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THIS MONTH

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Officer Parker Frick feeds a zebra at the petting zoo at National Night Out at Koepp River Park in Pewaukee on Aug. 1.

A zebra and more at Pewaukee's National Night Out

PEWAUKEE — On Aug. 1, Pewaukee-area residents were able to interact with police officers — and even a zebra — during National Night Out activities in the village.

Photo courtesy of the Pewaukee Police Department

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Construction continues on The Grain

Delafield project is on track to be completed in the spring of 2024

By Faith Rae
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262-513-2644

DELAFIELD — The Grain, the city of Delafield’s first mass timber development at 705 Genesee St., is a \$25 million development featuring two four-story buildings that have been under construction since January 2022.

Corporate Contractors Inc. is on track to complete construction in the spring of 2024, said Pete Woodkey, the project manager overseeing The Grains construction.

“Currently, the west building timber is being erected, the underground parking concrete slab is being poured and the east building is ready for exterior finishes,” said Woodkey. “Shipping delays with the timber affected the overall schedule. It took longer than expected to receive the timbers from Austria.”

CCI partnered with developers Hendricks Commercial Properties to construct The Grain and recently provided an update on the construction of two buildings.

The Grain is using a state-of-the-art construction method that combines solid wood panels and beams to create a strong and versatile structure, according to CCI in a statement. The method is environmentally friendly and a low-carbon alternative to concrete and steel.

The west building has Austrian lumber and British Columbian DLT pieces (Dowel Laminated Timber) on site and ready. The tower crane that is operated remotely is placing the timbers in position, and each floor of the DLT lumber will take around a week and a half to be set, according to a Facebook post by CCI.

DLT was chosen as the flooring plank material, and the Austrian timber consists of glulam beams that are being used for the structural beams and columns.

By the end of August, the four-story wood skeleton of columns, beams, purlins and decking will be erected, the post said, and construction of the east stair-



The Grain under construction in June. The Grain development consists of two four-story buildings being constructed at 705 Genesee St. in downtown Delafield.

well within CMU shaft is also underway.

For the east building, the exterior wall installation is complete, including the air/water barrier; the window installation is in progress; concrete floor toppings are being poured; framing on the first floor is finished; mechanical, electrical and plumbing rough-in has started on the first floor; the sprinkler piping is now completed on all floors; and the roofing will commence this month, the post said.

The buildings will include 60,000 square feet of office space and 18,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, according to developers Hendricks Commercial Properties. There will also be 125 combined surface and underground parking stalls within the development.

According to Hendricks Commercial Properties website, construction of The Grain was estimated to provide nearly 300 jobs, and another 625 jobs will be supported once the project is completed, which contributes an additional \$320,000 in property taxes each year to the city of Delafield.

For more information about The Grain, visit <http://bit.ly/3YjLl3M>.

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SCENES FROM THE PAST



As technology advanced, so did our cars from the basic designs and functions of cars in the 1910s and 1920s to the sleek, high-powered autos of the 1950s and 1960s. This “Amphicar,” driven by Clarence Hartwig in 1963, reflects stylish and efficient transportation, whether by land or by sea. Don't you wonder what Ole Evinrude, the local inventor of the portable gas engine for boats, would have thought of this clever adaptation?



These kids are making the best of Fowler Lake's cooling effects in about the 1910s. Swimming suits were as modest as their parents' were and usually made of wool, very scratchy wool. Ah yes, you can still almost smell the aromas of barbecued meat, fishy lake water and wet wool!

Summertime
water fun

OCONOMOWOC — When life was simpler, most summer fun was found near and in one of our beautiful lakes. All you needed was a grill, some hot dogs (or burgers), an icy cold beverage and lake water for splashing.

Photos courtesy of the Oconomowoc
Historical Society and Museum

Illinois-based
Mikerphone Brewing
approved for Delafield

DELAFIELD — A business plan of operation for Mikerphone Brewing was approved at a Plan Commission meeting in March for 527 Milwaukee St.

Mikerphone Brewing is located in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, and is a family-owned small craft brewery, according to their website. Owners Mike and Lisa Pallen started the concept of a brewery inspired by music out of their basement.

In the beginning of 2015, Mikerphone Brewing brewed and released its first commercial beer, according to their website.

Mike Pallen discussed the proposal in front of the Plan Commission on March 29. According to meeting documents, the majority of the beer will be served on site and the business is similar to Delafield Brewhaus and Water Street Brewery, except on scale and without a restaurant.

Plan Commissioner Mike Hausman asked why Mikerphone wouldn't be allowed to sell beer in Wisconsin that is brewed at the Illinois location, and Pallen stated that per Wisconsin state law, they cannot sell out-of-state beer under just a brewery license, according to meeting documents.

Common Council President Tim Aicher asked if 9 p.m. would be a good shut off time for outdoor music, and Pallen confirmed that was acceptable.

With everyone in favor, the motion carried. Unless the applicant makes any major changes to the building, it will not need to come back to the Plan Commission.

The business plan of operation is approved and it is now up to the applicant to decide how they wish to proceed.

New Merton School District
PTO Board takes over

MERTON — A new Parent Teacher Organization Board has been created in the Merton School District. Ronald Russ, superintendent of Merton Community School District, sent a letter to the school community. The new PTO Board members are: Crystal Cresci, president; Katie Farchmin, vice-president; Brooke Beale, treasurer; and Tracy Walther, secretary.

“As you may know, the PTO plays a vital role in fostering collaboration between parents, teachers, and school staff, contributing to the success and well-being of our students. Effective immediately, a new PTO Board has taken the reins, and with immense enthusiasm, we are ready to usher in a wave of positive change and transformation. Our primary goal is to build a stronger sense of community, foster open communication, enhance transparency, and encourage the active involvement of parents and volunteers like never before.

“While we express our gratitude to the previous PTO members for their past contributions, we believe it is essential to embrace a fresh start and usher in a new era of collaboration and innovation. Our

vision for the PTO is ambitious, and with your unwavering support, we are confident that together, we can achieve great things for our school and our children,” Russ said in an email.

The first PTO meeting will take place at 6 p.m. Aug. 16 in the Intermediate School on the second floor in the Learning Lounge.

“This meeting will serve as an introduction to the new PTO leadership and an opportunity for you to learn more about our plans and how you can get involved. For those unable to attend in person, the meeting will be live-streamed on our YouTube channel and recorded for future viewing. Unfortunately, no kiddos are welcome at this meeting as we sort out our insurance liabilities, but we hope to be able to offer childcare for future meetings,” Russ said,

The district created a short survey to help us match parents and teachers' interests and skills with the various committees and initiatives. The survey can be found at <https://forms.gle/4qLDey9AWvUTK-moU8>.

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TURTLE RESCUE
Hortland Fire Department saves turtle from road
By Karen Pilarski
A turtle was found on the side of a road near Hartland, Wis., and was rescued by the Hortland Fire Department. The turtle was found by a resident who called the fire department. The turtle was found on the side of a road near Hartland, Wis., and was rescued by the Hortland Fire Department. The turtle was found by a resident who called the fire department.

Council appoints Wuteska to avoid conflict of interest
Past and present county officials weigh in
By Karen Pilarski
The Waukesha County Board of Supervisors has appointed Wuteska to a position on the board. The appointment was made to avoid a conflict of interest. Past and present county officials weighed in on the decision.

Village board discusses Hartland Fire Department staffing issues
Lack of local volunteers, increased call volume pose problems
By Karen Pilarski
The Hartland Village Board has discussed staffing issues for the fire department. The board is concerned about the lack of local volunteers and the increased call volume. The board is looking for ways to address these issues.

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One of the youth team members performs a jump off the ramp.

Go, Gators, go!

PEWAUKEE — The Pewaukee Gators performed their weekly water ski show at Lakefront Park on Aug. 3 evening. Hundreds came out to see the “flashy and high-flying” Gators perform many stunts and tricks, along with a number of comedic skits between performances. The free family friendly event will continue through Labor Day every Thursday at 6:20 p.m.



The alien character skis in formation with his team members. The “alien” made numerous appearances during the comedic skits held between the ski performances.



Kids look through a book together as the sun begins to set.



The swivel team begins their performance, demonstrating their ability to spin while their skis remain facing forward.



Having just crawled out of the bushes, the character that was taken by the UFO, also known as the ski ramp, points to the ramp telling what had happened to him.



Once a few warm-up demonstrations were complete, the national anthem was sung while one of the boat team members held the American flag.

Photos by Phil Kidd,
Special to The Freeman






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Study looks at housing affordability challenges in Waukesha County

By Karen Pilarski
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262-513-2657

It is difficult to buy an affordable home in Waukesha County and renting also has its challenges for low- to moderate-income people, according to a recently released study from the Wisconsin Policy Forum.

The study, “Building Blocks: Understanding and responding to Waukesha County’s housing affordability challenge,” said houses are hard to find and rent prices continue to increase.

Economic challenges related to the pandemic and other factors have worsened the housing affordability challenges in Waukesha County. The cost of renting, buying, and building a home have increased sharply, the study said.

“High housing costs are already out of reach for many and rising faster than incomes,” the study said.

The median value of homes in the county was the highest in Wisconsin in 2021, while the county’s median rent was only exceeded in Dane County. Rent burden affects 43.4% of renter households in the county, which is higher than the statewide rate. The study said occupations such as teaching and firefighting don’t pay enough to afford owning a home in the county.

The median home sale price in Waukesha County has increased by over 41% between 2016 and 2021 while

the median income only rose 15%, the study said.

Limited housing production was found to be behind the county’s increasing home prices.

“The number of homes listed for sale in Waukesha County has declined for several years, while the vacancy rate in the owner-occupied market was just 0.2% in 2021,” the study said.

The study also found there has been very little affordable rental housing built in the last decade.

Other conclusions from the study include that zoning regulations limit different types of housing that can be produced and impact housing costs. Public opposition poses a major hurdle to affordable and workforce housing development, the study said.

Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow said the county has been working on solutions. In 2017 they “convened a group to talk about how to make workforce housing or the first generation of housing — that 1,500-square-foot first-time homebuyer home.”

Farrow said the challenge they see in Waukesha County, and across the rest of the country, is limited inventory and in Waukesha County, limited green space to be built upon.

“We have a market that is driving the prices up. When you talk to developers or builders they say they could build a house at \$300,000 but the market right now is driving it to \$500,000

plus. It’s a hard challenge,” Farrow said.

The county will continue to work with ideas and the communities. Farrow said there has been legislation passed by Gov. Tony Evers to look at new loan initiatives, not only for developers but for first-time buyers.

“When you look at the report, the single-income people, a lot of information they have is if there is a firefighter looking to buy a house they could afford (because they make around \$100,000) the going rate of \$300,000 plus is the average price of a house in Waukesha County,” he said.

What the study didn’t talk about, according to Farrow, was income per unit per household. In Waukesha County, the average income per household is about \$96,000.

“It gets them closer but it is still a challenge that has to deal with the inventory that is out there and the competition and the way the market is driving,” he said.

Farrow said there has been a considerable amount of growth with apartment units throughout the county.

“There is still a challenge with people who question having an apartment within their region. People are like ‘not in my backyard,’ thinking it has a detrimental effect,” Farrow said.

He added municipalities in the county such as Waukesha have done a very good job of putting apartment

complexes in areas where they enhance and don’t reduce the areas’ values.

Waukesha Mayor Shawn Reilly said housing affordability is not just a local problem but a state, regional and national issue.

“It’s not just Waukesha County. Most of the nation has a housing shortage. The shortage has the largest financial impact on lower-income families and young adults. Because one, they tend to rent and the number of rentals that are available is very low and that drives up the price. If you own something that is in high demand, you can increase your price easily,” Reilly said.

Another issue Reilly pointed out was that building or home owners can pick and choose who they rent to. People might rent only to those with perfect credit, no evictions or no legal issues.

“Lower-income people and newer families have a real problem finding housing,” he said.

Waukesha has more housing options than anywhere else in the county, such as houses for rent or sale. There are a bunch of apartments with 1-4 units built around the city, according to the mayor.

The one- or two-bedroom apartments are great for single people who pay less in rent than someone in a four-unit rental. But the city still has its share of challenges, such as rents being over \$1,000.

“Waukesha has tried to address the issue. We’ve got funds that we have used — both ARPA dollars and TIF dollars to create programs that provide assistance. We partner with those who are constructing affordable housing such as Habitat for Humanity. We also have programs that provide loans, income-based, to property owners who want to fix up their existing homes. For Waukesha, we have a lot of homes that are over 100 years old. Those homes need maintenance such as roofs and windows. We have funds to help with those issues,” Reilly said.

He said the point is not to allow housing to decrease but to increase by taking care of those issues.

There are also loan programs for landlords who offer to rent to income-restricted people. The loans help keep their property in good shape.

“We will continue to take action to create more affordable housing and more housing itself,” Reilly said.

The number of people wanting to live in Waukesha County is outpacing the number of units available.

“This is something has been a long time in the making and will take quite a while to make it so there is a better balance between supply and demand,” he said.

To read the study, go to the Wisconsin Policy Forum’s website at <https://wispolicyforum.org>.



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