

# City council hears update about pool (Concluded from page 1)

and swimming lessons, but she said that, at this point, it was the right thing to do.

The parks and recreation board asked to set funds aside to help cover what the donor might not. If the donor decided not to donate funds, they decided to complete the repair with the vinyl liner. Speicher said he could see several additional repair costs, and Prosser replied the numbers that the renovation company provided were for a worse-case scenario. Dix asked about the number of bids and Mitchell stated they needed one more for comparison and the city should probably request a proposal. Another suggestion was the company should visit the pool and work a contingency into the bid.

Katie Reno noted business people in town wanted to see what the city would contribute. Henningsen said the pool received about \$56,000 in local option sales tax.

The council also approved adoption of a new city logo. The new logo featured an outline of the state of Iowa with the city's name and slogan on the inside. The streamlined logo was suggested for use on trucks and merchan-

dise, with Mitchell noting that sometimes less was more on vehicles. The city will still use the traditional, detailed logo that includes the flying bridge, schoolhouse, corn, city name and slogan, on the city's letterhead and in other places.

In other matters, city employee Jason Gilmour stated the city could purchase a roughly \$500 grill guard for the city's tractor, or he could build a less expensive one. Leach said he would work with Case on this. The council took no action on the measure.

The council approved the purchase of a biometric time clock. Mitchell reviewed two options for the council and said many employers use biometric clocks to prohibit people from clocking in and out for others or clocking in at home.

Mitchell added the clock would calculate the time and not interface with the city's software. Leach asked how many time clocks the city should purchase, and Mitchell suggested including one for each of the shop, city hall and pool.

The members approved the ordi-

nance under section 31.035 for appointment and compensation of the city clerk.

The council approved setting a public hearing for Monday, April 6, for the fiscal year 2026-2027 proposed levy rate. It also approved setting Wednesday, April 15, for the public hearing for the final adoption of the fiscal year 2026-2027 budget.

The council approved building permits for a new home for Fredericksburg Community Development Corporation (FCDC) development lot five and at 526 Clover Circle for an addition to an existing garage.

Under department reports for the city attorney, Mitchell stated that Beth Becker admitted that she failed the city in the past few months and understood if it looked elsewhere. He added the city would use Becker's services for now, and that she would receive information for Fredericksburg on the Lewis negotiation and houses in question after tax season.

The next regular meeting of the Fredericksburg City Council will be Monday, April 6, at 6:45 p.m.

# SEMS provides update (Concluded from page 1)

vanced EMT, seven EMTs, one EMR and seven drivers. Of the 19 members, five are new within the last 12 months, which director Mike DeSloover said is a strong indicator of continued interest and growth in the service.

"Recruitment and retention continue to be a focus for us, and we are encouraged by the momentum we've built," he added. Every member works fulltime elsewhere, making daytime coverage especially challenging without the cooperation of local businesses. Even so, SEMS has grown significantly in recent years.

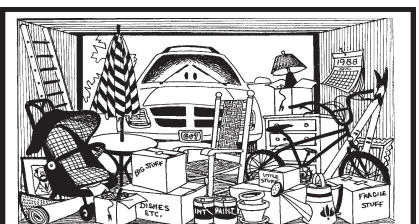
"We're incredibly lucky that we've got 19 people that signed up and want to do it," DeSloover said, noting when he took over, the service had only a handful of volunteers.

# Annual Easter tub hunt

(Concluded from page 1)

Electric; and Shawver Well Company. The candy is being sponsored by Bill Drewelow and North Iowa Fur Company; Ray and Lorraine Ambrecht; and John Cuvelier and Bob Vrzak and Insurance Associates of Lawler/Vrzak Insurance. Easter tubs are being sponsored by Aveka Manufacturing.

Parents are invited to bring their cameras to get a picture of their children with the Easter bunny who will be hopping through town.



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Training has expanded as well, thanks largely to community fundraising. SEMS has recently sent two members through paramedic school, and several volunteers will have completed EMT training by May. SEMS is currently hosting and teaching an EMT course through Hawkeye Community College, with 10 students enrolled from around the area.

"A lot of these people wouldn't have had the ability to pay for school without the community stepping up," DeSloover added. "We're lucky to see the growth we have, but volunteerism is down throughout the state. Staffing is low across many rural services like ours."

In 2025, SEMS responded to 397 calls, which represents a 44 percent increase – or 122 more calls – than in 2024. It was SEMS' highest call volume since the peak of COVID in 2020 and 2021.

Response times highlight SEMS' importance. If SEMS is unavailable, residents may wait 15 to 20 minutes for a crew from Tripoli, 45 minutes for Waverly and even longer depending on staffing in neighboring towns. "We're kind of out here by ourselves," DeSloover added, "which is why it's important to keep SEMS in our community. Without it, people will see an increase in response times. In emergency situations, every minute counts."

Funding remains SEMS' greatest challenge. The service is primarily funded through insurance reimbursements, but Medicare, which covers the majority of SEMS' patients, does not reimburse the full cost of running a call.

"The state and federal government do not match the Medicare reimbursements to the actual cost of what it takes to run a call," DeSloover stated. Of the 302 calls billed since February 2025, 66 percent were Medicare calls, meaning SEMS receives only partial reimbursement for most of its work.

Local government support helps but does not come close to covering operating costs. SEMS receives \$2,000 per month from the city of Sumner, \$13,629 per year from Bremer County, \$3,500 per year from Banks Township and \$500 per year from Bethel Township. Those funds must stretch across

fuel, insurance, workers' compensation, malpractice coverage, building insurance, ambulance repairs and medical equipment. A single cardiac monitor costs around \$35,000, and supplies used on a single call can total \$500 to \$600.

"That's why we rely on the community," DeSloover said. "We can't cover those costs with our income from calls. The community has continued to help us keep our equipment updated, staff trained and ambulances running."

"Insurance reimbursement remains a challenge statewide, not just for SEMS, and they continue to fall short of covering true operating costs. Because of that, community support remains crucial in helping bridge the gap, especially when it comes to replacing aging equipment, investing in education and preparing for future capital-intensive upgrades"

The statewide EMS landscape adds further strain. Iowa designated EMS as an "essential service," but provided no funding mechanism, leaving counties and towns to determine how to pay for it.

Even with these challenges, SEMS has many things to celebrate. Along with the rise in volunteerism, SEMS' fundraising organization, Support SEMS, has shown the importance of fundraising and how it impacts the emergency service.

Support SEMS has played a crucial role in helping SEMS to stay up-to-date with equipment and technology through several different fundraisers, including pancake breakfasts, chicken dinners, golf outings and poker runs.

Support SEMS has helped SEMS purchase three AEDs, two vein finders, AED trainer, dash-mount phone holder, simulation mannequin, Stryker power load, bariatric lift, pediatric and adult splints and pediatric and adult mattresses. It's current fundraiser – an ATV/UTV poker run and raffle March 28 – is focused on helping fund a Stryker power 2 cot system and one weight-one dose system.

SEMS continues to grow, modernize and lead. Its long history, volunteer strength, and community backing have made it a cornerstone of emergency care in northeast Iowa and a model for rural EMS resilience.



The Sumner-Fredericksburg chamber choir holds up their music as they are ready to perform "Earth Song" by Frank Ticheli.

# High school holds variety show (Concluded from page 1)

Tyzen Westendorf (who was absent) delivered a moving rendition of "Earth Song."

Several students also stepped into the spotlight with individual numbers. Skylar Harnisch performed "You Say," while Natalie Prosser offered a powerful take on "Only Love Can Hurt Like This." Kolton Kramer brought country flair with his performance of "Your Man" and the Class of 2026 seniors closed the first half with a warm, nostalgic rendition of "Blue Skies."

Following the intermission, the Sumner-Fredericksburg Sensations show choir presented their full competition show. Their set included "It's a Beautiful Day," followed by "A Storm is Coming," which featured solos by Asher Bergmann and Skylar Harnisch. Dylan Helgen took the solo in "Thunderstruck," and Natalie Prosser was featured in "Caught in the Storm," before the group closed with "Ridin' the Storm Out."

The Sensations are directed by Raquel Gitch and Gail Allison, with the instrumental combo led by Ethan Koch.



Zoey Strempe (left) and Rocky Collazo take the audience on a plane ride through the variety show and keep the crowd entertained between acts.



The concert choir sings "From the Start" by Laufey to kick off the variety show Friday night.



The 2026 seniors prepare to perform "Blue Skies" together hoping to wow the crowd.



The S-F Sensations (above) show off their prepared moves to the crowd, receiving loud cheers. (At right) Natalie Prosser performs her solo of "Only Love Can Hurt Like This" by Kiesa Keller to the crowd of people Friday night.



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