

# Lurking in Lac La Belle

## DNR nets and releases monster muskie

ON LAC LA BELLE — The Department of Wisconsin Natural Resources netted a whopper of a fish on March 7. Benjamin Heussner, fisheries biologist, and Andrew Notbohm, electrofishing coordinator, DNR, said they caught a muskie that weighed 34 pounds and was 48 inches long. On March 8 they also caught a slightly smaller muskie that weighed 23 pounds and was 44 inches long.

DNR staff were doing a comprehensive fish survey of Lac La Belle on March 7-8 using fyke nets. Later in the season they will use electrofishing gear.

The fish were released back into the lake.

"This is information we use for recommendations including length, season and bag limits. Those type of things and fishing regulations. It is important for stocking recommendations whether to stock muskies, walleye or other species," Heussner said.

Through their work they also document rough fish which are freshwater fish considered undesirable as a food or game fish.

On Lac La Belle, the DNR has removed 175,000 pounds of buffalo and common carp in the past two years.



Courtesy of Benjamin Heussner

Andrew Notbohm, electrofishing coordinator, Wisconsin DNR, holds a monster muskie on March 7 which weighed 34 pounds and was 48 inches long. The fish was caught using nets and released back into the lake. The DNR was doing a fish survey of Lac La Belle.

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## DockHounds to temporarily change name

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A1604 King James 1st hammered gold coin that Rob Rizzo found in Colchester, UK.



An early 1800s button from The Connecticut Rectory School that Rob Rizzo found at Rockwell Park in Oconomowoc, which is the former homesite of the city's founder John Rockwell.



Remnants of a tin of Lemans Ink Pen tips found at Rockwell Park in Oconomowoc by Rob Rizzo with his metal detector.



A woman's 1800s watch fob that Rob Rizzo found on the property of the Inn at Pine Terrace using a metal detector. The home was built as the summer home of Peter Schuttler of the Schuttler Wagon company in Chicago.

# A METAL DETECTIVE

Rizzo unearths lost treasures and trinkets of the past

By Katherine Beck  
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With precise and slow sweeps of his metal detector, Rob Rizzo searches for lost bits and pieces of history. Some of it has monetary value, such as a 1604 hammered gold coin found in a farm field in Colchester, England, worth about \$1,500 (although to Rizzo it's priceless).

But much of the other finds, such as old buttons and keys, have more value for Rizzo in the historical insight they offer than any money they are worth. Some of his favorite finds were located in the city of Oconomowoc, which he has called home for about five years.

For instance, he took his metal detector to the Inn at Pine Terrace on Lisbon Road. Originally the summer home of the Schuttler family and known as Mon Bijou, the mansion's grounds sparked great interest in Rizzo. However, the first two days spent sweeping the property resulted in nothing notable. On the third day, Rizzo was considering throwing in the towel when he unearthed a late 19th-century watch fob that he then presented to the owners of the inn.

## Time traveling one artifact at a time

As a boy, Rizzo developed a love of history that was encouraged by his grandmother Marie Rizzo, who operated an antique store called The Richland Thrift Shop. He said he would explore its shelves and his grandma was always happy to share some history with him.

It was also the 1960s when science fiction TV shows were popular, spurring Rizzo to dream of time travel.

While years later, time travel remains impossible, there is still plenty of history to unearth that takes Rizzo on a trip back in time as he researches a property before he scans it for treasure and then when he does research of his recovered items.

"It's the closest thing to time travel that I will ever experience," he said.

Now retired, Rizzo uses Oconomowoc as his home base, but takes his RV on trips, including to Texas recently where he met up with other metal detecting enthusiasts to partake in different activities.

"Sometimes the story is about what we find," he said.

For one person Rizzo worked with, it helped him to find some closure with an Oconomowoc property he grew up in located across from Bender Beach. He said the man's family had lost their home when he was a child and they had to leave it. He hadn't been back until the metal detecting trip during which some items were found.

Rizzo shares his metal detecting adventures on his YouTube channel, The History Digger. His show takes viewers on his treasure hunts, including to the new Rockwell Park on North Lake Road in Oconomowoc where he discovered artifacts he says could be connected to Oconomowoc founder John Rockwell. He said once the property was turned into a park, he was granted permission to use his metal detector there. He found a button, of which only three are known, that came from a private school in Connecticut. Rockwell and his family came to Wisconsin from a town near that rectory school in Connecticut, Rizzo said. He also found a Goodyear button that would have been used when tires were first made of vulcanized rubber. The items have since been donated to the Oconomowoc Historical Society.

Videos including "The Tale of Six Buttons" and "Metal Detecting: If At First You Don't Succeed" highlight his finds in Oconomowoc.

## Finding properties to search

Rizzo said he is always very careful to follow the law when exploring with his metal detector and gets permission to go on properties first. One way he locates properties that might be worth



Photos courtesy of Rob Rizzo

Rob Rizzo's passion for metal detecting and discovering pieces of history has taken him all over Wisconsin, the United States and even to foreign countries.

## More online

To learn more about Rob Rizzo, his metal detecting hobby and his adventures, follow him on Facebook, Instagram and his YouTube channel, The History Digger.

To get in contact with Rizzo, email him at thehistorydigger@gmail.com.



An 1862 "Fatty" Indian Head Penny that Rob Rizzo has found on one of his metal detecting adventures. He said the fatty Indian Head Penny refers to pennies minted from 1854-1864 when the pennies had a bigger diameter and were thicker. This particular coin was found at a church property in Waukesha County.



An 1800s suspender clip that Rob Rizzo found while using his metal detector on the Laura Ingalls Wilder homestead in Peppin. It was donated to the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum in Peppin.



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DELAFIELD

# The Grain shares tenant lists, new estimated opening dates

## Company excited for its first mass timber development

By Bridget Dean  
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DELAFIELD — Two buildings. Four stories each. 78,000 square feet total. A \$25 million development.

The Grain, downtown Delafield’s soon-to-be finished retail and office space, has been under construction since early 2022, but Hendricks Commercial Properties’ first mass timber development is expected to open this spring and summer.

According to Senior Vice President of Development Troy Anderson, the east building is slated for a mid-May opening, as tenants are already doing build-outs. The west building is slightly behind that date, with a tentative construction completion date in June, and tenant build-out scheduled for the next few months after that.

Anderson joined the company in January of 2023, a year into the construction of The Grain. He said his job is to take capital projects and make them a reality.

“The biggest, (most) exciting thing is the mass timber. It’s the only one in Delafield. There’s a few in Wisconsin, but not many,” he said. “It was kind of a last-minute change ... but I think it’s been the right choice.”

### What is mass timber?

“Mass timber has been around for a long time. I mean, if you look back in the day, barns and things like that were made out of mass timber that’s truly ‘mass size.’ Beams that were created out of basically a tree,” Anderson explained. The Grain will feature mass timber, as well as dowel laminated timber.

“They take timber, and they turn it 90 degrees and they laminate, basically glue, then dowel the timber together as it’s being produced, which gives us strength,” he said.

There are particular positives to mass timber that Anderson was excited to share. First, the weight factor: Mass timber is lighter than steel or concrete structure. Second, the carbon storage and sustainability of timber as a renewable source. Perhaps counter-intuitively, he said the mass timber structure is also very fire-resistant.

“With steel, once it heats up, it retains heat and it gets distorted and has less heat resistance to it than mass timber,” he said. “If it does (burns) at some point, it only burns to a certain point where the core stays intact for the structural stability of the building. So the fire resistance is huge.”

Anderson said the decision to build a mass timber structure in Delafield goes back to the environmental and renewable resources aspects and the uniqueness of the build style, since the area has no other mass timber developments.

“We wanted to give a cool work space for companies that were going to be leasing the building,” he said. “The main driving factor of building within the city of Delafield was truly keeping with this historic feel of the existing downtown ... Can we make those buildings feel like they’ve been there for 30 years or longer? That was the big push in all of what we do, honoring the history of the town and the history between the structures that were already there.”

### Parking and jobs

The Grain development will include 125 parking spots between an underground structure and on-site parking. During normal work hours, those spots would likely be taken by employees of The Grain tenants, says Anderson.



Courtesy of Hendricks Commercial Properties

An exterior rendering of the two buildings that make up The Grain. Parking is located outside the buildings as well as underneath the two buildings.



An interior rendering of office space at The Grain. There are 60,000 square feet of office space available across the two buildings.

son.

“With the project complete, hopefully it’s going to bring about 625 jobs to the area. With that, of course, we need parking in areas for people to commute to,” he said. “After hours, that should be available for community parking.”

Jackie Valde, District 3 Delafield alderwoman, said she’s excited for the opening and believes the vast majority of the community is too. She described her joy at seeing lights on in the buildings recently while driving past at night.

“Honestly, I’m waiting for it to open!” she laughed. “It’s been a long time in development.” Valde shared that when the buildings were proposed originally, the design was much more “aggressive.” She credits the Hendricks company for being willing to scale back the size by a few floors and in exterior design to make it more congruent with the other buildings downtown. “Thoughtful and successful projects take time.”

Anderson confirmed, saying the design was originally for a single building of about six floors.

Of course, Valde has heard from a few of her constituents about how the buildings are too big, or don’t fit in downtown, but Valde said she’s happy to listen to them.

“When you live in a place that’s highly desirable, you get what I’d call growing pains,” she said, explaining that some constituents, especially those who have lived in Delafield for a long time, are more hesitant about the development.

Valde believes The Grain will be a great destination and draw to the city for future residents and visitors.

### The Grain’s current tenants

**The East building, 705 Genesee St., is expected to open in mid-May.**

Current tenants:

- Synthetica, an artificial intelligence company on the 3rd and 4th floors
- Brunch Delafield, a restaurant on the 1st floor
- Voodoo Brewing Company, a brewery on the 1st floor
- Two spaces available for lease

**The West building, located at 525 Main St., will be completed in early summer, with tenants moving in mid-summer.**

Current tenants:

- Velvet & Tulle, a boutique on the first floor
- NONA Nutrition, a supplement and superfood shop and café on the first floor
- Midwest Insurance on the third floor
- RBC Wealth Management on the fourth floor
- Six spaces available for lease

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