

Lake Country

THIS MONTH

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‘We gather here tonight as one Hartland’

By Hunter Turpin
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HARTLAND — Seven days after an apartment building fire on Mansfield Court revealed six bodies and displaced three families, dozens of Hartland residents hugged, cried, sang and prayed for those affected by the tragedy and for healing the community.

A candlelight vigil was held Oct. 28 in Nixon Park, organized by the village of Hartland with St. Charles Catholic Church and Our Savior’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, two Hartland churches.

“Sorry if I’m a little shaky, but it is moving to see so many people come out,” Village President Jeff Pfannerstill said at the beginning of the vigil. “We gather here tonight as one Hartland, as one group to pray for healing, peace, continued support and to show our compassion and to strengthen our faith and our hope during this time of such tragedy.”

This was the second vigil for those impacted by the fire as residents put together an impromptu vigil last week, which expressed the same tone of support during a tragic time.

Pfannerstill and leaders of the two churches led the vigil, which included readings, prayers, reflections and hymns accompanied by a pianist and guitarist.

“Our brothers and sisters were suddenly and violently taken from us. Come swiftly to their aid, have mercy on them and comfort their families and friends,” said the Rev. Ken Omernick of St. Charles Catholic Church in a prayer.

Throughout the vigil, some people in the crowd broke down in tears and hugged those around them.

“It’s just heart-wrenching to hear all the people crying and the little children crying. It just rips your heart apart,” Village Trustee Ann Wallschlager said. “People go through their daily lives just



Hunter Turpin/Freeman Staff

The vigil was held Oct. 28 at Nixon Park, organized by the village of Hartland and two local churches.

doing things, your normal routine, and you come to something like this and you realize what’s really important.”

The attendees were led in prayer for various groups in the community, singing “give us your peace, oh God; give us your peace, your peace” between each prayer. They prayed for those displaced by the fire, the first responders, the community of Hartland and those struggling with mental illness, as well as for peace in the community and the world. The prayer concluded with a moment of silence for all impacted by violence.

The six dead, four of whom were children, were all found with a single gunshot wound with the adult male’s and adult female’s wounds self-inflicted, Hartland police reported.

“I was born and raised here in Hartland, and Hartland has always come together in good and bad. I don’t recall ever having anything as devastating as this

that affected so many people. Ever. And I was raised by a cop,” Wallschlager said.

Those who organized the vigil and those who attended it said they were moved by the turnout and support from the community, especially given an Arrowhead playoff football game Oct. 28.

Teenagers made up a notable portion of the crowd, some with faces painted for the football game. One of the children who died was 14-year-old Arrowhead High School freshman Natalie Kleemeier. The Arrowhead School District described her as being quiet, caring and funny.

The village is accepting donations of gift cards or money to be split three ways for the families displaced. Pfannerstill said other items can be given to a local food pantry or charity, but to check with the village first to see if the items can be donated directly.

“I think it’s great for the people that did survive the fire, for them to see the love and support from

this community,” Pfannerstill said. “We’ve been supporting them financially, but for them to really see and feel emotionally the power behind those of us in this community having their backs, that they can get lifted up, they’re not gonna fall.”

Despite the tragedy, the village is looking for ways to help the community begin healing, speakers at the vigil said.

Pfannerstill said that this December he plans on taking a ride to Watertown on the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train with a boy who lived in the apartment building and helped his siblings escape.

“I have four kids, so obviously it hits me. There’s the loss of children and the loss of children plus adults, that’s devastating to lose six in one shot,” he said. “There’s an investigation going on, so to have all of that wrapped into one is just not something we deal with on a regular basis.”

“It pulls you in a lot of different directions.”

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Inside



CP Holiday Train returns to the rails

▶ Page 4A



More luxury homes popping up in Lake Country

▶ Page 3B



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NOVEMBER 2022

Late, longtime Hartland resident Gary Grauel honored

*Plaque symbolizes mark
he left on community*

By Faith Rae
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HARTLAND — “In loving memory of our friend Gary Grauel” reads a plaque placed on a bench in downtown Hartland recently. The plaque honors the long-time, well-known village resident who died on Jan. 27 at 64.

Known by many people and businesses in the community for riding his full-sized, three-wheeled bicycle everywhere he went, the plaque features a picture of the bike.

“Everybody knew him, not just in Hartland, but really Lake Country,” said Steve Osterndorf, branch manager at U.S. Bank in Hartland, a place Grauel visited often. “He had some disabilities but was really just welcomed into a lot of different businesses.”

The community opened their arms to Grauel and his brother Greg. The two lived together until his brother died towards the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic from Influenza A, according to Osterndorf, who added that caregivers visited Grauel regularly after that.

Grauel had his regular stops around the community. Two of those stops included U.S. Bank Branch, 160 E. Capitol Drive, and Birch & Banyan Coffee, 150 E. Capitol Drive.



Courtesy of Jessie Puzach

Longtime Hartland resident Gary Grauel died on Jan. 27 at 64.

Osterndorf got to know Grauel through his daily visits to the office, sometimes several times a day and especially on Fridays, when the office had popcorn available.

Grauel would stop in every Friday to get his bag of popcorn, say hi to everybody and visit a couple of the offices before heading over to Birch & Banyan Coffee for a drink and a lemon bar, according to Osterndorf.

Grauel would spark up conversations about everything.



Courtesy of Jessie Puzach

The honorary plaque for Gary Grauel placed on a bench between U.S. Bank Branch, 160 E. Capitol Drive, and Birch & Banyan Coffee, 150 E. Capitol Drive.

He would fill everyone in on what happened during his bike travels, and he especially enjoyed chatting about the weather, current happenings in the world and politics.

“It’s fitting because the bench that was donated is located directly between our office here and the coffee shop, which were two of his primary stops,” said Osterndorf.

Birch & Banyan owner Jessie Puzach considered Grauel a true friend of hers. After he died, Puzach and others decided to sponsor the bench with the coffee shop through the Hartland Business Improvement District.

Although another business in town was already sponsor-

“Everybody knew him, not just in Hartland, but really Lake Country.”

— Steve Osterndorf,
Branch Manager at U.S. Bank in Hartland,
a place Grauel visited often

customers and employees could attend the burial.

Around 75 to 80 people attended the service, said Deb Senglaub, an employee at Birch & Banyan.

“It was really wonderful,” said Puzach. “A lot of the community was there.”

Grauel is remembered as a nice, down-to-earth resident who loved to interact with the community. No matter what he did he always tried to make sure everyone had a smile on their face, according to Osterndorf.

“He adopted us, and we adopted him,” said Senglaub. “He was just a special guy, and we miss him.”

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-Jo Peterson - Oconomowoc

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Board passes Thomas Farm ordinance

By Hunter Turpin
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TOWN OF DELAFIELD — The Delafield Town Board passed a revised zoning ordinance 4-1 that would cap development of the Thomas Farm property at 230 residential units over objections from town residents who say the ordinance allows for development to be too dense.

“I’ve been waiting four years to hear from other board members on this,” Town Supervisor Edward Kranick said.

The board said there needed to be a compromise between the land owners, residents and the town, and the ordinance before them was a compromise.

“In my honest opinion, I believe that the land owner and the town has done a lot of compromising. I really hoped a lot of the neighbors would come along and try to compromise, but ... they just don’t feel that they compromise anymore and they just want to keep dialing it down and dialing it down. I mean, where do you draw the line?” Kranick said.

“I have gotten a lot of emails saying, you know, I’m out to destroy the character of the Town of Delafield...I would be the first person to say that I love the Town of

Delafield...I don’t believe that this ordinance is gonna destroy the character of the Town of Delafield.”

In the meeting Oct. 11, as well as past meetings, residents referred to the town’s slogan “Residential, Recreational, Responsible,” primarily saying the ordinance is not responsible, but the Town Board maintained this ordinance does fit within the town’s vision.

Resident Christine Hansen referenced the town’s slogan and added “respect” to the list.

“If you respect the land, lots less than 20,000 square feet are not something you will vote for. If you respect the electorate, this ordinance...is not something you will approve,” Hansen said. “We have been telling you and telling you and telling you for years we do not want this in the Town of Delafield.”

Public opposition

Many residents and neighbors have shared their concerns about the ordinance and possible developments over the years. Proposals for this 150-acre lot began in 2019 and have included commercial, industrial and senior living uses, as well as over 400 residential units including rentals.

Allan Knepper, a resident, said the 10,000 square-foot lots allowed are

too small, the homes are too small and that ideally the number of units would be reduced to around 150. He also was concerned about interference from the county; Waukesha County is listed as a stakeholder in potential developments of this land.

“I hope that everyone sitting here is representing the Town of Delafield and not Waukesha County,” Knepper said.

Cindi Duchow, who also is a member of the state assembly, said she is concerned about the precedent that this development could set for other non-developed land in the town.

At a Plan Commission meeting last week, Kranick said he knows of people who do support the ordinance, but won’t speak in favor of it for fear of upsetting their neighbors.

“I’ve found only people who are in favor of development, but development that would blend with the already existing neighborhood, and why is it that you think the rest of us speak here without fear? I’m speaking despite my fear because I love Delafield and I know we can do better,” resident Denise Reese said.

single family homes at low density (20,000 square foot lots), zone two would permit these homes with the addition of low-medium density homes with lots no smaller than 15,000 square feet, zones three and four would allow the two aforementioned densities plus single-family homes on 10,000 square foot lots and no more than four condos per acre.

The entire property could only be developed for residential uses, all owner-occupied.

The ordinance would also include protections for wetlands as designated by the DNR in 2010, protections for primary environmental corridors, preservation of some existing tree lines and landscape buffers. Open space requirements for the zones two, three and four would be 60% (as percent of lot area) and 70% in zone one.

Plan Commissioners and Town Board members were fond of the provisions in the ordinance that require developers to conduct sewer, water and traffic studies prior to approving any developments.

Board reasoning

The board voted 4-1 to pass the ordinance, which was reduced from 250 units at the last Plan Commission meeting. Supervisor Magalie Miller voted no on the ordinance,

with Kranick, Supervisor Steve Michels and Board Chair Ron Troy voting to pass it. Supervisor Joe Woelfle also voted to pass the ordinance, but took several seconds to decide.

The board said it received a petition with 28 signatures opposing the ordinance, but there were not enough signatures to trigger the town’s protest petition ordinance. Miller said her husband signed the petition without her knowledge, but she believed that she could vote based on the information provided to her in public meetings.

“I’m here to represent the residents of the town and I don’t think this is where we should be... I think we’re rushing it, I don’t think we’re ready to move forward on this,” Miller said.

“I’ve talked to a lot of you (residents)...” Woelfle said. “I’ve heard unit proposals to five-acre lots, people who are totally fine with 300 units, I’ve heard everything in between, I’ve heard people who want to keep it a farm...but the two things that have held consistent with requests and people’s ask is that it all stays residential and that there’s testing to support the residential.”

The family members that own the land have 90 days to sign this ordinance and, after that, the county must also approve it.



Courtesy of New Berlin Police Department

Members of the Suburban Critical Incident Team (SCIT) at the New Berlin Police Department. The SCIT received funds raised by Positively Pewaukee for their new SCIT-Technology Resource Group.

Positively Pewaukee raises funds for police, Suburban Critical Incident Team

PEWAUKEE – Positively Pewaukee successfully raised funds for the Pewaukee Police Department and the Suburban Critical Incident Team (SCIT) at their annual Bourbon and Wine Tasting on Oct. 7 at Good

Eats Café, 405 Capitol Drive. The event raised funds for new technology for the police department and the SCIT to be used toward their new SCIT-Technology Resource Group (TRG).

The TRG will be a dedicated group assigned to SCIT to assist with tactical technology needs: drones (interior and exterior), surveillance cameras, room clearing robots and more.

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— SCENES FROM THE PAST —



From the Waukesha Freeman negatives at the Waukesha County Museum

Charity ball gets off to swinging start

The Oct. 31, 1966, Waukesha Freeman carried an article about the Waukesha Service Club, at the meeting where this photo was taken the previous night, setting its annual charity ball for the following Dec. 3, with a Mexican theme — “Le Balle des sol” (Ball of the sun). At the meeting, nearly 100 Service Club members received tickets to sell for the event. As part of the event, attendees were to be able to receive merchandise from area vendors and, for one, an all-expense-paid trip for two to Mexico City.

Husbands of Service Club members provided sing-along entertainment at the charity ball ticket party, held at the Seven Seas in Hartland. Dressed in a variety of formal wear were, from left, William Glidden, Waukesha, drums; Dr. Robert Feulner, Waukesha, trumpet; Robert Younger, Waukesha, pianist; R.G. Hein and Clyde Zamjahn, both of Waukesha, on violins; Ted Pellation, Muskego, banjo; and Mig Figi, Waukesha, saxophone. J.D. Van Ness of Waukesha led the singing before the ball theme was announced.

Lake Country Fire & Rescue moves forward with staffing plan

By Hunter Turpin
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DELAFIELD — As a result of low staffing, Lake Country Fire & Rescue has had to close fire stations 50% of the time this summer and fall and response times are up 30% over national standards.

Now, the department is pursuing a staffing plan to hire 22 positions in the coming years to address the shortage, which has been a burden on the department, Fire Chief Matthew Fennig said.

“(Staff) is doing more with less,” Fennig said. “They’re going into dangerous situations every single day and, as you can imagine, if you’re going into dangerous situations you want there to be adequate help.”

The staffing plan was approved by the fire board on Nov. 10 in a special meeting. LCFR has five stations covering over 75 square miles in seven municipalities, according to the department’s website.

The department has relied on “low cost staffing,” such as part-time and paid on-call staff, to fill 50% of its daily schedule, according to LCFR documents, but this model isn’t working any more, Fennig said.

“Every fire agency is struggling with the part-time, paid on-call model,” Fennig said. “...it was a great model, but it’s been failing for decades and now it’s finally at the point where it needs to convert over to a paid model.”

Department documents show that taking a job at a full-time department is the most common reason staff leave LCFR.

The staffing plan shifts LCFR’s focus to full-time positions, eventually filling the daily schedule with full-time employees and filling in gaps with other staff, the plan says.

The original plan was to do all 22 hires in one year, but this plan does it over four years: seven next year, six in 2024, six in 2025 and three in 2026.

“It’s much more gradual, which makes it more palatable,” Fennig said. “Unfortunately, because of state levy limit laws and things like that, we’re really limited on how we can do things.”

To fund the plan, individual communities will decide if they want to pay for it with a fire fee or through a referendum. Fennig said the way fire departments are funded isn’t working.

“It’s kind of a broken system in Madison that forces these communities to do referendums for what I’ll call basic governmental needs,” said.

The plan also calls for program corrections like updating technology, communications and payroll software, adding a human resources director, and bringing back the department’s tuition reimbursement program, among other things.

In the LCFR district specifically, Fennig said increased demand for service and increased training demands have contributed to staffing issues. For example, Fennig said EMT training requirements have increased to almost 280 hours from somewhere closer to 180.

“That’s somebody that’s going to do it as a career. It’s not somebody that’s going to spend one night a week at a local fire station,” he said.

LCFR serves the city and Town of Delafield, Town of Genesee, Chenequa, Nashotah, Oconomowoc Lake and Wales. Fennig said he hopes the communities adopt the plan to get the department back to recommended response times.

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Kapenga re-elected as state Senate president

MADISON — State Sen. Chris Kapenga, R-Delafield, was reelected Senate president for the 2023-25 legislative session on Nov. 10. This is Kapenga’s second term, having been elected to the position in 2021.

On Tuesday, Kapenga won re-election, running unopposed and winning 96.4% of the vote, or 67,320 votes. He was first elected to the Senate in 2015.

Kapenga represents the 33rd Senate District, which covers most of central Waukesha County and Lake County.

“I want to thank each of my colleagues for re-electing me to serve in leadership for the Senate Republicans,” Kapenga said in a statement. “As Senate President, it’s my role to ensure the work of the Senate is appropriately carried out while presiding over floor debates where everyone’s voice can be heard. I look forward to the next session and continuing to serve as Senate President.”

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Heather Van Dam, Executive Director for the Watertown Humane Society, gives a helping hand positioning Chewy, the family pet of Logan and Hailey Greesick of Oconomowoc, as they pose for a picture with Santa on Nov. 12. The event was hosted by Animal World Adventures Pet Store in Oconomowoc as a fundraiser for the Watertown Humane Society.

Sue Boyer/Special to The Freeman

Santa Claus and paws for a cause

OCONOMOWOC — Animal World Adventures Pet Store in Oconomowoc has hosted pictures with Santa for five years as a fundraiser for the Watertown Humane Society. Nov. 12 was a special day for families and their four legged family members posing with Santa for a memorable holiday moment.



Courtesy of Oconomowoc Arts Center

Milwaukee TV and radio personality and prolific actor John McGivern returns to Oconomowoc to help celebrate the OAC's 15th anniversary season in "A Kodachrome Christmas."

John McGivern returns to the OAC in 'A Kodachrome Christmas'

OCONOMOWOC — Milwaukee TV and radio personality and prolific actor John McGivern returns to Oconomowoc to help celebrate the OAC's 15th anniversary season in "A Kodachrome Christmas."

Starring McGivern as the colorful cable access TV hostess, Earlene Hoople, the "one-woman" show will take place just in time for the holiday season at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 17, and 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 18.

"The first time I did the show was in 2011. It was originally written for a woman, and I thought, 'I could do that!' I was so excited because the show is so funny and much more than about me dressing up as a woman. The character of Earlene is very real, and she is not over the top. Her career as a TV hostess connects with what I do for a living, so it's very sweet," said McGivern.

"A Kodachrome Christmas" was written and directed by Pat Hazell, one of the original writers for NBC's "Seinfeld" and a "Tonight Show."

"Working together with Pat in this role has been an amazing collaboration. He always dives in and is really gifted at finding a universal voice. We've changed some of the commercials and updated references to offer something a little different, but the audience will still really recognize themselves in these stories," added McGivern.

This is the seventh time the OAC has welcomed McGivern to its Main Stage. McGivern's other one-man shows, "The Wonder Bread Years," "The Early Years of John McGivern," "Midsummer Night McGivern" and "Home for the Holidays" tell stories of being the third born of six kids in a working-class Irish Catholic family in Milwaukee.

His latest project, "John McGivern's Main Streets" is a destination travel show that takes his unique style of storytelling throughout the Midwest. The program's second season will debut in January 2023 on PBS Wisconsin.

For more information, visit www.kodachromechristmas.com and www.mainstreets.tv.

The Oconomowoc Arts Center is located at 641 E. Forest St. and is part of the Oconomowoc Area School District. For more information, call the OAC box office at 262-560-3172 or visit www.theoac.net.

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More luxury homes popping up in Lake Country

By Karen Pilarski
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HARTLAND — A 10,000-square-foot house on Pine Lake in Chenequa sold for \$15 million last week. This estate was completed in 2017 and sits on 2.38 acres with 7 bedrooms and 7.5 bathrooms. It features an infinity pool overlooking the lake.

There have been other luxury homes popping up around the Lake Country area. The big shift was the pandemic, which prompted many people to put a much higher priority on their homes and property, according to Bruce Gallagher, manager partner, Gallagher Lake Country Real Estate.

People wanted more space, privacy and recreational opportunities because they were stuck at home. A lot of people weren't traveling and other activities ceased.

"People with significant means started looking for places like Lake Country. That fueled the increase in demand for lake property and for some others the nicer-off lake properties too in our area," Gallagher said.

The pandemic caused many businesses to suffer due to a lack of customers, but real estate wasn't one that did.

"We've never been busier," Gallagher said.

There are others like the \$15 million home out there but not a lot, according to Gallagher. He believes there will continue to be a market for luxury homes built in the area.

"A lot of that is due to our location, quality of life, really good schools both public and private. That is driving it and certainly the demand for the high end lakefront property is going to continue," Gallagher said.

He added the broad market is definitely softening. Gallagher said you can't have interest rates more than double in a year and the stock market drop 25% in nine months and not have a significant impact on housing affordability.

"We are definitely seeing prices pull back. For the top quality homes, the best lake homes, not all lake homes, are going to hold value and do well even as we head into a definite housing shift," he said.

What clients want

Home buyers have other want lists for a home besides the usual spacious kitchen and large backyard. Gallagher said many customers want home gyms, home theaters, and more extravagant exterior aspects like huge patios and swimming pools.

"Swimming pools have become more in demand during the pandemic again. Nice patios with outdoor kitchens and you got your flat screen TV somewhere over in the shade. On the high end, that is what people are wanting," he said.

Gallagher added people want more time



Courtesy of Gallagher Lake Country Real Estate

A 10,000-square-foot house on Pine Lake in Chenequa sold for \$15 million last week. This estate was completed in 2017 and sits on 2.38 acres with 7 bedrooms and 7.5 bathrooms. The home features an infinity pool overlooking the lake.

at home to relax and entertain.

With the aging population buying luxury homes, Gallagher said they want elevators.

"Prior to several years ago it was rare anyone thought about elevators. I think it is a lot of the baby boomers realizing their mortality. So it is main floor master suite and elevators have been very much on trend," he said.

The trend of big homes is surprising to Gallagher.

"There are a lot of 10,000-square-foot-plus homes on and off lakes being built. Fifteen or 20 years ago the really big old lake homes would hardly even sell. People were going away from those huge homes. Even for people who don't seem to have big families there has been a trend for large homes on the luxury side," he said.

He has seen people move in with other family members to keep them closer, such as their children and grandchildren. There are in-law and guest suites and other areas for different generations to live.

"The \$15 million home we just sold basically had a guest wing. Tactfully attached

to the house with its own small driveway and parking area and entrance but integrated to the main house," he said.

Gallagher said they are seeing a lot of buyers on the high end in their forties and fifties.

"We have also seen people in their sixties and seventies where they have the grandkids and want a place where they can pull the family together," he said.

Family business

Beachy Gallagher, Bruce's mother, started Gallagher Lake Country Real Estate in 1982. Gallagher said his mother was very well known in the community and business. His sister, Kathy Gallagher, Rosenheimer joined their mother 20 years ago. Bruce Gallagher came aboard and took over for their mother 13 years ago.

The family loves helping others make such an important step.

"I love that it draws on a wide range of skills and every transaction is different and property is different. A great variety of people and it is super fun and reward-

ing to help people with such a big life shift. Whether if they are buying or selling," Gallagher said.

He finds it very rewarding to get to know people on a deep level since he is helping them with a big life change.

A challenge for industry pros like Gallagher is managing such a wide range of demands, from helping people prepare for sale, through the sale, having a good transaction, and after the sale where there are always unexpected twists, turns, surprises good and bad, according to Gallagher. The process is much more complicated than people think.

He added the company wouldn't be successful without being very focused on the niche and geographical area they serve.

"It allows us to be experts in what we do. The keys of my success are an awesome team working with me to provide all the service and attention to detail we provide," he said.

For more information visit <http://www.gallagherlakecountry.com/about>.

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Photo by Kristopher Grunert

The Canadian Pacific Holiday Train returns to the area after a three-year hiatus this season on its first cross-continent tour. The train is scheduled to stop for performances in Hartland and Oconomowoc on Dec. 9.

CP Holiday Train returns to the rails

Supporting community food banks again after two-year hiatus

HARTLAND — The Canadian Pacific (CP) Holiday Train returns after a three-year hiatus this season on its first cross-continent tour.

Due to the pandemic, virtual concerts were held in 2020 and 2021. The train will again raise money, food and awareness for local food banks in communities along the CP network.

Waukesha County residents can see the train on Dec. 9 in Hartland at 5:30 p.m. and

Oconomowoc at 6:40 p.m. “I’m grateful to the CP team members who adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic to deliver two exceptional virtual Holiday Train shows and to all those who continued to donate while we kept community members safe,” said Keith Creel, CP’s president and chief executive officer.

“The Holiday Train is all about families and communities coming together to celebrate the season and help those in need.

We are excited to be back out on the rails and in our communities, taking these two beautiful trains across our network and sharing the joy that comes with gathering in the spirit of giving.”

Live music is held during the CP Holiday Train experience. This year’s performers will include Alan Doyle, Tenille Townes, Mackenzie Porter and Lindsay Ell, to name a few. Details about this year’s artists and which performers will play during which

shows are available at cpr.ca/holidaytrain.

Holiday Train shows are free to attend. CP asks attendees to bring a cash or non-perishable food donation if they’re able. Local food shelves will set up collection stations at each event.

Since the Holiday Train program launched in 1999, it’s raised more than \$21 million and collected 5 million pounds of food for community food banks across North America.

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