

RECORDS

DNR project aims to cut sediment, boost habitat near East Lake Okoboji



The Reed Farm, east of Arnolds Park and directly north of the Waste Management lot, covers roughly 160 acres of land. It was recently acquired by the Iowa DNR for a restoration project in collaboration with Ducks Unlimited. (Photo by Stewart Chisham)

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The Iowa Department of Natural Resources plans to restore eight wetlands on the former Reed Farm east of Arnolds Park this summer.

Work on the Reed Wildlife Management Unit property will improve water quality in the Iowa Great Lakes watershed and expand habitat, waterfowl and other wildlife. Bids closed April 23. Construction is projected to wrap up by early September.

This project sits about half a mile east of East Lake Okoboji, immediately north of the landfill. It connects to the Spring Run wet-

land complex, Iowa's second designated Bird Conservation Area.

Ducks Unlimited played a leading role in acquiring the 160-acre farm from the Reed family, partnering now with the DNR on restoration. The Lake Restoration Program contributes \$150,000, with additional money sourced from the North American Wetland Conservation Fund and U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

Engineer estimates topped \$350,000, though multiple bids came in under that figure.

Crews are set to build a wetland dike, excavate basins, manipulate drainage tile, install concrete water-control structures, add erosion control, remove trees and construct a parking lot for public access.

Each of the eight wetlands receives custom treatment — some larger and deeper, others seasonal and shallow — to match historical conditions and provide varied habitat.

The site previously delivered heavy sediment loads to downstream waters. Restoring natural hydrology and seeding 85 acres of uplands will trap nutrients and soil before they reach the lakes.

DNR officials emphasize the prairie pothole region's importance for migratory birds. The restored wetlands will support a wide mix of species while protecting water quality for the Iowa Great Lakes.

The parking area, funded separately by Ducks Unlimited, will maintain and improve longtime

public access from the north and south sides of the property.

No formal long-term monitoring program is planned for the site itself. Existing efforts by Lakeside Lab and other groups already track water quality across the region.

The Reed family farmed the land for more than 80 years. The late Irene Reed wanted the property to stay rural and support conservation.

Ducks Unlimited worked with donors to purchase the land and transfer ownership to the DNR.

Once completed, the project will deliver cleaner water to East Lake Okoboji and Upper Gar Lake while giving future generations more places to enjoy the outdoors.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

We endeavor to keep the calendar accurate. If there are items here that are no longer scheduled, or items for which the details have changed, or items that should be added, please email us at news@spencerdailyreporter.com.

TUESDAY, MAY 12

- Coffee with Randy — 7 a.m., Occasions, Spencer
- Spencer Ambassadors at Nielsen's Appliance — 9:30 a.m., 422 First Ave. E., Spencer
- Chair exercises — 10:30 a.m., Occasions, Spencer
- 500, pool, Snooker — 1 p.m., Occasions, Spencer
- Spencer ADA Council — 5:15 p.m. Spencer Library Conference Room
- Spencer High School Awards Concert — high school, 7-9 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13

- Tai Chi — 10:30 a.m., Occasions, Spencer
- Next Chapter Book Club for Adults with Disabilities — Spencer Library, 10:30-11:30 a.m., call 712-580-7290 for meeting location
- Ponytail Canasta, pool, Snooker — 1 p.m., Occasions, Spencer
- Spencer Young Professionals Walk and West O event — 5:30 p.m., West O

THURSDAY, MAY 14

- Chair Exercise — 10:30 a.m. Occasions, Spencer
- Make It OK Walk for mental health awareness — noon, starting at Northwest Bank, downtown Spencer
- 500, pinochle, bingo, pool, snooker — 1 p.m. Occasions, Spencer
- Food Bank of Iowa mobile food bank — 4-6 p.m., Spencer Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1910 10th Ave. E.; call 515-564-0330 or 712-262-5213 with questions about it.
- Groundbreaking event for Spencer Splash Pad — 5 p.m., Riverview complex next to aquatic center; ceremony at 5:30 p.m.

- Free Community Meal — 5-6:30 p.m. The Outreach, Spencer
- Spencer Table Tennis Club — 6:15-8:15 p.m. Spencer SDA Church Fellowship Hall

FRIDAY, MAY 15

- Spencer Eighth Grade Career Day — middle school, 8 a.m. to noon
- Coffee Klatch — 9 a.m., Occasions, Spencer
- Geri-Fit senior chair fitness — 1 p.m., Spencer Library, call 712-580-7290 for info

SUNDAY, MAY 17

- Occasions breakfast — 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Occasions, Spencer
- Pinochle, 500 — 1 p.m., Occasions, Spencer

BIRTHS

MAEVLEE JO WEMPE

Clay and Jalen Wempe, of Spencer, are parents of a daughter, Maevelee Jo Wempe, born May 5, 2026, at the Spencer Hospital. She weighed 6 pounds, 5 ounces. Grandparents are Kathi and Arlen Rost, of Spencer, and Tricia and Darin Wempe, of Spencer. Maevelee was welcomed home by a sister, Willow.

MAGNOLIA KAY BONESCHANS-LAYMAN

Adam Layman and Amanda Boneschans, of Spencer, are the parents of a daughter, Magnolia Kay Buneschans-Layman, born May 5, 2026, at the Spencer Hospital. She weighed 7 pounds, 4 ounces.

K Aidan Ray Coenen

Josh and Brenda Coenen, of Sutherland, are parents of a son, Kaiden Ray Coenen, born April 16, 2026, at the Spencer Hospital. He weighed 7 pounds, 6 ounces. Grandparents are Filliberto and Alicia Nava, of Woodinville, Washington, and Tammie Coenen and Jay Arneson, of Harris. Kaiden was welcomed home by a sister and four brothers.

FUNERAL NOTICE

BECKY SMOOT

Becky Smoot, 71, of Royal, passed away Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at Avery McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Services were Saturday, May 9, at 2 p.m., at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Royal. Visitation was one hour prior to the service at the church. Warner Funeral Home, Spencer, is in charge of arrangements.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

NEW DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP HERE MAY 20

Occasions announced it will begin a new Dementia Support Group monthly gathering on the third Wednesday of the month at 2:30 p.m. It will be at Occasions, 104 E. Fourth St., Spencer. The first meeting is Wednesday, May 20, and it will be facilitated by Cari Jack from St. Croix Hospice. For answers to questions about the group, contact Cari at 712-363-9897.

SIGN UP FOR MAIN STREET GOLF OUTING BY MAY 22

Spencer Main Street will raise funds for its Micros Grant Program with a golf fundraiser Friday, June 5, at the Spencer Municipal Golf Course. The nine-hole tournament is a shotgun start at 1 p.m., with check-in starting at 12:30 p.m. Registration for teams and sponsors is underway, and is due by May 22. More information is available by emailing Nancy Naeve at nancy@spencermainstreet.com or calling 712-262-7246 or going to spencermainstreet.com.

SUMMER READING PROGRAM OPEN HOUSE MAY 28

The Spencer Public Library Summer Reading Program — "Plant a Seed, Read" — begins with an open house Thursday, May 28, from 1-5 p.m. That day you can sign up, get program information, enjoy a kids and teens book giveaway, and eat popcorn. The summer reading program is for all ages and runs through July 31. Read what you want and track your reading for chances to win prizes. It is free and open to the public. Call 712-580-7290 for more information.

DONATIONS SOUGHT FOR SPENCER FIREWORKS

You can help fund Spencer's celebration of America's 250th anniversary fireworks show planned for Saturday, July 4, at 10 p.m. The Spencer Chamber Foundation is accepting donations. You can donate via cash, check and card. Checks should be made to Spencer Fireworks. Checks and cash can be dropped, and card payments made at the chamber office at 1805 Highway Blvd., Spencer, IA 51301. Card payments can also be made at a link on the chamber's website page about the fireworks, spenceriowachamber.org/fireworks/. Sponsorships from \$100 to \$1,000-plus are being sought, and those donors will be recognized.



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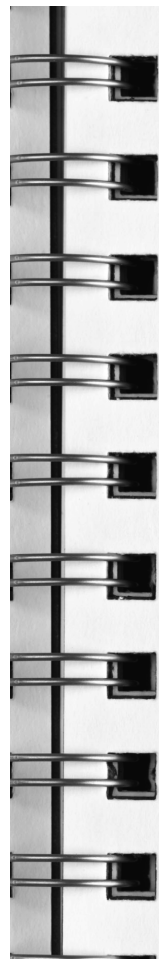
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Rides

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Notice is hereby given that the Regional Transit Authority dba RIDES Board of Directors will conduct their regular business meeting on **Thursday, May 21, 2026**. The meeting will be held at the **Regional Transit Authority Office, 522 10th Avenue East, Spencer, IA**. The meeting will start at 10:00 a.m.

The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) RIDES Board of Directors Meeting is open to all individuals regardless of disability. Any person with a disability requiring a reasonable accommodation to participate in a Board of Directors Meeting should contact the RTA Office at (800) 358-5037 at least three business days prior to the Board of Directors Meeting.



IOWA PRIMARY ELECTION JUNE 2, 2026

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