

McDONALD COUNTY PRESS IS A WEEKLY PUBLICATION THAT COMPRISES THE EDITIONS OF THE ANDERSON GRAPHIC, McDONALD COUNTY PRESS, McDONALD COUNTY NEWS GAZETTE, GOODMAN NEWS-DISPATCH AND SOUTHWEST CITY REPUBLIC

INSIDE

Covid-Related Death Reported

For the first time in more than a month, the McDonald County Health Department reported another covid-induced death this week — bringing the death toll to 31.

— FULL STORY, 2A

SWC Waives Water Leak Debt

Southwest City's board of alderman met with the property owner in order to get to the bottom of a water leak that's been flowing for seven months.

— FULL STORY, 3A

Neosho Farmers Market Seeks Vendors

Neosho Farmers Market is taking applications for area growers of garden vegetables, fruits, and other farm-fresh produce to be a part of its summer market season.

— FULL STORY, 7A



Mustangs Can't Hold Off Mount Vernon

Mount Vernon held off a pair of McDonald County comeback attempts to post a 76-60 win on Feb. 19 at McDonald County High School.

— FULL STORY, 1B

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COURTESY PHOTO

Student **Naomi Franco** holds up a book she got from the new book vending machine at Anderson Elementary School. Students are rewarded with trips to the machine for good behavior.

School Gets Book Vending Machine

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Sharing a love of literacy is the idea behind a new book vending machine at Anderson Elementary School.

Librarian Kariann Abbott said she saw one on social media and loved the thought of giving students a book as a reward for good behavior.

"I love the idea of rewarding with reading," she said. "Hey, you did a good job; you get a book." Instead of getting a prize for reading, you get reading as a prize."

She said she presented the

idea to Principal Sarah Messley, and then she and some students presented the idea to the school board for approval. This occurred in March 2020, and the book vending machine was supposed to arrive shortly thereafter. However, it was delayed because of the covid-19 pandemic. The school opened it during the last week of January, which was during One Book, One School week, in which the entire school reads the same book, Abbott said.

"It's in the cafeteria. Students walk by. They see it and get excited about it and see the books in it,"

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Anderson Hires Officer, Approves Vehicle Purchase

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Anderson's board of alderman made moves to advance three of the city's departments at the rescheduled meeting on Tuesday evening.

After crunching numbers with City Clerk Andi Browning, Police Chief Dave Abbott told the council that an additional full-time officer is feasible. He said it would cost approximately \$25,000 in salary pay for the remainder of the year and that expense could be offset

by a \$30,000 reimbursement for participation in the Drug Task Force.

This would allow for coverage each shift with double coverage during the day and evening five days a week — with the exception of illness or deployment.

The council unanimously approved the hiring of an eighth full-time officer.

Public Works Director Ben Shoemaker reiterated interest in an SUV to be used as a city vehicle. He noted that \$20,000 was

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Noel Council Discusses Business Licenses, Storm

Sally Carroll
Special to the McDonald County Press

Noel City Council would like to charge a two- or three-tier business license fee for entities that are considered larger businesses.

Mayor Lewis Davis told the council that businesses in Noel usually are charged \$20, but those are generally smaller businesses. Tyson, with some 1,200 employees, has never paid for a business license, he said.

He asked Noel fire chief Brandon Barrett how often his team

responds to calls at the Tyson plant. Barrett said his team generally responds to medical calls there about six to eight times a month. Davis asked Marshal Randy Wilson how often his team responds to calls there. Wilson said double of Barrett's count.

Noel services are being utilized, yet the city is not being compensated for such, Davis said.

Councilmember Terry Lance said he would be interested in exploring different levels of fees,

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Goodman OKs Trail Grant Resolution

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In a tie vote broken by Mayor JR Fisher, the Goodman Board of Aldermen approved a resolution to apply for a Recreational Trails Program grant on Tuesday.

The board held an emergency meeting at 3 p.m. Tuesday, due to its regular meeting being canceled because of snow and its makeup meeting, which was to be Monday night, being canceled due to lack of a quorum. Aldermen Clay Sexson and Sammie Jo Goodson attended Tuesday's meeting via phone calls.

The RTP grant is awarded through the Department of Natural Resources and is an 80/20 matching grant. If approved, the city's portion would be roughly \$16,000, Fisher said on Tuesday.

Sexson commented that, in his opinion, the last snowstorm demonstrated that the city has greater needs infrastructure-wise

other than a trail.

Alderman Ron Johnson made a motion to approve the resolution, and Alderman Ed Tuomala seconded. Johnson and Tuomala voted yes, and Sexson and Goodson voted no. Fisher broke the tie by voting yes.

Following the meeting, City Clerk Georgia Holtz said donations for the project in the amount of \$12,420 had already been collected, \$8,125 of which came from the Goodman Betterment Club, and the rest from individual donors.

Fisher said he disagreed with Sexson's comment on infrastructure, commenting that the trail grant funds would be separate from funds devoted to infrastructure needs.

"It absolutely made no sense to me why they would vote no to this. The perception they're putting off to the community is really bad, I think," he said. "I think a walking trail would be a fantastic addition to this baseball complex."



RACHEL DICKERSON/McDONALD COUNTY PRESS

Goodman Mayor JR Fisher indicates where a proposed trail would go if the city is approved for a grant. The board of aldermen approved a resolution to apply for the grant on Tuesday.

Nonprofit Makes Dog Treats For Fundraiser

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Dog treats are the primary fundraiser for a Pineville nonprofit that matches service dogs with disabled individuals.

Danea Key and her husband Joel started the Saber Life Foundation last spring. They pay 51% of the cost of a service dog, with the matched individual paying the other 49%. The couple started the foundation after their daughter, Gracie, was matched with a service dog.

They have matched three people with service dogs since the organization's founding. Service dogs can be quite expensive, costing about \$3,000 to \$5,000 for the dog and about \$25,000 to \$30,000 for

the training.

The foundation has received a few grants and has applied for more, but it does not want to rely solely on grants for funding, and so it has its own dog treats, Danaea said.

The foundation sells the treats online, at events and through social media. The packaging has its information on the back so that people can get in touch and obtain more. All the treats are made in the couple's home.

In the beginning, the Keys had 22 recipes, which they whittled down to 18. From there they started selling the treats and determined their bestsellers, and now they have seven recipes, one of which is new this year. Each recipe has a

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COURTESY PHOTO

Ella Key, daughter of Danaea and Joel Key, sells dog treats for the Saber Life Foundation at It's Fall Y'all, a festival at the Benton County, Ark., fairgrounds in 2020.