



Column One Events

Kidstop to hold annual Soup Fundraiser

Kidstop Childcare and Preschool annual Soup Supper fundraiser on Wednesday, April 1, 2026 from 5:00-7:00 pm in the Summit Center Cafeteria in Bancroft. It is a free-will donation. This year we are also having a family literacy night each child 5 and under will receive a free book and activity to take home.

Hunter Education Field Day Class

The Kossuth County Conservation Board will hold a Hunter Education Field Day Class this spring. The course will meet on Saturday, April 25th from 12:00-3:00 P.M. at the Izaak Walton League located at 2408 Highway 169. This facility is across from Smith Lake on the east side of U.S. Highway 169. Pre-registration is required for the course. Students must register online for the field day class at <https://events.goutdoorsiowa.com>. Students attending this event must also have completed the Iowa DNR online course. The online class registration information is available at <https://www.hunter-ed.com/iowa/>. Students are required to bring their online field day voucher the day of the class. The deadline to register online for the Field Day Class is Thursday, April 23rd at 4:30 P.M. For more information contact the Water's Edge Nature Center at (515)-295-2138.

Give the Gift of Life

The Ringsted Evening Out Club will host a community blood drive with the American Red Cross on Wednesday, April 8th from 1:00 to 6:00 at the Ringsted Legion Community Center. For more information or to make an appointment to donate, call Barb Christensen at 712-260-0375, Karen Witte at 712-260-1671 or Cindy Liljedahl at 956-458-2155. Or you may sign up online at redcrossblood.org.
Hosting a blood drive coincides with the Evening Out Club's core values of giving back to the community. "With a simple blood donation, we have the ability to help save the life of someone who could be a coworker, loved one or neighbor.
Blood is routinely transfused to patients with cancer and other diseases, premature babies, organ transplant recipients and trauma victims, according to the Red Cross.
"The short amount of time it takes to donate can mean a lifetime to a patient with a serious medical condition. We urge eligible donors to join us in the selfless act of giving blood."
Donors of all blood types are needed, especially those with types O negative, B negative and A negative. According to the Red Cross, type O negative is the universal blood type that can be safely transfused to anyone, and is often used to treat trauma patients.



Sandy Laabs visits with her daughter Brenda Carrigan during a stop at the Blades, Hair & Nails Salon booth at Vendor Show in Armstrong Saturday, March 28. Brenda gave "A free nail treatment for her Mom during the Show". Blades is located on Highway 9 in Swea City.



Sacha Alesch of Bishop Garrigan and North Union's Khaal Jones represented the Top of Iowa West Conference at the 2026 Iowa Basketball Coaches Association Pizza Ranch All-Star Games this past Saturday. Alesch played on the Northwest squad girls' all-star team while Jones was on the boys' all-star squad.

Photo submitted

Jones caps record-setting season with postseason honors

North Union standout sets multiple school records in 2025-26 campaign

By David Swartz
dswartz@esthervillenevents.net
North Union senior Khaal Jones capped off a record-setting basketball season by collecting multiple postseason honors following the 2025-26 campaign.
Jones, a 5-foot-10 guard, was named the Top of Iowa West Conference Player of the Year in early March after leading the Warriors to a 15-10 overall record and an 8-8 mark in conference play. He helped guide North Union to a district championship before the Warriors fell one game short of the state tournament in a 56-42 substate loss to MMCURU.
When all-state teams were released after the state tournament, Jones added another accolade, earning Class IA Second Team All-State honors from the Iowa Basketball Coaches Association.
Jones' senior season was one for the record books — literally.
He finished his career holding or sharing 10 school records, including several of the program's most notable scoring marks. He set single-season and career records for points with 516 and 956, respectively, while also establishing new standards for field goals made in a season (183) and career (341).
From beyond the arc, Jones was equally prolific. He set school records with 74 3-pointers this season and 144 for his career. His 74 makes from long range also helped North Union set a new team record with 179 3-pointers on the season.
Jones also etched his name alongside other standout players in several shared records. His 35-point single game performance this season against Garner-Hayfield-Ventura on Jan. 9 ties the mark set by 2017-18 alum Riley Bauer. He also shares the single-game rebound record with a 16-board effort, matching Bauer, 2016-17 alum Trent Pedersen and 2023-24 alum Kody Irmiter.
In addition, Jones recorded six double-doubles this season, tying Irmiter for another program mark.
Beyond the records, Jones filled the stat sheet in every category. He averaged 20.6 points per game and led the Warriors in rebounds (184), assists (135), steals (98) and blocks (13).
Back on the court
Jones' season extended beyond high



North Union High School Coach Alex Fisher poses with senior basketball player Khaal Jones who played in the All-Star Basketball game.

school competition as he was selected to play in the 2026 Iowa Basketball Coaches Association Pizza Ranch All-Star Games this past Saturday at Dallas Center-Grimes High School.
Competing for the Northwest team, Jones played in two during the event. In the first round, Jones' Northwest team lost 96-94 to the Northeast squad. In 15 minutes, Jones had nine

points. Storm Lake's Jady Coon and Cam Boyd led the Northwest team with 17 and 11 points, respectively.
In the second team, Northwest lost 93-88 to the Southeast squad. Jones had 11 points while Boyd and Coon led the Northwest team again with 19 and 12 points.
The experience capped off a standout senior season for the Jones.

Easter Bunny coming to Swea City

The Annual Easter Egg Hunt in Swea City will be held on Saturday, April 5 at 10:00 a.m. in the North Union Middle School Playground.

In case of inclement weather it will be held in the cafeteria. The hunt is for kids through fifth grade. Check Facebook for a list of the businesses to redeem your eggs. Prizes must be redeemed by 11:00 a.m. Don't forget to have your picture taken with the

Easter Bunny.
The event is sponsored by the Swea City Community Club.



Swea City to see reduced tax rate

By Michael Tidemann

Prior to their regular Wednesday, March 25 meeting, the Swea City City Council held a public hearing and approved a fiscal 2026-27 property tax levy.

A levy decrease will reduce the tax rate on city regular residential property nearly 10 percent, or from \$982 for the current budget year to \$884 for a residential property with an actual/assessed valuation of \$100,000/\$110,000. Commercial property will see a lesser rate decrease of 3.33 percent, from \$4,270 for the current year to \$4,128 for fiscal 2027. While the rate decreases, there will be an overall \$34,000 increase in property taxes due to increased valuations.

City Clerk Alycia Wolterman said there were no oral or written comments submitted to City Hall before the public hearing. When Barry Boland asked where increased spending will go, Wolterman said playground equipment and nuisance abatement.

Councilmember Lupe Kollasch moved for levy approval. Councilmember Dustin Sobolik seconded her motion and the council approved.

In the regular meeting that followed, former Mayor Wendy Zielske confronted Councilmember Randy Perdue over a rumor of Zielske using a city skid loader to clean snow from her driveway.

"It's none of your business who scrapes my driveway," Zielske said, adding that she was not in the city skid loader and had Perdue seen her try to operate a skid loader he would realize she was not capable of doing so.

Perdue said later in the day he had supposedly seen Zielske using the skid loader he had contacted Mayor Troy Langford about the matter and learned she had not done so.

"There was an accusation that was incorrect," Zielske said.

Perdue apologized for the incorrect accusation.

Langford broached the subject again at the end of the meeting.

"The last thing we need is councilmembers saying things that are not true," Langford said to Perdue. "It's frustrating to hear that."

Langford also admonished Perdue to refrain from interfering with city maintenance staff doing their work.

"When people are doing their work we've got to stay out of their way, Randy. We've got to set better examples," Langford said.

Langford told Perdue if he had a complaint about city staff, he should come to him.

Langford also defended Zielske from community rumors against her.

"Wendy spent eight years doing this job," said Langford. "There's no sense keeping on her. Quit hammering on Wendy."

"I would love to see people step up and do these jobs," Langford said of residents who criticize city officials. "I just really want to see things starting to change."

In the library report, Tifini Stevens said the annual report had been submitted and the card catalogue was available online. Stevens said new hours would be posted: Monday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to noon.

Stevens said the board is looking for a new member and is inviting a prospective candidate to the next board meeting. She said board members have to take annual training as will the new board member.

Tyson Zinnel gave the fire report and City Superintendent Travis Stevens reported on water and sewer. Stevens said the city lagoon had filled with recent snows and drawdown had started the previous day. He said King Construction brought three pumps to pump water from the lagoon. Stevens said the lift station had been reprogrammed and was working and

that the Iowa Department of Natural Resources said the city had passed all clean drinking water standards.

In the garbage report, Tylor Evans said one-dumps had picked up and he would probably need to order four to six more dumpsters.

In other business, Wolterman said she was still gathering information on a city Web site. Kollasch moved that the matter be tabled and Sobolik seconded her motion and the council approved.

The council also tabled purchasing security cameras, with Sobolik moving to table. Perdue seconded his motion and the council approved.

In other matters, the council:

- Approved paying up to \$6,500 for pickleball court fencing.
- Approved paying \$1,916 for painting and work on the park basketball court with the money coming from leftover playground equipment funds.
- Agreed to have residents put out curbside debris from April 23-26 for community cleanup, with pickup starting April 27.
- Approved pay request #7 to King Construction on the lagoon project for \$168,862.50.
- Agreed to contact the owner of a nuisance property at 405 1st Ave. W. regarding associated liabilities of demolition and that progress must take place by April 15. The council also agreed to have Yung deal with the nuisance property.
- Approved the annual insurance renewal as presented.
- Approved Troy Adams as zoning administrator.
- Set a 6:30 p.m. April 15 public hearing for the fiscal 2026-27 budget.
- Approved making Main Street South one-way from north to south from Highway 9 and one block south.
- Updated the city fee schedule.
- Discussed a nuisance abatement.
- Heard from Wolterman that nine applications had been received for lifeguard positions.

Property Tax Levy public hearing held by NK School Board

By Kim Meyer

The North Kossuth School Board met on Tuesday morning, March 24th for the Proposed Property Tax Levy public hearing.

North Union superintendent Travis Schueller explained to the members that with the passing of the PPEL vote earlier in the month, the PPEL is now increased to a \$1.00.

He also explained that the current tax rate could be changed once the state sets their rates. The highest this rate would be set at is \$8.81. Last year's tax rate was \$8.31.

Income surtax remained the same from last year.

Board members asked Superintendent Schueller about the upcoming schedule of the building maintenance work that the PPEL money will allow them to complete.

He stated that the company they are working with will be at the school April 2nd and present them a project schedule. It is projected that bids will

go out in the fall of 2026 and work will begin in spring of 2027. But this has not been fully determined.

Superintendent Schueller stated that the voted in PPEL will now increase the monies the district to receive to around \$480,000. With this increase and the savings, the district will not have to a bond to finish the projects.

"When I found out the PPEL had passed, I was very pleased," stated Schueller.

The breakdown numbers in a whole were 183 yes votes to 144 no votes with 55.83% voting yes.

Following the closing of the public hearing, the board went into their normal session to pass the Proposed Property Tax Levy.

The second public hearing on the Proposed Property Tax Levy will be held at 7:30 a.m. on April 21.

A public hearing was also held on the 2026-2027 school calendar. School will begin on Monday, August 24th with four professional development days held the week prior.

Christmas break will begin on December 23 with students returning January 5. Spring break will be held March 25-29th.

Graduation is set for May 16th and the last day of school is May 20th. Five virtual days will be able to be used throughout the year.

The calendar was approved.

The school audit was reviewed and approved by the board.

Every five years, the district must approved their DDSP plan. This calculates the overall score for special education students on roster. The higher the score of a student, the smaller the roster is to allow the teacher to spend more time with the student.

There was no changes and DDSP was approved.

Cory Rezac was approved for the head baseball coaching position. The district is still looking for an assistant coach for the upcoming season.



Almost time to play Little League ball

Ethan Jensen, Clint Davis, and Spencer Clausen were taking time on Saturday, March 28 to get the Little League field ready for action. The three gentlemen volunteered their time to start preparing the infield.

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