

Wolfe

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Conservation, for Wolfe, wasn't a slogan—it was the daily practice of respect: for land, for people, for the future.

After Catholic grade school and Arcadia High School, Wolfe earned a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Wisconsin—River Falls, majoring in Soil Conservation. In his senior year he studied abroad in the Netherlands, examining polders—low-lying tracts reclaimed from the sea through dikes and drainage. Historically driven by windmills and now by pumps, the Dutch system impressed on him how a small, densely populated country could use ingenuity to make room for farming.

Then came the United States Peace Corps. Stationed in Burkina Faso in West Africa, he worked on managing lowland areas for rice production, he helped build terraces and taught farmers techniques to increase production and self-sufficiency—an experience he describes as truly eye-opening.

Back home in Wisconsin, Wolfe was hired by NRCS and worked in five counties, building broad, hands-on experience and a reputation for practical problem-solving. In Lafayette County he met his future wife, Janis Rockabrand — a retired physician assistant at Regional Health Services of Howard County. They married in 1980 and raised two children, who now live in the Des Moines area. Today, Wolfe and Janis are proud grandparents to two little ones, ages 4 and 6; his granddaughter lovingly calls him “my cute little Grandpa Jimmy.” Together, they love to travel, including a memorable service trip to Nepal. Wolfe also enjoys gardening.

Professionally, he rose to District Conservationist in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, while Janis accepted what became her dream position in Cresco. The couple navigated a long-distance stretch for a little over two years until the right opportunity opened in Cresco. Wolfe was then hired as the Howard County District Conservationist, where he spent the largest portion of his career managing the office and mentoring a growing team.

His tenure coincided with major milestones in U.S. conservation policy. The 1985 Farm Bill—one of the most consequential of his career—brought new funding, staff, and conservation provisions. Among them was the Highly Erodible Land (HEL) conservation provision, which required the district to look at every crop field in the county to determine which acres were highly erodible and to classify them. Farmers then had to develop a conservation

plan and apply the practices in that plan to remain eligible for USDA farm payments—“in tough economic times that was very important,” he notes. He emphasized that productive soil underpinned everything—without healthy soil, crops and food suffer—and he pushed for better water quality as a priority across the county. “When I think back on it, we probably oversaw the largest expansion of conservation activity since the office was set up—there were a lot of different things happening,” Wolfe recalls. He helped implement the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which encourages producers to convert highly erodible and environmentally sensitive acres to vegetative cover such as native grasses, trees, and riparian buffers, with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. He also supported the Wetlands Reserve Program, which provided payments to landowners to restore and protect wetlands. “At one point in Howard County we had a lot of wetlands, but we lost a lot,” he says. “With the help of this program we’re starting to see the animals and vegetation come back—beyond just protecting the wetlands.”

Locally, his team advanced practical, farmer-friendly efforts like promoting no till practices, SAMS (A Farmer’s information sharing resource club), well water testing, and water-quality watershed projects—many of which continue today. “It’s primarily because of the conservation farmers that we had then and the ones we have now, that we were able to make everything work,” he says. “But also it’s because we had a great staff, we had great commissioners, and we had the funding to help our farmers protect the environment in the best way possible.”

In 1992, Wolfe and his wife Janis bought a steep, erosion-prone farm near Granger. He set out to make it a model conservation farm, planting some 30,000 trees over the years, establishing native prairie grasses and food plots, and constructing several wetlands and ponds. One pond, in particular, stands out. “It drains a large area that would have created a lot of sediment in the Upper Iowa River if not for the pond structure,” he explains. “It’s a big improvement in water quality and erosion control at the site. It’s also reducing flooding downstream and, most importantly, it provides a lot of water for wildlife—I’ve seen a lot of ducks, geese and other wildlife watering on that pond.”

From Dutch polders to African rice terraces to Iowa prairies and wetlands, Wolfe has spent a lifetime showing how conservation works—on paper, on farms, and on the land itself. That thread runs

through his decision to accept a new kind of public service. Many of the same skills he used in conservation—listening carefully, weighing trade-offs, staying practical, staying patient—translate to city matters. Roads and budgets, water and parks, ordinances and opportunities: they’re different details, but still about stewarding a place and serving the people who call it home. Now, weeks into the job, he enjoys the teamwork, the problem-solving, and the sense that decisions matter in tangible ways. He also likes the pace—steady, sometimes urgent, often incremental—because it mirrors the way good land stewardship happens: one season building on the next, improvements you can measure over time.

Wolfe encourages neighbors to reach forward both immediate service concerns—like a pothole, a streetlight out, or as he has already heard about—dog waste receptacles needing to be emptied—as well as broader policy ideas such as public safety and infrastructure issues. Anyone in the Ward 2 district can contact Cresco City Hall to reach Wolfe or come to a City Council Meeting. Ward 2 includes the NE part of the City Limits of Cresco in the area surrounding East Park (see image on story).

Cresco’s City Council works alongside the mayor and city staff to adopt ordinances, approve budgets, oversee city utilities and services, and guide planning and development. Council members also serve on committees. Wolfe is expected to serve on the following committees which were assigned at the January 5, 2026 meeting: Tourism, Library, Airport, and Public Safety Oversight.

Residents can attend City Council meetings on the first and third Wednesday of the month, 5:30pm at City Hall in Cresco. The Council invites constituents to reach out early on issues, noting that questions or ideas are easiest to address when they’re raised before formal votes.

Why this moment matters is straightforward. City councils are where community priorities meet practical decisions—what gets paved this year, which grants the city pursues, how to balance service levels with the tax levy, and how to plan the next decade of growth. As Ward 2’s new voice, Wolfe will play a key role in those conversations, bringing neighborhood perspectives into citywide policy. However big or small the question, the job starts the same way: listen well, do the homework, and keep the public trust. Ask him why he said yes, and his answer is simple: he was asked. He’s retired, yes, but not from purpose—and he intends to leave things a little better than he found them.

Cresco City Council

Mayor Fortune called the Cresco City Council meeting to order on February 16, 2026 at 5:30 pm. Council Members Carman, Wolfe, Fossaaen, McConnell, and Kriener were present. No Council Members were absent.

McConnell made the motion to approve the consent agenda which included approval of the agenda; claims; minutes from February 2, 2026, regular and special meeting; February 6, Special Meeting; Tax Abatement under the Urban Revitalization Plan for Craig and Terri Cotant; Tax Abatement under the Urban Revitalization Plan for Gatlin and Ashlyn Keehner. Carman seconded and it passed all ayes.

Public Works Director Brenno reported: (a) the Water Department fixed a water main break on Crescent Drive. The water temperature has been about 42.3 degrees; (b) Street Department found a storm frozen street sewer; (c) the generator at City Hall has been repaired and is now working, we will need to keep it plugged in during winter.

Police Chief Ruroden had nothing to report. Deputy City Clerk Yanes reported: (a) Hill has been busy with budget; (b) 1929 meters have been installed. Up 200 from the last meeting. Of the 45 final reminders sent out 9 have not responded and will be getting surcharges on their next bill. Letters will be sent on all remaining that have not been changed by next week.

Council Member Wolfe reported that he attended the Airport Commission meeting and met with Jordyn on the Library Board Agenda as he was unable to attend their meeting. Mehmers will be looking into the waterproofing issue at the Library and Mracek’s will be giving a quote on the new air conditioner unit.

Mayor Fortune asked for comments from the audience and there were none.

Kriener made the motion to approve a resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an Information Technology Services Agreement - Statement of Work with Solutions, Inc. Fossaaen seconded and it passed

all ayes. McConnell made the motion to waive the building permit fee for Howard County for their new Secondary Roads building. Carman seconded and it passed all ayes. The City’s tax abatement plan under the Cresco Urban Revitalization Plan was discussed. Kriener made the motion to keep the terms as they currently are and review it again in 5 years McConnell seconded, and it passed all ayes.

Carman moved to adjourn the Council Meeting at 5:39 pm. Wolfe seconded, and it passed all ayes. The next regular Cresco City Council meeting will be March 2, 2026 at 5:30 pm at Cresco City Hall.

Mayor Alexander Fortune
Deputy City Clerk Amber Yanes

Following is a list of claims approved for payment:

ACCESS SYSTEMS, Copier	324.38
ALLIANT, Elect	115.92
ANDERSON, Athny	264.00
ATLANTIC COKE, Concess	672.76
BADGER METER, Srvc	1,598.85
BC/BS, Ins	33,847.58
BOB’S ELECTRIC, Srvc	1,152.65
BUREAU VERITAS, INSPCT	85.00
CAPITAL SANI, SUPP	71.27
CARQUEST, SUPP	221.68
CARRICO, CHEMS	55,815.95
CITY LAUNDERING, Srvc	319.87
CITY OF CRESCO, INS	4,087.87
CLAIR R PECINOVSKY, Srvc	600.00
CR HEAT & VENT, Srvc	412.92
CR TPD, SUBS	381.62
DSG, SUPP	2,165.14
DEAN R MILLER, Srvc	708.63
DELUXE ECHOSTAR, MOVIE	40.00
DEPT OF INSPECT, PERMIT	75.00
FAREWAY, SUPP	213.24
FENCO, SUPP	37.60
GOOD TIMES GRILL, Dp	64.76
HAWKEYE SANI, Fees	87,120.97
HOLSTROM, SUPP	100.95
HOWARD CO, Shared LEC	8,783.93
IA DNR, Cert	400.00

IOWA ONE CALL, One Call	17.10
JEFF MEINECKE, Srvc	275.00
KWIK TRIP, Gas	4,313.39
LUCKTEIG LAWN, Supp	52.99
MARTIN GARDNER, Srvc	92.40
METERING & TECH, Meters	71,221.68
MIENERGY, Elect	9,497.57
MUDSLINGERS, Srvc	120.00
NEIA MOTORS, Srvc	956.80
NOSBISCH, MIKE, OpRF	35.91
OLSEN, RON, OpRF	22.14
PETTY CASH, Pstg	108.10
POSTMASTER, Stamps	234.00
RHSHC, Srvc	113.00
RUPPERT, Supp	614.95
SOLAR PRO, Solar	1,851.90
STATE HYGIENIC LAB, Analysis	1,056.00
STOREY KENWORTHY, Supp	1,210.00
TASC, Fees	319.20
TREASURER, ST OF IA, Tax	8,755.82
UTILITY RADIATOR, Srvc	255.00
VISA, Supp	2,746.57
WINDSTREAM, Internet	704.19
ZIFT, Fees	2.50

BY FUND:

GENERAL	104,484.49
LOCAL OPTION TAX	55,652.00
NUISANCE HOUSE	108.10
CR COMM FIRE	103.61
ROAD USE TAX	2,025.30
EMPLOYEE BENEFIT	319.20
SCENE SHOP PROJECT	92.40
WATER UTILITY	16,032.84
WATER UTILITY REPAIR RPLC	71,221.68
SEWER OF	38,820.36
YARD WASTE	15,275.96
CASH CLEARING	122.81

Total Expenditures 304,258.75
Total January Revenue 837,803.36

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2/25/2026

Probate/Will

Case No. ESPRO12571 NOTICE OF PROBATE OF WILL, OF APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTOR, AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the Iowa District Court in
and for Howard County
In the Matter of the Estate of

DEAN MACKENBURG,
Deceased.

To All Persons Interested
in the Estate of
DEAN MACKENBURG,
Deceased,
who died on or about
January 5, 2026:

You are hereby notified that on February 12, 2026, the Last Will and Testament

of DEAN MACKENBURG, deceased, bearing date of May 9, 2024, was admitted to probate in the above named Court and that Kayla Mackenburg was appointed Executor of the estate. Any action to set aside the will must be brought in the district court of said county within the later to occur of four months from the date of the second publication of this notice or one month from the date of mailing of this notice to all heirs of the decedent and devisees under the will whose identities are reasonably ascertainable, or thereafter be forever barred.

Notice is further given that all persons indebted to the estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned, and creditors having claims against the estate shall file them with the clerk of the above named district court, as provided by law, duly authenticated, for allowance, and unless so filed by the later to occur of four months from the date of the second publication of this notice or

one month from the date of mailing of this notice (unless otherwise allowed or paid) a claim is thereafter forever barred.

Dated February 17, 2026

/s/Kayla MacKenburg, Executor of the Estate
20213 125th St
Cresco, IA 52136

/s/Kevin E. Schoeberl, ICIS#: AT0006991
Story, Schoeberl & Seebach, LLP
126 N. Elm St., PO Box 89
Cresco, IA 52136

Date of second publication
March 4, 2026

Published in Cresco Times Plain Dealer
2/25/26 to 3/04/26 issues

H. County Sherrif’s Office Press Release

PRESS RELEASE
Please see message below
from Sheriff Rick Busch:

HOWARD COUNTY & MITCHELL COUNTY - At or about 1:33 am this morning both the Mitchell County Communications center and the Howard County Communications center received a call regarding a potential homicide that had occurred in Riceville, Iowa. Responding law enforcement agencies established a perimeter in the area of the report. During the course of the investiga-

tion, it was concluded that no homicide occurred as reported to law enforcement. Further investigation throughout the night and continuing into today indicates this to be a suspected SWATting call, designed to lure law enforcement into a specific area or have first responders respond to an incident that is false in nature. This information provided by the caller has been turned over to the Iowa Fusion Center, Department of Public Safety for further investigation. Agencies responding to

the incident overnight were the Howard County Sheriff’s Office, Mitchell County Sheriff’s Office, Floyd, Winneshiek, and Chickasaw County Sheriff’s Offices, the Iowa State Patrol and the State Patrol Tactical Team, Osage Police Department, and the Riceville Fire and Ambulance Services. I would add that anyone with information regarding this incident to contact law enforcement in their area and provide any information they might have to aid in the investigation.

We Appreciate Our Community’s
Law Enforcement Officers

Winneshiek Sheriff’s Office Press Release

PRESS RELEASE
-Date: 2/20/2026
-Time: 4:30 am
-Incident/Charge: Class C - Felony 3rd Degree Burglary and Aggravated Misdemeanor Operation Without Owner’s Consent
-Location: 380th Street, Decora, Iowa
-Person: Timothy Schmitt
-Address: Guttenberg, Iowa
-Age: 31
WINNESHIEK COUNTY - Incident Details:
Around 9:30 am deputies re-

sponded to a burglary that took place on 380th Street in Highland Township, in northeastern Winneshiek County. It was reported that the victim woke up around 4:30 am to find a tractor being driven out of their driveway but thought it was a neighboring farmer. Later that morning, the victim realized his 4430 John Deere tractor was missing from his machine shed. The victim also found that his zero-turn lawnmower had been taken from an outbuilding and was stuck in the snow in his driveway.

During this time, travel was not advised due to a winter storm producing heavy snow and blizzard-like conditions.

While deputies were on scene, the suspect, Timothy Schmitt, brought the tractor back to the residence. Upon realizing deputies were on scene, he abandoned the tractor about halfway down the driveway and attempted to flee from the area.

Deputies were able to stop Schmitt and speak with him. Schmitt admitted that during the snowstorm he got his minivan stuck in the ditch about a mile away. Schmitt admitted that he took the zero-turn lawnmower to pull his stuck minivan out of the ditch, but got the lawnmower stuck in the drive-

way. He then went back to the machine shed and took the 4430 John Deere tractor to pull his minivan out of the ditch. Once Schmitt successfully had the van out of the ditch, the van remained stuck in the snow on the roadway. Schmitt then drove the tractor to a nearby friend’s house for a few hours. Upon attempting to bring the tractor back to the victim’s machine shed, Schmitt then put the tractor in a different ditch, breaking a window out of the cab. Schmitt proceeded to maneuver the tractor out of the ditch and made it about halfway down the driveway before realizing deputies were at the residence. Schmitt left the tractor and fled on foot.

Upon further investigation Schmitt also admitted to stealing Milwaukee tools from an outbuilding. Deputies were able to recover the tools that were still in his minivan stuck in the snow on the roadway.

Timothy Schmitt was placed under arrest and transported to the Winneshiek County Jail for Class C Felony 3rd Degree Burglary and Aggravated Misdemeanor Operate Without Owner’s Consent.

This incident remains under investigation with additional charges pending.



PHOTO BY
RACHEL
RILEY/TPD

Rebound battle

CRESCO - Crestwood’s Cody Sobolik, right, battles a Waukon player for a rebound during the Feb. 19 district playoff game. The Crestwood boys’ basketball team beat Waukon, 80-57.

Howard County Sheriffs Office - Dispatch Activity

The following calls are just a snapshot of calls handled by our local Howard County Officers.

2/13/26	18:28	SUSPICIOUS PERSON	HWY 9 PLANTPEDDLER	CRESCO	CRESCO POLICE
2/13/26	22:07	VEHICLE IN DITCH	1/2 WAY BETWEEN QUAIL AND PINE ON 55TH ST	LIME SPRINGS AREA	SHERIFF’S OFFICE
2/14/26	2:19	10-80 CHASE	HOWARD COUNTY	HOWARD COUNTY	SHERIFF’S OFFICE
2/14/26	5:37	RUNAWAY	LIME SPRINGS	LIME SPRINGS	SHERIFF’S OFFICE
2/14/26	12:10	THEFT CALL	500 BLK 2ND ST SE	CRESCO	CRESCO POLICE
2/14/26	14:03	CIVIL COMPLAINT	600 BLK 2ND AVE SE	CRESCO	CRESCO POLICE
2/14/26	14:19	VANDALISM	500 BLK 5TH AVE SW	CRESCO	CRESCO POLICE
2/14/26	22:09	SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY	400 BLK 3RD ST SE	CRESCO	CRESCO POLICE
2/16/26	4:17	ASSAULT	GRANGER HEADED TO CRESCO	HOWARD COUNTY	SHERIFF’S OFFICE
2/16/26	22:36	ALTERCATION	RICEVILLE SCHOOL	RICEVILLE	SHERIFF’S OFFICE
2/17/26	9:56	GAS DRIVE OFF	500 BLK BUSTI	ELMA	SHERIFF’S OFFICE
2/18/26	6:30	SUSPICIOUS PERSON	HWY 9 BY CASEY’S	CRESCO	CRESCO POLICE
2/18/26	13:15	THEFT CALL	ELMA	ELMA	SHERIFF’S OFFICE
2/18/26	20:36	SEXUAL ASSAULT/ABUSE	LIME SPRINGS	LIME SPRINGS	SHERIFF’S OFFICE
2/19/26	8:07	UNDERAGE TOBACCO	1000 BLK SCHROEDER DRIVE	CRESCO	CRESCO POLICE
2/19/26	10:12	CIVIL MATTER	100 BLK 3RD AVE SW	CRESCO	CRESCO POLICE
2/19/26	13:13	FRAUD	CITY OF RICEVILLE	RICEVILLE	SHERIFF’S OFFICE
2/19/26	14:20	ACCIDENT	700 BLK 6TH AVE W	CRESCO	CRESCO POLICE
2/19/26	21:07	ACCIDENT	HWY 9 AND DALE	RICEVILLE AREA	SHERIFF’S OFFICE
2/20/26	MANY	ROAD CONDITION/DITCH	HOWARD COUNTY - MANY LOCATED ON HWY 63	HOWARD COUNTY	SHERIFF’S OFFICE

FROM: 2/13/26 - 2/20/26
TOTAL DISPATCHES: 174