

# WINNECONNE NEWS

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Serving Village of Winneconne; Communities of Butte des Morts, Larsen; Towns of Winneconne, Poygan, Vinland, Winchester and Wolf River.

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\$1

VOLUME 155, ISSUE 5

The 2025 Community Health Assessment is Here!



Community Health Report 2025

TRI-COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT COALITION

## County examines whether 10,000 housing units in 10 years is possible

By Jonathan Richie  
Winneconne News

Winnebago County officials are on the precipice of spending millions of ARPA dollars to get housing built across the county while leaving questions about where these are going to be built and who is going to be building them.

Winnebago County needs 10,000 housing units over the next 10 years, according to county executive Gordon Hintz and housing grant specialist Lu Scheer. The county has been using that figure for the last three years.

The Winnebago County Board of Supervisors approved a new program last month – the revolving loan fund. The idea is that the county puts in millions of dol-

lars of American Rescue Plan Act money into this fund for more housing units.

“The reality is that if we want to drive down rental and purchase costs, and reduce homelessness for the long term, we need a dramatic increase in the supply of housing,” Hintz said after signing the RLF resolution. “The RLF has the potential to play a role in doing this. We look forward to working with partners to move this forward.”

The county will now put a request for proposal out for non-profits to bid on becoming the agency that runs the RLF program. The county has put in \$4.5 million, mostly of ARPA funds, and hopes a non-profit will be able to fundraise and double that amount so the fund has closer

to \$9 million.

Developers and homeowners will then be able to apply for funds that will be paid back. This could be for funds to build a new apartment complex or could be used to lend \$50,000 to a young couple needing it for a down payment for a home.

Housing issues have been discussed by some municipalities over the last couple of years. Oshkosh, Neenah and Menasha have all had these discussions when publishing housing studies and have set goals for new housing units.

Other communities like Fox Crossing have space and are working with developers on a new subdivision and other proj-

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Students preparing to perform Disney's Frozen  
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Photo by Michael Cooney

## Team building

Sasha and Justin Smith (front) play in a pickleball tournament Saturday with Ken and Ann Levine to support the Fox Valley Dragon Boat Club at Pickle and Bags Oshkosh. The dragon boat club is recruiting members for a youth team, a breast cancer survivor team and a competitive team. For more information, see page 6.

## Party on Poygan raises money for community organizations

By Dave Gill  
News Contributor

The ice was as thick as the fish stories, the weather was “warm” and the 17th Annual Party on Poygan lured in hundreds of people and fish alike in Winneconne on Saturday at Critters Wolf River Sports and Woodey's Bar & Grill.

“We had the perfect storm of cold weather for weeks to make great ice conditions and then a warming up on Saturday” to make this year's Party on Poygan

a tremendous success, said Chris “Crittter” Boucher, the owner of Critters.

Boucher said more than 1,600 fishing tickets were sold in addition to 230 more Northern Pike tickets for 2026. In the end, more than \$10,000 in cash and more than \$20,000 in prizes were awarded as part of the event.

Party on Poygan also serves as a fundraising opportunity for the Winneconne Area Chamber of Commerce and American Legion Giles Luce Post 364, who

team up to host two 50/50 raffles and a gun raffle.

“We really enjoy the event, and we're really grateful that Chris (Boucher) allows us to be there to stay visible in our community,” Chamber President Cindy Herbert said.

Proceeds from the Party on Poygan raffles are used to help fund the annual Independence Day fireworks the Chamber of

SEE **Party on Poygan** ON PAGE 5



Winneconne News

Cade Fredrick has the walleye that he caught weighed Saturday during the Party on Poygan event. The catch earned him a fifth-place finish and \$250 for his efforts.

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## Corrections

It is the policy of Winneconne News to correct all errors of fact. For correction information please call 920-582-4541.

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# Reworld launches poster contest for local students

Winneconne News

Reworld-Fox Valley is launching an environmental poster contest this month, inviting students across five local school districts to explore what it means to protect the planet. The initiative, titled "Be a Reworld Waste Warrior," is open to all K-12 students in Oshkosh, Winneconne, Berlin, Ripon and Omro.

The contest encourages students to answer the central question: "What does a Reworld Waste Warrior do to protect the planet?" Through original artwork, participants are asked to highlight everyday actions that support environmental stewardship, including recycling, reducing waste, reusing materials and caring for natural

resources.

Information about the contest has been shared with all participating schools, and students are encouraged to speak with their teachers if they need additional details or guidance on how to submit their work.

Entries may range in size from 8.5" x 11" to 11" x 17" and must include the phrase "Reworld Waste Warrior." Only original artwork is permitted, and copyrighted characters or logos—other than the Reworld logo—are not allowed.

Winning posters from each age group will be on display throughout the entire month of April in participating community libraries to celebrate Earth Month and

highlight the environmental messages created by local students.

An optional bonus point may be awarded for incorporating elements of Reworld's operations, such as recycling bins, sorting processes, trucks, or the Materials Processing Facility.

Entries are due by March 2. Winners will be announced on March 30, and the winning posters will be displayed April 1-30 as part of Earth Month celebrations. Parent or guardian permission is required for any artwork selected for public display.

More information about Reworld's environmental work can be found at [reworldwaste.com/what-we-do](http://reworldwaste.com/what-we-do).

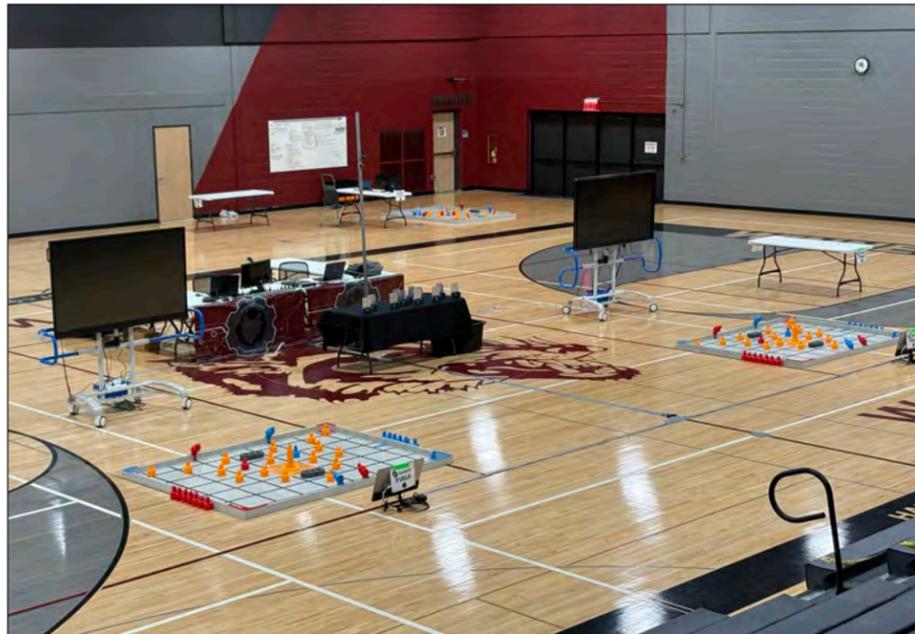


Photo from Winneconne Robotics Club

## Robotics competition

The Winneconne Middle School gym was set up Saturday for 17 elementary school VEX IQ teams to show off the robots they built. The Winneconne Robotics Club hosted the event with the help of supporters and volunteers, thanking all those who helped throughout the day.

# Oshkosh Herald

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## Scholarship program brings awareness to county government

Winneconne News

High school seniors who reside in Winnebago County that plan to attend a post-secondary educational institution are eligible to receive one of nine Winnebago County Board \$2,100 scholarships.

The program was developed to promote an awareness and understanding of county government.

Interested students need to complete and submit an application form and write a 500 to 800 word essay addressing the question: "If I were to run for any Winnebago County elected position, which one would I run for and why?"

Elected positions include county board supervisor, county executive, judges of circuit court, district attorney, sheriff, clerk of courts, county clerk, treasurer and register of deeds.

All application requirements must be followed to be considered. The deadline to apply is March 31. If interested, go to [winnebagocountywi.gov/759/Winnebago-County-Board-Scholarship-Progr](http://winnebagocountywi.gov/759/Winnebago-County-Board-Scholarship-Progr).

## Area unemployment rate increases in December

Winneconne News

The Oshkosh-Neenah metropolitan area (MSA) and Winnebago County saw their unemployment rate increase to 2.7% in December from 2.5% in November and at the same time last year, according to preliminary data from the state Department of Workforce Development.

The preliminary December unemployment rate increased in all 13 metropolitan areas over the month. Rates increased in all 13 metropolitan areas over the year.

Unemployment rates increased in 33 of Wisconsin's 35 largest cities over the month. Rates stayed the same in the two remaining cities.

Unemployment rates decreased in three cities over the year. Rates increased in 25 cities over the year and stayed the same in the seven remaining cities.

Unemployment rates increased in all 72 counties over the month. Unemployment rates decreased in eight counties over the year. Rates increased in 58 counties over the year and stayed the same in the six remaining counties.

Estimates of unemployment and employment statistics are from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.





Submitted photo

The cast of Disney's Frozen: The Broadway Musical at Winneconne High School includes Chloe Wyssbrod (Hans), Demarcus McDaniel (Olaf on Friday and Sunday performances), Vivian Verich (Elsa on Friday and Sunday performances), Evynn Rosenow (Anna on Friday and Sunday performances) and Jonah Jacobson (Kristoff).

## High school presents musical production of Disney's Frozen

Winneconne News

Winneconne High School's 2026 musical production of Disney's Frozen: The Broadway Musical will take the stage for four performances from Feb. 12 to Feb. 15.

The show features around 45 talented Winneconne High School students in grades 9 to 12, as well as various alumni and community members assisting in the pit orchestra.

For the first time in forever, experience the musical phenomenon that has taken the world by storm. Based on the Academy Award-winning animated feature film, Disney's Frozen includes all the film's beloved songs by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez, along with new music written exclusively for the stage.

According to the description for the production provided by the school, in the beautiful mountainous kingdom of Arendelle, Princesses Anna and Elsa grow up sheltered inside their castle, isolated from the world and increasingly distant from each other. When Elsa is crowned queen,

the magical powers she's desperately tried to conceal from her sister take control, and she flees into the mountains.

As a ferocious winter descends on Arendelle, Anna sets off on an epic journey to find Elsa and bring her home – with the help of hardworking ice harvester Kristoff, his loyal reindeer Sven, and a happy-go-lucky snowman named Olaf. Full of magic, humor and a stunning musical score, Frozen is a powerful tale of sisterhood, acceptance and finding the real meaning of true love.

All four performances are open to the public and tickets can be reserved either online at [ticketleap.events/events/winneconne-community-arts-center](http://ticketleap.events/events/winneconne-community-arts-center) or at the WCAC Box Office by appointment by calling 920-582-5810 ext. 1120. Tickets are free and donations will be accepted at the door.

Show times are at 7 p.m. Feb. 12 to Feb. 14, with a matinee at 2 p.m. Feb. 15.



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Photo by Michael Cooney

## Pet expo

J&R Aquatic Animal Rescue's bearded dragon proved popular with kids Saturday during the Oshkosh Love Your Pet Expo at the Oshkosh Arena. The event produced by the arena's management company, VenuWorks of Oshkosh, featured a mix of shopping, education and entertainment. The expo featured 40 pet-focused vendor booths offering products and services for pet owners, along with educational workshops led by local experts.

## Families invited to 4K/ kindergarten open house

Winneconne News

All families of 4K and kindergarten students for the 2026-27 school year are invited to an open house at Winneconne Elementary School.

The open houses are scheduled for 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Feb. 17 or Feb. 26.

During the events, families will be able to meet the teachers, experience the play-based 4K program and explore kindergarten. Students can engage in hands-on play

activities that showcase the program.

Enrollment paperwork will be available on site. Families are asked to bring the child's birth verification paperwork, parent/guardian proof of identity and parent/guardian proof of residency.

More information is available at [winneconne.k12.wi.us/district/how\\_to\\_enroll](http://winneconne.k12.wi.us/district/how_to_enroll). Contact Enrollment Coordinator Jenni Hostettler with questions at 920-582-5802 ext. 3133.

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# Art students advance to regional show

Winneconne News

Three students were selected to represent Winneconne High School in the regional show, which is currently on display at the Neville Museum in Green Bay through the end of the month.

Works were also juried into the Youth Art Celebration to be held in March in Madison.

“Artwork for these types of shows require originality, technical skill and artistic voice,” art teacher Angela Breunig said.

Junior Aubrey Racine took her inspiration from an artist named Elizabeth Sullivan, who is known for her intricate stitchings that create abstract compositions and use color to evoke emotion.

According to Breunig, Racine was excited to mix media and try stitching through canvas for the first time. She researched various knots and stitches and used her love for nature as a source of her subject matter.

Her landscape painting took on a semi-realistic style. She incorporated beads and sequins among her stitches to take on the abstract shapes of flowers, buds and even the wind blowing.

“Aubrey’s art is an example of ample risk-taking,” Breunig said. “When this piece returns, we will stretch her canvas onto stretcher bars for a dimensional canvas.”

Racine’s art was selected as Best in Show for the high school age group for the Northeast Region.

Sophomore Lilly Robbert created an

original piece as a way to communicate to viewers the pressures of society’s beauty standards but also to address similar pressures that teens are faced with in their social groups in high school.

“It’s a constant struggle of women, especially teens, to be exhausted by having to keep up with societal standards and the gained insecurities that happen over time,” Breunig said. “She creates a surreal style with muted browns while drawing emphasis to the girl in the mirror with earthy colors.”

Senior Ella Buser created an oil pastel drawing of a landscape. This was an independent work for Buser, Breunig said.

“Her artistic goal for this piece was to go abstract and to dabble a bit more in oil pastel which she had minimal experience in,” Breunig said. “She researched the Fauvist style, but as she was creating, she began adding strokes and textures in her oil pastel that gave her work more of an Impressionistic style. She kept unity by sticking to a color scheme that integrated through the entire piece. We had to cut the original artwork down in order to meet size requirements for the juried show.”

For the regional show, all teachers who want to submit work must be members of the Wisconsin Art Education Association. A teacher can select up to five artworks to send to the regional show.

Three artworks are selected from the five to move onto the state show in March in Madison.



Photo from Winneconne Community School District

An acrylic painting titled “Exclusion” by Lilly Robbert.



Photo from Winneconne Community School District

An acrylic painting with additional embroidery titled “From a Dream, I’m Waking Up,” by Aubrey Racine. This work was also awarded Best in Show for the high school age level.



Photo from Winneconne Community School District

An oil pastel landscape titled “Smoke in the Mountains” by Ella Buser.

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Winneconne News  
From left to right, the group of Matt Sleik, Brandon Williams, Matt Haborkorn, Camren Sleik and Carver Nickerson took part in the Party on Poygan.

## Shallow Lakes Chronicles

### A “boom”ing time this weekend

By Matt Harp  
Outdoor Reporter

In keeping with the shaking off the winter blues, another great opportunity shows itself this weekend. I don't mind shamelessly plugging the Lake Poygan Sportsmen's Club 11th Annual Fisheree to be held Saturday.

You may already know that LPSC raises funds for habitat and access to Lakes Poygan and Winneconne along with the Wolf River. While breakwall projects are the most obvious signs on the lakes, the club also plows ice roads, maintains a safety beacon, installs reefs and woody habitat, builds and maintains wood duck houses, and dozens of other projects.

The LPSC's three main fundraisers for the club are its annual April banquet, a June calendar raffle and this weekend's fisheree. Boom Bay Bar and Grill on the



Harp

north shore of Lake Poygan is the headquarters for the fisheree once again.

Under the new owners Karen Davis and Lori Locy (new since October), a lot will be the same, but with some nice new tweaks. Starting at 6 a.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday, there will be hot breakfast sandwiches, hot drinks and donuts.

The heated tent and bar areas will house the hundreds of participants and burgers, brats, beer, chili and their regular menu will be available.

In addition to the fishing contest, there will be lots of prize raffles, a 50/50 raffle and an ATV raffle. The fishing ticket is \$10 and gets participants entered into a cash raffle even if they don't fish. For those who do fish, any legal fish (walleyes over 14" please) gets them in the random cash payouts. Fish are not weighed or measured.

All in all, there's a ton to do, lots to win and it's always great hanging out with like-minded folks that all contribute to the health of the Shallow Lakes.

It's going to be another great day on a great lake for a great cause.

Reach Matt at lakeandpond2@gmail.com.



Photo by Tim McEnroe

Over 1,600 fishing tickets were sold and 230 northern tickets for this year's Party on Poygan. Organizers of Saturday's event gave away over \$10,000 in cash and over \$20,000 in prizes.

### Highway 91 project receive construction award

Winneconne News

An asphalt paving project in Winnebago County was among the statewide award recipients for excellence in construction.

Six companies received awards at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) annual Contractor-Engineer Conference last month.

Northeast Asphalt, located in Greenville, received the award for work on Wis-

consin Highway 91 between Oshkosh and Berlin. The project resurfaced 14.5 miles, including 21 side road intersections and 165 driveways.

The efficiency of the paving crews helped the project finish ahead of schedule and under budget.

### Party on Poygan

FROM PAGE 1

Commerce puts on every year in the Wolf River north of Main Street, according to Herbert.

Boucher said the great ice conditions and warmer weather made this year's Party on Poygan one of the best in terms of tickets sold. But he also wants to be careful and keep the event more family focused.

"This has turned into more of a family event," Boucher said. "With life being as busy as it is, this has become a way for family and friends to get together. And it gives young people something to do instead of video games and their phones. It has grown very well, but I want to keep it a family-friendly atmosphere."

Earlier in the afternoon at Woodey's before most of the anglers and their fish

were coming in to be registered, a couple of patrons were sipping on a newly tapped offering at the bar – Yuengling Traditional Lagers – and one asked the other: "Did you get your fish all registered yet?"

To which his buddy replied, "Nah, it's still in the lake."

It appears Party on Poygan has something for everyone.



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# Chicken Fun Night raises funds for fire department



Winneconne News  
 Captain Pete Anderson on the microphone, the son of a firefighter spinning the paddlewheel and event coordinator Josh LaMarche took part Jan. 28 in the Winneconne Poygan Fire Department's Chicken Fun Night at Fin 'n' Feather.

By Dave Gill  
 News Contributor

It may have been below zero outside at Winneconne's home of the famous paddlewheel boat themed restaurant on Jan. 28, but inside the Fin 'n' Feather the Winneconne Poygan Fire Department's paddlewheel was bringing the heat.

Local residents packed into the restaurant to participate in the 36th annual Chicken Fun Night that serves as the fire department's only fundraiser of the year.

Josh LaMarche, the fundraiser's coordinator for the department, said the paddlewheels were flying and everyone was very willing to participate in the cause.

When all was said and done, LaMarche estimated that about \$12,000 was raised

between the raffle tickets, paddlewheel prizes, 50/50 raffle, buckets of booze, the chicken dinners and half the bar sales.

"It was a great year," LaMarche said. "We even had one of our \$1,000 raffle ticket winners donate it back to the department."

He said that shows just how much the community supports the department's efforts.

Proceeds of the event will go toward the continued development of the department's training center on County Road D.

Fire Chief Kevin Allcox said that construction of a simulated structure inside the training center pole building is slated to begin by no later than the end of February.



Winneconne News  
 Winneconne Poygan Fire Department Chief Kevin Allcox receives the \$1,000 prize money won by Joan Fleischer. She decided to donate it back to the department.

The department is very well into the plans for a two-story structure within the main building, Allcox said.

The department's firefighters will be us-



Winneconne News  
 Bryce Roland holds one of the prizes given out during the Winneconne Poygan Fire Department's Chicken Fun Night.

ing it for search and rescue scenarios, he said.

"We're hoping we'll be able to utilize it for training by spring," Allcox added.

## Pickleball tournament supports dragon boat club

By Michael J. Cooney  
 News Contributor

A pickleball tournament Saturday at Pickle and Bags Oshkosh was organized to support the Fox Valley Dragon Boat Club.

Event organizer Amy Otte said 16 teams were participating in the first-time tournament.

"The best part of the day is seeing so many people come out and giving us the chance to introduce them to the sport of dragon boating," Otte said. "It's a great opportunity to share what we do with people who may not be familiar with it yet."

The club is building a youth team, a breast cancer survivor team and a competitive team, so Otte said there's a place for a lot of different people to get involved.

"We won't be on the water until the ice is gone, so right now our focus is on team building and indoor activities," Otte said.

The club meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month at the Winneconne Public Library.

Right now, Otte said the club has 44 members, and the boat has only been in the water for less than a month before it got too cold.

"We're doing really well and are excited to bring dragon boating to the Fox Valley," Otte said. "We're looking forward to what's ahead."

The Fox Valley Dragon Boat Club will have an informational table set up at the Northeast Wisconsin Chinese Association spring Bazaar for Chinese New Year from 3 to 7:30 p.m. Feb. 28 at Neenah High School. Anyone interested in learning about the dragon boating Breast Cancer Survivor, youth or competitive teams can find out more information during the spring festival.

## Winnebago ice report

By Jim Nobbe  
 Payne's Point Hook & Spear Fishing Club

The main north-south crack .4 miles off our landing has healed up.

We pulled the two truck bridges and the ATV bridge off it this afternoon. We put a truck bridge on the east-west crack north of our treeline roughly a mile.

The bridge is located just east of Haystack Reef. It is marked with four Christmas trees. We also have a truck bridge at 3.1 miles out on the main road on our treeline.

The crack runs southeast to north-northwest. It is roughly 10" wide. We still have the truck bridge on the crack that runs east off of Blackbird Island roughly a half mile west of the island.

There was a new crack that started Saturday south of it about 3/4 of a mile that runs east also. It dies out about two miles out in the lake.

With the drastic temperature changes and little snow, I suspect the lake will keep cracking in random spots for the foreseeable future so pay extra attention while you're traveling on the ice.

We are seeing 18-21" of ice in most areas. Also thanks to the fella that helped us by drilling the holes that marked our bridge on the crack north of the treeline Sunday.

Don't forget to support your local fishing clubs and remember the ice is never 100% safe.

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# Housing

FROM PAGE 1

ects.

In Winneconne a new subdivision of 25 new single-family homes is slated to be built in the coming years. The Wolf Run Estates is being planned to be built north of Klein Ford and southeast of Winneconne Middle School.

Eric Hoffman of Prairie Stone Homes said 12 of the lots are sold. That will bring 25 new single-family homes into the village in the near future.

Although county officials have stated there is a need for 10,000 new housing units by 2033, Scheer said the county has not set this figure as the goal it hopes to complete over the next seven years.

“We’re hoping that this revolving loan fund encourages developers to build here,” she said.

Figures for municipalities throughout the area show how many housing units have been built in Winnebago County in the last three years and whether the county is on track to build 10,000 housing units by 2033.

In Oshkosh, 406 housing units have been built over the last three years or are currently under construction. This includes the Red Earth development being built just off Lake Butte des Morts and the Mill on Main project still under construction.

Oshkosh has been focused on building housing units since a housing study was done in 2022. Since 2020, there have been 1,814 housing units built, under construction or approved by the council. Those are all units located in multi-family residential buildings.

Neenah has added over 300 housing units since 2023. The city is planning on building 960 housing units over the next 10 years, which would mean just under 100 new housing units every year.

In Menasha, the city has been building on a smaller scale with a housing study in place that calls for new housing on a timeline reaching 2040. The city has built 87 new housing units since 2023.

It’s a total of 812 new housing units since 2023 in the cities in the county. If the housing units that have been built since 2020 are added, the number grows to 1,356.

Jennifer Sunstrom, director of public relations and government affairs for the Realtors Association of Northeast Wisconsin, said the housing problem has reached crisis level in the area and the biggest contributor to that is the lack of supply in the market.

“That is the result of significantly underproducing housing since the last recession, especially one and two-family

homes, especially smaller homes and lots,” Sunstrom said. “Given that the price of new construction has basically doubled in the last five years, we also need more diversity of home options like townhomes, condo, duplexes that are more affordable.”

Sunstrom added Wisconsin needs to build approximately 227,000 new housing units in the next decade if it wants to grow its working-age population. She said not keeping up with the housing needs will be met with a number of effects, including people buying houses later in life.

“There is a whole list of consequences as a result of the housing crisis that is a subject all onto itself,” Sunstrom said. “For instance, the average age of the first-time homebuyer has increased to 40 years old, almost 10 years older than historic average of late twenties-early thirties.”

When asked if it was possible for Winnebago County to add 10,000 housing units from 2023-2033, Sunstrom admitted it’s a hard question to answer.

“So far, even with the housing crisis gaining attention and with regulatory reform, we are still producing about one-half of the housing units we need to meet demand and with that, each year we are digging a deeper deficit,” Sunstrom said.

She said it was important to look at predictors like building permits with the county and planned subdivisions or expansions.

The county reported 208 building permits issued in 2023 and 330 in 2024. From January to August 2025 the county issued 188 building permits for a total of 726 over that time.

A number of cities have set housing goals based on their own studies.

Oshkosh officials had a housing study done in 2022. It states that Oshkosh’s population will continue to grow by over 3,200 permanent residents. Based on U.S. Census data, Oshkosh would have a population of around 70,000.

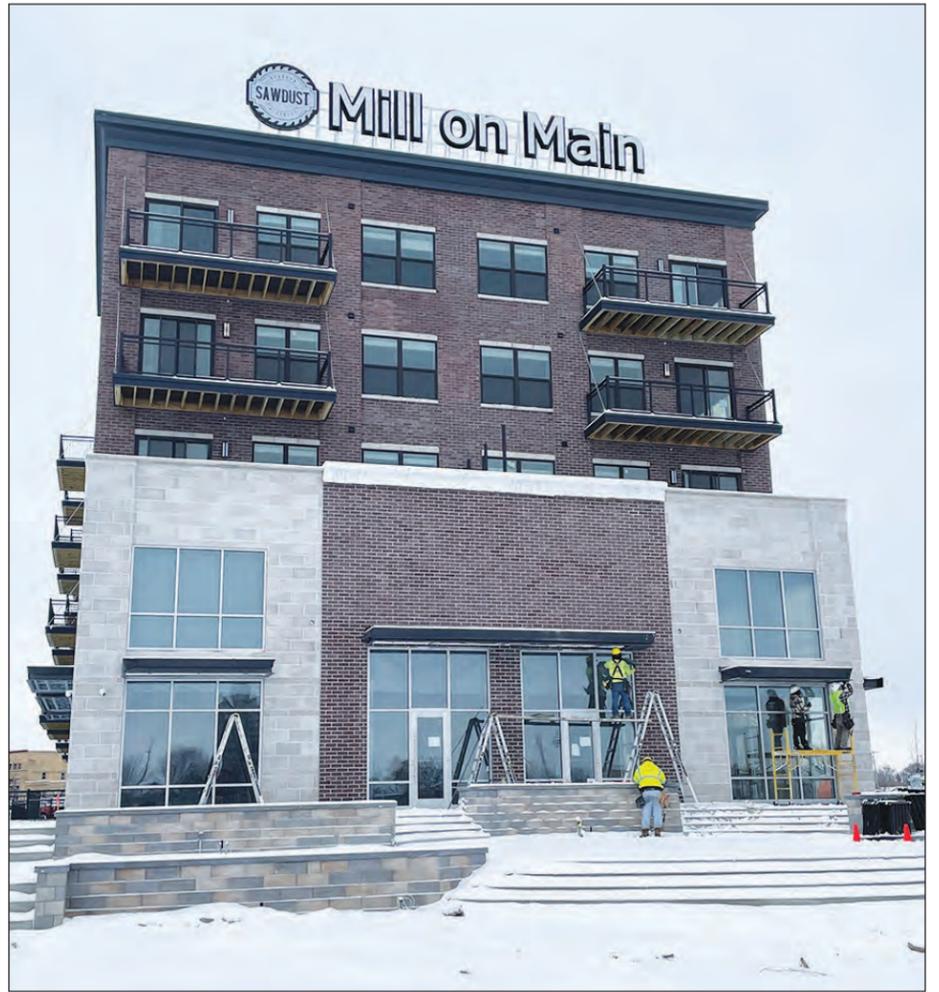
The study states that due to the forecasted population growth the city will need to build 1,700 new housing units by 2030, or approximately 160 units annually.

Neenah completed a housing study in early 2025 that has similar goals to Oshkosh despite having less than half the population of the county seat.

The Neenah Housing Study and Needs Assessment states the 10-year target for new housing units in Neenah is 960, which would be 96 units annually.

In Fox Crossing, the village has not done a recent housing study. However, the village is currently working with developers on a new subdivision off of Shady Lane.

The Shady Lane Estates could add as many as 69 single-family homes to Fox Crossing. According to the village’s annual comprehensive financial report, the



Winneconne News

Mill on Main is one of the housing projects in Oshkosh still under construction.



Winneconne News

Wolf Run Estates is being built north of Klein Ford and southeast of Winneconne Middle School. The plan is to bring 25 new single-family homes into the village.

village built Sand Point Pond, a retention pond, to help with area flooding and to “allow for the urbanization of Shady Lane.”

In Menasha, the city’s 2024 housing study states Menasha is projected to need between 1,000 and 1,300 new housing units by 2040. The study’s executive summary breaks down the need for single-family homes, apartments and housing for seniors.

Those municipalities alone are hoping to build almost 4,000 new housing units in the coming decade. But there is still a huge gap between what is being planned from the cities compared to what the

county is anticipating.

“We need more residents and business owners to understand the extent of the problem and the consequences of not addressing it,” Sunstrom said. “This will mean we have to do housing very differently than we have done in the past to get the number of units we need and make them affordable to even middle-income individuals. We also need more people who are struggling to find affordable housing to speak up during hearings for regulatory reform and for development projects.”

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# Prep Roundup

## BOYS BASKETBALL

### Wolves breeze to wins over Waupaca, Shawano

Four players finished in double figures as Winneconne rolled to an 84-38 win Thursday on the road over Waupaca.

Brody Schaffer led the way for Winneconne with 25 points, eight assists and seven rebounds in the win. Gage Bartel



Photo by Doug Sasse

Winneconne senior Andon Lang looks to make a pass into the lane during last week's win over Shawano.

added a season-high 23 points, while Parker Ingles and Drew Lenz chipped in 16 and 15 points, respectively.

Dallas Walker picked up a team-high eight rebounds for the Wolves, who went 8-of-15 from 3-point range in the win.

Earlier in the week, Winneconne posted an 82-63 win over Shawano in a Bay Conference tussle.

Schaffer and Ingles paced the Wolves win with 27 and 20 points, respectively, while Lenz also reached double figures with 11 points. Julian Aberle added nine points off the bench in the win.

Bartel led the team with 10 rebounds and eight assists.

Winneconne will host Clintonville in a nonconference game on Friday.

## GIRLS BASKETBALL

### Winneconne drops heartbreaker to Shawano

The Wolves suffered their second

straight loss Jan. 27, falling to Shawano 57-56, in a Bay Conference game in Shawano.

Harper Neace led three players in doubles figures with 21 points. The junior also grabbed a game-high 16 rebounds.

Grace Mitchell added 13 points and Brooklyn Messerschmidt finished with 11 points and seven assists in the game.

Winneconne finished just 7-of-15 from the free-throw line in the loss.

Winneconne bounced back on Friday by pummeling Green Bay East, 65-15.

Twelve different players scored in the game for the Wolves led by Neela Gardner, who totaled 10 points in the win. Mitchell finished with nine points and Neace added eight.

Winneconne, now 15-4 on the season, will host Weyauwega-Fremont on Monday.

## GIRLS WRESTLING

### Brown leads way for Wolves at tournament

Addison Brown finished second at 107 pounds to lead Winneconne at the fourth annual Shawano Girls Invitational Friday.

After receiving a bye, Brown pinned Audrey Becher of Hortonville in 2:36 and



Photo by Doug Sasse

Jada Kaiser scans the floor for a teammate during Winneconne's win over Green Bay East last week.

then scored a 10-9 win over Pulaski's Lilian Wiitala in the semifinals. Brown lost to Freedom's Katherine Cook in the title bout.

Brown is 32-7 on the season.

Denna Gehrke finished fourth at 145 pounds, while Marley Rewolinski was sixth at 120 pounds.

Winneconne finished sixth among the 47 teams competing at the tournament.

## BOYS WRESTLING

### Winneconne splits pair of home dual meets

The Wolves topped Xavier but suffered a close loss to Seymour at a home Bay Conference triangular meet Thursday.

Winneconne won four of the six contested matches in the win over the Hawks, with all four of the victories coming by pin.

Tyler Engelke (138), Brady Marks (144), Bryce Jones (165) and Carson Piotraschke (175) were the wrestlers to record pins for Winneconne. Ryden Jezwinski (113), James Barone (120), William Baer (126), Briar Vroman (132)



Photo by Doug Sasse

Winneconne's Tyler Engelke takes control of Xavier's Luke Hackl during their 138-pound bout during Thursday's dual meet. Engelke won the match by pin.

and Trye Zemke (157) all won by forfeit for the Wolves.

In the 46-36 loss to the Thunder, Winneconne registered four pins and two forfeits.

The highlight of the dual meet was the return to action for Zemke, who scored a pin in 1:05 in the 157-pound match in his return to action. The senior had been out with an injury suffered during the football season.

Vroman (132), Marks (144) and Jones (165) also scored pins in the match for Winneconne, while Luke Jackson (106) and Piotraschke won by forfeit.

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# Books inspire themes for area outdoor recreation

By Anya Kelley  
Winneconne News

Staff at the Norbert Rich School Forest are promoting literacy and physical fitness through StoryHikes.

Norbert Rich School Forest Coordinator Pat Kolbe was inspired by the Willow Creek County Park near Nordic Mountain to start the StoryHike. He was on a hike with his children when they came across a one-mile trail marked with signs holding a book.

“I thought it was fantastic,” Kolbe said. “My kids were extra motivated by the book and really, they weren’t just hiking but instead running from sign to sign.”

The first StoryHike took place in September 2023 after Kolbe was able to purchase 18 permanent weather-proof signs and a year’s worth of books through the help of grant funding and donations.

The StoryHike Trail is about three quarters of a mile long and open all year round. The books are changed every month, aside from January and February when it remains the same, and are often themed to festivities going on during the month. The current book is “The Snow Thief” – a story about a squirrel and bird duo learning to enjoy the snow before it disappears – by Alice Hemming and Nicola Slater.

“I try to look for outdoor themed books,” Kolbe said. “The StoryHike is featured in some of our community events, too, like for some of our monthly Family Fun Nights and the Spooktacular Candlelight StoryHike night in October. Sometimes, I’ll choose books to correlate with scheduled elementary grade field trips and activities we are doing because we usually

like to include a hike around the StoryHike Trail in our field trip plans.”

Kolbe said kids love to hear how the story plays out while they’re moving down the trail. The obstacle course playground is located at the end of the StoryHike Trail making for a fun surprise when the story is finished.

The books used in the hike generally range from 31 to 40 pages and are suited for young children. Members of the public are encouraged to recommend books for the hike or sponsor or donate books. One hike requires two copies of each book. For more information or to reach out to sponsor or donate, email Kolbe at kolbep@w-csd.org.

“In this day and age, I think it’s more important than ever to have opportunities available where students can learn and have hands-on experiences outdoors,” Kolbe said. “There’s so much in our world that keeps us confined in the comforts of home – TV, tablets, phone, air conditioning. I encourage everyone to find something that makes them spend more time outdoors.”

Plans for some of the recent Candlelight Snowshoe Hike events have been changed due to weather, but one was held Friday.

Another one is scheduled with a special “Super Snowshoe Sunday and Winter Family Fun Day” theme. Outdoor winter activities for the entire family will take place from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday at 5007 Ginnow Road. Visitors are asked to park on the side of Ginnow Road and walk up to the driveway.

Norbert Rich is open to the public from dawn until dusk every day. The forest



Photo from Norbert Rich School Forest  
A bonfire was lit Friday for a Candlelight Snowshoe Hike at Norbert Rich School Forest.



Photo from Norbert Rich School Forest  
Norbert Rich School Forest hosts events throughout the year with different themes along the StoryHike Trail.

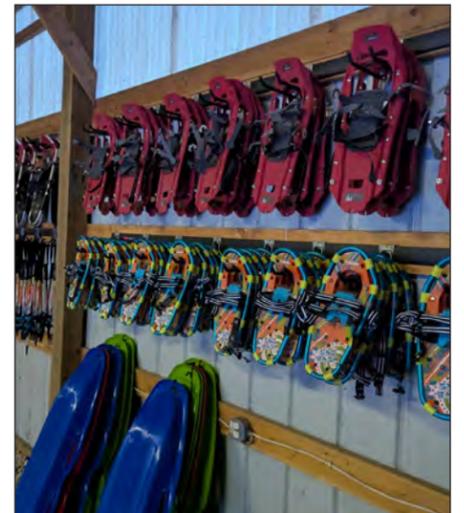


Photo from Norbert Rich School Forest  
Snowshoes are available to use during various events at the Norbert Rich School Forest.

features about two miles of hiking trails, bridges, a pond and a playground for children. For updates on what books are on

display, what events are going on and to see photos from the forest, visit the Norbert Rich School Forest Facebook page.

## The Weekly Whisk

### Boursin Pork Chops

*Creamy, herby comfort with a dinner-party feel*

If you’re looking for a way to dress up pork chops without turning dinner into a project, Boursin cheese is the secret weapon. The soft, garlicky cheese melts into the meat as it cooks, keeping the pork juicy and adding big flavor with almost no prep. These chops feel special enough for guests but are simple enough for a Tuesday night.

#### Ingredients

- 4 pork chops
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt & pepper
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 3/4 cup chicken broth
- 1 (5.2 oz/150g) package Boursin Fine Herbs & Garlic cheese
- 1-2 tablespoons chopped parsley

#### Instructions

Take the pork chops out of the fridge 15-30 minutes prior to starting the recipe if possible. Pat them dry and season them with the garlic powder and some salt & pepper.

Add the olive oil and butter to a skillet over medium-high heat. Let the pan heat up for a few minutes, and once it’s hot, cook the pork chops for 3-5 minutes/side or until golden (3 minutes for thinner chops and 5 minutes for pork chops up to 1” thick). Once the pork chops are done



searing, transfer them to a plate.

To the skillet, add the onions and sauté for about 5 minutes or until softened and lightly browned. If the pan seems dry, add a small splash more olive oil. Add the chicken broth and the Boursin to the skillet. Stir until you’ve got a smooth sauce. Let it bubble for 4-5 minutes, then stir in the chopped parsley.

Add the pork chops (and any plate juices) back in and cook for another 3-5 minutes or until the sauce has thickened up a bit more and the pork chops are cooked through (145F minimum). Add in another splash of chicken broth if the sauce gets too thick. Season with salt and pepper if needed and serve immediately.

#### Serving tip

Serve with roasted potatoes, green beans or a simple salad. Any extra cheese that melts out of the chops makes a perfect drizzle for the vegetables.

For questions or comments email weeklywhisk01@gmail.com.



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**Thursday (Feb. 5):** Frozen – Beef Stew with Peas, Carrots and Potatoes. Green Beans. Grape Juice.

**Friday (Feb. 6):** Garlic Honey Pork Chop. Browned Potatoes. Carrots. Peaches.

**Monday:** Italian Ground Beef Casserole. Romaine and Spinach Salad with Cucumber and Tomato. Tropical Fruit. Garlic Bread.

**Tuesday:** Frozen – Country Sausage Gravy Biscuit. Carrots. Hot Apple Bake. Banana.

**Wednesday:** Chicken Supreme. Baked Potato. Beets. Pears.

**Thursday:** Frozen – Lasagna. Bread Stick. Salad Greens with Sweet Peppers. Fresh Fruit Cup.

**Friday:** Taco Casserole with Pasta, Re-

fried Beans, Shredded Lettuce, Tomato and Sour Cream. Peaches.

**Winneconne Community School District**

**Monday:** ES – Cheese Bites/Sauce, Smuckers PB&J or Grilled Chicken Salad. Yogurt Cup. Baked Beans. MS – Sloppy Joe/Bun. Curly Fries. Baked Beans. Quick Bites – Hamburger/Bun. Chef Salad. Chicken Fajita Salad. Fruit Bowl. Smuckers PB&J. HS Country Roads – Popcorn Chicken. Smuckers PB&J. Peas and Carrots. Buttered Pasta. Fruit and Salads – Fruit Bowl, Chicken Fajita Salad and Yogurt Fruit Parfait. Stadium Burger – Chicken Patty/Bun. Spicy Chicken Patty/Bun. French Fries. Willies Pizza – Cheese Pizza.

**Tuesday:** ES – BBQ Rib Patty, Smuckers PB&J or Grilled Chicken Salad. Oven Baked Potatoes. MS – BBQ Chicken Totchos. Green Beans. Quick Bites – Chicken Patty/Bun, Chef Salad, Chicken Fajita Salad, Fruit Bowl and Smuckers PB&J. HS Country Roads – Turkey Jack Wrap.

Smuckers PB&J. Green Beans. Fruit and Salads – Fruit Bowl, Chicken Fajita Salad and Yogurt Fruit Parfait. Stadium Burger – Corndog. Rice Bowl/Lo Mein. Willies Pizza – Pepperoni Pizza.

**Wednesday:** ES – Chicken Wings, Smuckers PB&J or Grilled Chicken Salad. Cheesy Potatoes. Peas. MS – Breakfast Bowl. Quick Bites – Pizza Cruncher, Chef Salad, Chicken Fajita Salad, Fruit Bowl and Smuckers PB&J. Fruit and Salads – Fruit Bowl, Chicken Fajita Salad and Yogurt Fruit Parfait. Stadium Burger – Chicken Wings. Nacho/Taco Bowl. Willies Pizza – Cheese Bites/Sauce.

**Thursday:** ES – Cheese Quesadilla, Smuckers PB&J or Grilled Chicken Salad. Corn Chips. Roasted Vegetables.

MS – Meatball Sub. Corn. Quick Bites – Hot Dog/Bun, Chef Salad, Chicken Fajita Salad, Fruit Bowl and Smuckers PB&J.

HS Country Roads – Chicken Tikka Masla. Smuckers PB&J. Cilantro Lime Rice. Oven Baked Potatoes. Fruit and Salads – Fruit Bowl, Chicken Fajita Salad

and Yogurt Fruit Parfait. Stadium Burger – Hamburger/Bun. Pasta Bowl. Willies Pizza – Sausage Pizza.

**Friday:** ES – Baked Zitti, Lunch Box or Grilled Chicken Salad. Wheat Dinner Roll. Cauliflower.

MS – Chicken Nuggets. Cheesy Potatoes. Baby Carrots. Quick Bites – Chicken Ranch Wrap, Chef Salad, Chicken Fajita Salad, Fruit Bowl and Smuckers PB&J.

HS Country Roads – Cheese Dipper/Sauce. Smuckers PB&J. Chili Soup. Roasted Vegetables. Fruit and Salads – Fruit Bowl, Chicken Fajita Salad and Yogurt Fruit Parfait. Stadium Burger – Fish Sticks. Breakfast Bowl. Willies Pizza – French Bread Pizza.



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# Obituaries

## Kay L. Freeman

Kay L. (Baur) Freeman, 84 years young, passed away surrounded by her family on January 29, 2026, following a short illness.



Kay was born August 1, 1941, in Fond du Lac as the only child to Aloysius and Norreen Baur. She graduated from Appleton High School in 1959 and enjoyed many reunions with her cherished classmates. Kay met Reg, the true love of her life, on the ski slopes of Mosquito Hill in New London. Their romance led to marriage in 1961 and together they built their family home in Neenah.

They welcomed their daughter, Lori, in 1963 and their son, Brian, in 1965. More blessings followed, including building a cabin in Rhinelander where the family snowshoed and snowmobiled and enjoyed yearly camping and skiing trips that

created countless treasured memories.

In 1985, Kay and Reg moved to their riverside condo in Winneconne, always on the hunt for a bigger and faster boat to enjoy time on the water with friends – cue the “Miami Vice” theme music. They remained very close to their boating friends, even after Reg’s health declined.

Kay loved being busy. She enjoyed monthly book club, weekly Mahjong, the Winneconne women’s group, working the polls, and serving on her class reunion committee—truly any activity that included good company, a cocktail, and plenty of laughter. Kay excelled as a real estate broker, qualifying for numerous trips through her Coldwell Banker sales achievements. She and Reg were always the life of the party and they formed many lifelong friendships.

In addition to being Reg’s adoring wife, Kay’s favorite role was being Granny to Shanna (Matt) Valaskey, Jake (Chelsy) Baldauf, Grant Freeman, and Mason Free-

man, and GG “Great Granny” to Evelyn Kay Valaskey and Lenna Baldauf, who will soon be welcoming a baby sister. She was an amazing mother and incredible role model to Lori (Brian) Baldauf and Brian (Cathy Spoehr) Freeman.

Kay adored the family furbabies and was especially grateful for the time she spent with Dougie during visits over the last couple of years.

Kay was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Reg, in 2022 and her son, Brian, in 2023. She felt the heartache of these devastating losses every day since and was determined to live her life as they would have wanted her to—fully and joyfully. Kay is survived by Reg’s siblings Rick, Roger, Steve and Cynthia; dear cousins Russ, Vickie, Gail and others; and countless friends who will deeply miss her spunky, fun-loving, positive spirit, even in the face of adversity.

A celebration of Kay’s life will be held at Mueller Funeral Home in Winneconne

on Monday, February 9, 2026, visitation beginning at 1:00 p.m. with time to share memories starting at 2:00

p.m. Memorials may be directed to the Robert Wachter Cancer Center at Mercy Hospital in Oshkosh, where Kay courageously faced her brief battle with ovarian cancer. She liked to tease that chemo days were her version of a spa – wrapped in warmth, care and constant attention from the wonderful nurses. The Mercy nursing staff, along with the Compassus Hospice team, showed extraordinary compassion in caring for Kay and her family.

She truly lived a blessed life and was very grateful for every moment of time spent with her family and will be forever loved and remembered.

Give ‘er Yukabuski!



## Casimira Zembrycki

Casimira “Cassie” Zembrycki, age 64, passed away at ThedaCare Medical Center in Appleton on Friday, January 23, 2026.



She was born to the late Chester “Chet” and Leona (Scott) Zembrycki on June 23, 1961, in Grand Chute, WI.

She graduated from Appleton West High-school and went on to graduate with a bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin- Whitewater. Cassie worked for the Institute of Paper

Chemistry as well as the Shawano Paper Mill and as a Bartender at Captains Cove where she loved to meet new people and see old friends.

Cassie loved traveling somewhere warm and going to the casino especially tagging along with her cousin, Sandy. She also enjoyed gardening.

Cassie is survived by many cousins. Per Cassie’s wishes a cremation has taken place



## James A. Selle

James A (Jim) Selle died January 27, 2026, the cancer ultimately overwhelmed his body ability to function leading to his death. He was 73.



He was born October 9, 1952 to Armond and Gladys Selle whom proceeded in death, along with a sister-in-law Ginger Selle and a Brother-in-law Robert Elandt.

Jim was a farmer for most of his life and farmed on the same farm in Winneconne for almost 52 years. Other than farming Jim spent 35 years on the Winnebago County Fair Board serving as vice president for a most of those years. He also spent most of his youth and a big share of his adult life volunteering for the Boy Scouts of America. Obtaining First Class as a youth and the Silver Beaver Award and District Award of Merit as an adult. He was also a Vigil member of the Order of Arrow and Wood badge Beaver both with the Boy Scouts of America.

Jim was survived by his wife Colleen, son David (special friend) Kim Han-

sen, Granddaughter Brittany (Dustin) O’Bright. Stepson Blaine (Samantha) Gibson and Step-granddaughter Lily. Brother Jeff and his children Dan, Becky and Tim plus brother Doug (Julie) Selle and his children Steph, Bradley, Kevin, Sister-in-laws Cindy (Forrest) Peterson, Carmen Riebel and Martha Elandt. Brother-in-laws Richard (Mona) Elandt and Roger (Susan) Elandt. Nieces, Nephews, Quinn Selle and other great- nieces and nephews and two great-great nephews.

Fellow farmers will serve as pallbearers Mike and Andy Becker, Jake and Jack Dodd, Ed Quigley and Ryan Overton.

Visitation and Service at Mueller’s Funeral Home in Winneconne, Wisconsin February 6th 4pm-7pm and February 7th 10- until the time of the service. A Celebration of Life at Westward Ho near Buttes Des Morts, Wisconsin February 10th 4pm-7pm.

In lieu of flowers give monetary donation of your choice in his name to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital or American Cancer Society.



# Samers Bay breakwall project to resume

Winneconne News

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) said construction efforts on the Samers Bay breakwall project are planned to resume this winter, with a portion of the construction likely to occur during the sturgeon spearing season.

The main objective of the project is to install an offshore breakwall on the north side of Samers Bay on Lake Butte des Morts to protect, preserve and restore fish and wildlife habitat. Marsh and wetland areas throughout the Upriver Lakes have faced extensive degradation due to water levels leading to erosion from wind, wave and ice energy.

Located approximately 1,000 feet offshore, a total of 11 breakwall segments will provide an area protected from the lake’s energy to allow aquatic plants to establish, providing aquatic habitat and promoting water quality.

Construction equipment will access the project site from the Butte des Morts Conservation Club property on the south side of Terrell Island. Spearers may encounter construction during the spearing season, which opens Feb. 14.

The ability to conduct this project and its exact timeline will be dependent on ice conditions in the area.

This project is led collaboratively by local groups including the Butte des Morts Conservation Club, Winnebago County Land and Water Conservation Department, Fox Wolf Watershed Alliance and the Wisconsin DNR.



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STATE OF WISCONSIN  
Town of Wolf River  
Winnebago County

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Town Board of the Town of Wolf River will meet at the Wolf River Town Hall at 8800 County Road II, Fremont, WI, on Monday, February 23, at 6:45 p.m. for the purposes of holding a public hearing as prescribed by Section 66.0627 Wis. Stats., to consider proposed ordinance changes to the Town of Wolf River Slow, No Wake Ordinance regarding Section 7. Effective Hours. Copies of ordinance changes are posted at the Fremont Post Office and the Town Hall.

All interested persons wishing to be heard at the Public Hearings are invited to be present.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan J. Gilbert, Clerk

Dated this 30th day of January 2026

Susan J. Gilbert, Clerk  
Town of Wolf River

Published February 4, 2026 and February 11, 2026  
WNAXLP

# Classifieds

## Miscellaneous

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EAA photo/Connor Madison

The whole family can be involved in hands-on activities, such as the airplane coloring table, at EAA's Winter Flight Fest.

## Winter Flight Fest to feature skiplanes, activities

Winneconne News

The annual Winter Flight Fest will bring hands-on activities and the skiplane fly-in to the EAA Aviation Museum.

The all-ages event from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday features activities across the museum, with the skiplane fly-in taking place at the Pioneer Airport facility right behind the museum. All museum activities are included with regular museum admission, while the skiplane fly-in is free to attend.

The hands-on activities in the museum include:

- Paper airplane launcher – Fold your best creation and see how it flies
- Pararescue challenge – Design a miniature parachute and test it in a wind tunnel
- Indoor model airplane flying – Discover what it takes to build and fly a radio-control model
- Rotorcrafting – Build your own helicopter with a working rotor from recycled household materials

Scale plastic model builders can put their work to the test in a contest in the museum's Air Racing Gallery. Entry is free and open to all ages, with separate divisions for adults and youth. Contestants must have their models registered at the Air Racing Gallery by 1 p.m. Judging will begin at 2 p.m. with winners being announced immediately after.

A unique facet of fun flying will be on display as skiplane pilots from throughout the upper Midwest descend on Pioneer Airport to participate in the annual fly-in. Arrivals will begin at 8 a.m. with the airplanes remaining for several hours.

Complimentary chili will also be served at Pioneer Airport. Shuttles will operate from the museum to Pioneer Airport throughout the day. The skiplane fly-in is weather permitting, with pilots being notified in advance of a cancellation. Skiplane pilots are asked to register their aircraft online at [eaa.org/eaa-museum/eaa-skiplane-fly-in-pilot-sign-up](http://eaa.org/eaa-museum/eaa-skiplane-fly-in-pilot-sign-up).



Photo from Oshkosh Area Humane Society

PawGrams can include a printed letter from a shelter animal along with a dog, cat, bunny or guinea pig plushie sent in the mail.

## PawGram fundraiser supports Oshkosh Area Humane Society

Winneconne News

Oshkosh Area Humane Society (OAHS) has launched a new fundraiser for Valentine's Day in which community members can surprise their Valentine by sending a PawGram from a shelter pet – either a personalized email or printed letter and dog, cat, bunny or guinea pig plushie in the mail.

"This offers a way for you to surprise your Valentine with a really meaningful, personalized gift they won't forget," said Ieva Engel, OAHS executive director. "At the same time, it's supporting a really great cause in honor of their loved one; it's a gift both the giver and receiver can feel really good about."

There are two options for PawGrams, including a personalized email PawGram for a \$25 donation, in which the recipient will receive an emailed PDF PawGram

with a shelter pet's Valentine photo and message. The second is a personalized mailed PawGram and a Plushie for a \$40 donation, in which the recipient will receive a padded 8.5" x 11" envelope in the mail with an exterior label that states "Someone Loves You" and a plushie of the donor's choice – dog, cat, bunny or guinea pig (plushies are 4-5" tall), along with a printed personalized PawGram with a shelter pet's Valentine photo and message.

Donations raised from the PawGrams campaign will be used to provide nutritious food, soft blankets, medical care and a safe, warm place for shelter pets to stay until they are adopted.

PawGrams can be ordered at [givebutter.com/pawgrams26](http://givebutter.com/pawgrams26) and will be sent next week. Mailed PawGrams can be sent to any U.S. address.



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