognized several of its members for their years of service during its annual Awards and Spouse Appreciation Night held Saturday.

Firefighters Marlin Duren and Jon Eagan were each honored for 20 years of service to the department, while T.A. Kleckner was recognized for 15 years. Jacob Potter received recognition for five years of service but was not present for the event.

The annual gathering serves as an opportunity for the department to celebrate not only the dedication of its firefighters, but also the

support of their families, whose contributions play a vital role behind the scenes.

In addition to the weekend's recognition, 1st Vice President Mike Kime of the Iowa Firefighters Association attended the department's meeting Monday night, where he formally presented Length of Service Awards to Duren and Eagan for their two decades of commitment.

Osage Fire officials expressed their appreciation for the honorees, noting their continued dedication to protecting the community and serving residents year after year.



T.A. Kleckner (center) is recognized for 15 years of service with the Osage Fire Department during the department's annual Awards and Spouse Appreciation Night. He is pictured with presenters following the ceremony.



St. Ansgar City Hall, where a public hearing on the proposed property tax levy is scheduled for March 26.

St. Ansgar to hold hearing on proposed property tax increase

ALYCIA DIONEDA SCHNEEDLE
The Osage Oracle

The St. Ansgar City Council will hold a public hearing March 26 on its proposed property tax levy for fiscal year 2026-27, with total city property taxes proposed to rise from \$720,302 to \$890,758.

The hearing is scheduled for 6:45 p.m. at St. Ansgar City Hall Council Chambers, 111 S Mitchell St., according to the published notice. Residents and taxpayers may present objections to or arguments in favor of the proposed levy

at that time. Under the proposal, the city's regular tax rate would increase from 11.24408 to 11.29280.

Based on valuation examples included in the notice, a residential property with an actual or assessed valuation of \$100,000/\$110,000 would see city taxes increase from \$533 to \$553, a 3.75% change.

A commercial property with an actual or assessed valuation of \$300,000/\$330,000 would

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ATTENTION VETERANS AND WIDOWS OF VETERANS

If you were an active-duty veteran of one of the periods of war and received an injury during that period, please come and see if we can get you some compensation. If you were boots on the ground of Vietnam review the presumptive list to see if you may have one of the cancers, diabetics etc.. If you served during a period of war and your finances are not very good, then check to see if you qualify for a Veterans Pension.

If you are a Widow of a Veteran who served during a period of war and you have low finances, please come and check to see if you may qualify for a Widows Pension.

All these services for either the Veteran or a Widow of a Veteran are at NO COST. The only thing it will cost is a few minutes out of your day.

PLEASE CONTACT:
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Mitchell Co. Veteran Affairs
Cell: **641-220-1759** (available 24/7 365 days a year) PREFERRED
Office: **641-832-2920**
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