

The Fontanelle Observer LOOKING BACK

25 years ago - 2001

Adair County Engineer Scott Nixon presented his five-year Secondary Roads construction plan to the Board of Supervisors at their regular meeting on Wednesday, March 28. The plan encompasses bridge replacement or rehabilitation, riverbed stabilization, road extensions and/or resurfacing, etc. The Board will study the plan, consider any recommendations in order to give their approval so that Nixon can submit the plan to the DOT by April 13.

Adams County Speedway fans will see a new group of cars and drivers when the 2001 NASCAR Weekly Racing Series kicks off with a practice session April 14, followed by the season opener on April 21. Promoter Gail Hampel has announced a new class of cars "Hobby Stocks" and is excited about the opportunity this class will bring. There are 25 nights of racing, a special UMP Summationals Super Late Model race and an O'Riley Auto Parts All-Star Series race.

Cecilia Bower of Johnston was a Saturday lunch guest of Ralph and Nita Kester. On Saturday afternoon, their daughter, Sheryl Noble of Houston, TX, arrived for a visit with Ralph and Nita, Tom and Troy and other relatives and friends. - Bridgewater News

Ernie Dunn and Steve Firth stopped to visit Vern and Merle Richards last week. - Bridgewater News
Joy Grantham and Tootie Lydon were Wednesday afternoon guests of Mrs. Bob Menefee. - Avondale News

Repha Steward and Eleanor Steward visited Erma Carr in Corning Friday afternoon. - Avondale News

Gaylord and Linda McCall were Sunday callers in the home of Ardith McCall. - Avondale News

Florence Spangler of Norwalk was a weekend visitor in the home of Nora Baudler. They attended the Victorian Tea at the Catholic Church on Saturday afternoon. - Around Town

50 years ago - 1976

A meeting of the Fontanelle Alumni was held Friday evening with a small attendance. In order to continue the plans for this year's event, more interest must be shown. Another meeting is scheduled for April 9 at 8 p.m. in the City Hall. If anyone is interested in taking part of honoring the 50-year class, please make your wishes known at this meeting. Members of the graduating class of 1926 included: Nelse Thiele, Melissa Coleman, Merlyn Newbury, Frank H. Martin, Julia Mae Baker, Ethel

Spaulding, Archer Knouf, Hilda Kleuver, Ella Ehm, Bernice Lounsbury, Vera Hardisty, Gale Smith, Estella Timmons, Lolita Canfield, Florence Montgomery, George Perry, Velma Thiele, Violet Morgan, Ethel Reha, Maysell Means, Loretta Mutersbaugh, Katharine Stroup, Evangeline Gipple, Wayne Newbury, Don Hemphill and Bernice Crist.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Shatava, of Greenfield, are announcing the birth of a son, Justin L, born Tuesday, March 9, at the Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines. The infant weighed 7 pounds and 10 ounces at birth, and joins a sister, Kimmy, age 6. Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. William Newman and Mr. and Mrs. Don C. Thompson, all of Greenfield.

The Seventh District American Legion Conference will be held at the Fontanelle Legion Post on Saturday, April 3. In conjunction with Legion conference, the Auxiliary will hold its Conference at the Lutheran Church Parish Hall in Fontanelle. Joint Legion-Auxiliary Memorial Services will be held in the Fontanelle City Park at 11 a.m. on April 3. A banquet will follow at the Fontanelle high school gymnasium at noon.

75 years ago - 1951

Dedication and open house of the new \$600,000 Rosary hospital is scheduled at Corning Sunday afternoon, April 8, starting at 1:45 p.m. Funds for the hospital began in 1942, with the late Thomas and James Roach of Corning leaving \$253,000 to Catholic Charities. Approximately \$175,000 was subscribed in community drives. To this total, \$188,000 in federal aid was secured. The \$600,000 hospital will begin operations entirely free of debt.

Adair County people who are interested in learning about the planting of windbreaks on the farm can do so by attending the windbreak planting demonstration on the Carl Reeves farm in Lee township on Wednesday, April 11. The demonstration will begin at 1:30 p.m. according to Arlie A. Pierson, county extension director. H.G. Hertel, farm forester, will aid the county extension director in the actual demonstration. He will answer questions which pertain to the planting and harvesting of trees in all phases, the county extension director stated. The Carl Reeves farm is located 2 miles east and 2 miles south of Greenfield on a rock road.

The Iowa Highway Commission will let contracts at Ames Tuesday,

April 17, for grading 14 3/4 miles of Highway 25 north from Greenfield to No. 6 west of Menlo. The project will include 42 reinforced concrete box culverts, extensions, pipes and flumes. The new right of way runs west of the present Highway 25 and follows the present route from Greenfield one mile north.

Mrs. Harold Royer, of Dallas Center, who, with her husband, spent twenty years in missionary work in Nigeria, West Africa, will address a meeting of the Mayflower Guild of the Congregational Church at a meeting to be held in the church Friday afternoon, April 13. While the Guild is a women's organization, this meeting is open to everyone, including the men, and all are invited to hear an interesting discussion of missionary work. Mrs. Royer is a sister-in-law of Mrs. Frank Colwell, president of the Guild.

100 years ago - 1926

W.C. Hodges was elected mayor of Fontanelle in the election held Monday, defeating G. S. Walsworth by 68 votes. I.P. Bailey and D.L. Dunlap were re-elected councilmen, and three new members of the council were elected: Henry T. Miller, H.W. Pfundheller and Fred Arndt. C.A. Baker was re-elected treasurer and Niels Bredhal assessor.

Mrs. Enid Winn, daughter of Theodore Winn of Fontanelle, and Mr. Clare E. Clark, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Clark of Creston were married in Council Bluffs Monday, the ceremony being performed by Rev. Henry DeLong, a Methodist minister. They were accompanied by the groom's mother and Mrs. Lloyd Clark, of Omaha. The bride graduated from the Fontanelle High School in the class of 1928 and for the past year has been a clerk in the Stoll drug store. They are popular and well known young people and have the hearty congratulations and best wishes of many friends. After May 1, they will be at home in Hemingford, Nebraska, where Mr. Clark will work at the barber trade.

Adventure follows adventure in James Oliver Curwood's thrilling story, "Baree, Son of Kazan." It starts in the next issue of the Observer. Be sure to read it.

Rev. H.J. Wilkins, a former pastor of the Congregational church here, visited with friends here a short time last Thursday evening. He was on his way to Anita to conduct a funeral service. He now has a pastorate in Mt. Pleasant.

FONTANELLE LIBRARY CORNER



Adult Fiction

"Never Flinch" by Stephen King is the story of detective Izzy Jaynes who investigates a threat to kill 14 people while Holly Gibney protects a feminist speaker from a stalker. There were mixed reader reviews, but on the whole, readers are glad to have a new Stephen King to read.

"Clive Cussler Quantum Tempest (The Oregon Files Book 19)" by Mike Maden is an "intelligent techno-thriller that blends cutting-edge science and Central America geopolitical stakes." Great suspenseful reading.

Junior Graphic Novels

"Quest for the True Dragon (City of Dragons No. 3)" by Jamal Yogis and Vivian Truong is a favorite series for 10-year-olds and up and reviewers call it a good fit

for kids who like Rick Riordan's brand of fantasy adventures.

"Paws: Priya Puts Herself First" by Nathan Fairbairn and Michele Assarasakorn is the third book in this series that is the "babysitters club" for pets.

"Jawbreaker" by Christina Wyman is highly recommended for middle school kids and adults! It's a funny story of "sibling rivalry, economic disparity and jaw breaking dental drama," critics say.

"Hooves of Death Volume 1" by Sam Bragg is based on the beloved

webcomic from WEBTOON (the No. 1 digital comic platform). It's a post-zombie apocalypse story, with mythical creatures brought into the fight for grade levels 3-7.

New Board Books for babies to 5-year-olds

A board book is a durable children's book designed for babies and toddlers, featuring thick, sturdy cardboard pages and rounded corners to withstand rough handling, tearing and chewing.

"Pop-up Peekaboo! Tractor"

"Pop-Up Peekaboo! Baby Dinosaur"

"Pop-up Peekaboo, I Love You"

"Because a Little Bug went Ka-Choo"

"Easter Basket"

"An Easter Prayer"

Check out The Fontanelle Public Library!

STANGELAND'S STATE OF OUR SCHOOLS

Property taxes and community variations

By Dr. Pam Stangeland

NV Schools Superintendent

Tax season is stressful. Whether you own a business, farmground or are simply trying to balance your family budget, calculating your taxes is often an exercise in uncertainty, fear or frustration.

Those emotions are present on the other side of the coin as well, as public entities are charged with levying taxes to manage their organizations. Counties, cities and schools must submit their budgets to the Department of Management to determine how



Stangeland

much of their operating costs were met by their current funding formulas. For schools, our foundation formula consists of the Uniform Levy, the State Foundation Aid and an Additional Levy. Those three components are referred to as the Combined District Cost.

The Uniform Levy provides \$5.40 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation. This is levied by every school district in the state of Iowa. State Foundation Aid fills a district's formula-driven authority up to the 88.4% level. This is most often referred to as "state aid" and varies from district to district. The Additional Levy is what is needed to fill the last 12.5% of a district's formula-driven authority. There is no rate limit, but the rate adjusts automatically based on the dollar amount authorized by the formula.

This can lead to immense variations in the Additional Levy for school communities. According to the Iowa Department of Management's FY2026 reports, the Additional Levy this year ranged from a low of \$7.98 per \$1,000 of valuation in Spirit Lake to a high of \$19.00 in Ballard. While the majority of Io-

wa's 325 school districts were in the \$11 to \$14 range, many districts levied a rate of \$16 or more. Only 28 districts (8.6%) had levies below \$10 per \$1,000 of valuation.

The tax rate is impacted primarily by certified enrollment, supplemental weighting and state supplemental aid. These factors are largely out of the control of the school district. Other factors more within our ability to impact are our Dropout/At-Risk dollars, Income Surtax Levy, Cash Reserve Levy, Management Levy and Debt Service. Of course, many community members point to "tightening the belt" and cost-cutting measures as a means of fiscal responsibility and keeping taxes low.

Since the influx of COVID funds in 2020-2023 and their mandated sunset, most districts have been in a state of cost cutting for the past several years. When Supplemental State Aid does not keep up with inflation, increased utility costs, double-digit school insurance costs and other major factors, schools must make drastic programming cuts and simultaneously keep their budgets afloat by increasing taxes.

Ultimately, our communities are most healthy when we have healthy schools. If we can not afford to keep programs, provide safe and engaging

learning environments and retain quality teachers and staff, our communities fail as schools are forced to close their doors.

Serving two communities, I am acutely aware of the needed tax differences for both. While the proposed maximum tax levy for CAM has increased by approximately \$2, the tax rate for Nodaway Valley has been lowered by over \$2. Superintendents do not like being in positions to either substantially raise or lower rates, but there are compelling reasons for both. Not levying for cash in CAM for over three years has left the district depleted of resources and in peril of a negative solvency ratio. Our insurance costs have doubled, leaving our Management fund insufficient in the case of major property claims. Approximately 94% of the Orient-Macksburg taxable valuations will be joining the Nodaway Valley CSD for Fiscal Year 2027. That provides a larger tax base and decreases the need to sustain a \$13 tax levy.

While taxes are complex and often anti-intuitive, the staff in our districts are working hard to maintain high quality programs and services and also to be effective stewards of your tax dollars. I encourage you to reach out to me or your board members if you have any taxing questions this time of year and always.

Informed citizens build stronger communities



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