

Greeting card makers



Pat McKnight/Banner Journal

Owen Zenz (l) concentrates on coloring a picture on a Mother's Day card April 23 when he and his friend Anton Cassidy visited the Earth Day displays set up at the Ho-Chunk Nation Executive Building. Youth visiting the Jackson County 4-H booth at the event had the chance to make a greeting card in which the youngsters could place a gift of seeds. Zenz is the five-year-old son of Kyle and Eric Zenz, and Cassidy is the five-year-old son of Melanie and Jeron Cassidy.

Village of Merrilan under construction

By JoDee Brooke

Travelers passing through the village of Merrilan this week encountered the beginning of a major construction project expected to continue through October. The USH 12 project involves pavement replacement and installation of infrastructure.

Beginning Monday, USH 12 between STH 95 and Old Highway 12 was closed. That involves stage 1 of the project. The proposed detour route, northbound, is I-94 to STH 95 to USH 12. The proposed stage 1 detour

route, southbound, is STH 95 to I-94 to USH 12.

Stage 2 is expected to begin midway through summer and involves closing USH 12 between Merrill Street and STH 95. The detour route, northbound, is STH 95 to USH 10 to USH 12. The southbound detour is USH 10 to STH 95 to USH 12.

During Stage 1, an alternate route for I-94 will be signed to STH 95 to CTH FF to CTH F to CTH A to USH 12.

The project cost is approximately \$2.4 million.

Getting ready for his future



Contributed photo

The Dobson brothers, three-year-old Rylie (l) and six-year-old Zacharie, checked out the inside of an ambulance April 27 when they attended the Black River Falls Emergency Medical Service's (BRFEMS) open house. The boys are the sons of Tracy and Dave Dobson. Zacharie admitted he wants to be like his parents when he gets older. Tracy is an emergency medical technician and Dave is an ambulance driver. The BRFEMS observed its 40th anniversary with the open house at the Black River Falls Fire Station.

Defendant in repeat gas drive-off case sentenced

By Pat McKnight

A Reedsburg man was sentenced in Jackson County Circuit Court to 30 days in jail for two counts of stealing gasoline after pleading guilty to the charges.

Roger A. Otto, 21, was charged after a Black River Falls Police Department officer followed a hunch and located the defendant's vehicle at Otto's Monroe County home.

Black River Falls' police officer Dean Taylor investigated a number of gas drive-offs last year and discovered there were similar cases in Monroe and Juneau counties.

Since the thefts occurred in the three-county area, the officer thought it likely the subject was living somewhere centrally located in the three-county area.

He contacted the Tomah Police Department to see whether Monroe County law enforcement could identify the subject. The Tomah Police Department provided Taylor with Otto's name.

When Monroe County investigators interviewed the suspect, Otto denied being involved in the thefts. However, photos of Otto's pickup truck taken by Monroe County investigators matched those recorded on the surveillance videos.

According to Black River Falls Police Department (BRFPD) reports, the perpetrator was stealing vehicle plates and putting them on his pickup when he fueled up. Some of the plates Otto used on his pickup during the thefts were stolen in Monroe and Juneau counties as well as

Jackson County. One of the first incidents of stolen plates was a plate taken from a vehicle parked at the Days Inn Motel in Black River Falls in May 2011.

Taylor reported the perpetrator would fill up his truck and some gas cans in the back of his pickup, always hiding his face from the surveillance cameras at the Kwik Trip store.

The total value of the gas taken in Jackson County was \$502.

In addition to the jail time, to be served concurrently, Otto was ordered to stay employed full-time or be a full-time student or have a combination of work and school. He was also ordered to pay fines and restitution of \$1,055.58.

Earth Day cleanup crew up to challenge



A crew of volunteers from the Friends of the Black River removed a propane tank from its resting place near Morrison Creek during the April 20 Earth Day Cleanup. The crew (above photo) of (l-r) Furman Newby, Rollie Lee, Jeff Polzin and Jerry Schmidt (not pictured) moved the tank to the creek where it was towed to the Morrison Creek landing on the Black River. Polzin (below) tows the tank behind his kayak as he heads to Morrison Landing on the Black River. The cleanup volunteers believe the tank was carried to the spot during the 2010 or even the 1993 flood. Federation Cooperative brought equipment to pick up the tank. The cleanup crew believed the tank still contained some propane.



Council From Front Page

utes away on the schedule.

In situations when a male and a female responder are scheduled, one of them has to sleep on the futon in the training room. Access to the upstairs restroom also means having to go through the dorm room where responders are expected to sleep.

The renovation project includes putting a shower into the upstairs restroom. "Currently, the only option for showering on-site is to use the showers that are downstairs, on the other side of the building," Chown said. "Those wanting to shower on-site need to go downstairs, walk to the other end of the building, stand on a stool to reach the temperature control on the ceiling of the bathroom, turn the heat on and then wait for the

room to warm up before showering. Having an updated bathroom with a shower on the second floor right next to the dorms will provide a shower in a controlled environment, improve the conditions of staying at the fire hall and make for a more welcoming environment."

The dorm renovation project is only part of the upgrades the emergency medical service and fire department have told the BRFCF it needs. Chown and Black River Falls Fire Chief Steve Schreiber have informed the alderpersons of the fire station's shortcomings.

Windows in the first floor storage/janitor area and the apparatus bay area are original to those parts of the building, and the concrete block walls let in cold air. The windows leak, putting a great deal of demand on the

heating system.

The fire station is running out of space to store equipment and records, and there is inadequate room for administration and staff.

Storage of responder vehicles is also inadequate. Newer fire truck models are taller and have tilt cabs. The ceiling in the apparatus bays doesn't allow enough space to open the cabs when working on them. The trucks have to be pulled outside for maintenance or repair, which is a problem during the winter or when it is raining.

In 2010, the emergency medical service contracted with a design firm to develop designs for expanding the fire station. Chown presented two preliminary designs for possible additions to the building at the March 2010 BRFCF meeting. One plan called for a 14,980-square-

foot addition and the second plan is for 7,245 square feet.

Estimates for the 14,980-square-foot addition are between \$1.65 million to \$1.95 million, and the 7,245 square-foot remodeling project could cost between \$1 million and \$1.16 million.

Remodeling the current fire station would not address the issue of its location next to the river. The fire chief and members of the council have questioned investing in improvements at the fire station when there is a possibility the building could be damaged by flooding.

A couple years ago, the fire chief estimated a new station would cost \$6.5 million. In his annual reports, Schreiber has included the proposed construction of a new station in 2020.

Dive

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to participate in the search gives our team the much needed hands-on experience. These sonars are very sophisticated to operate and to identify a body, you have to put in the time to get good at using this equipment. And, if there's any way we could help give the family the closure they need, the effort would well be worth it."

Tax

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now allows the tourism promotion entity to use 40 percent of the funds it receives for costs and administration.

The ordinance also requires the tourism promotion entity to submit an annual report on how the funds are spent.

The hotels and motels in Black River Falls and the town of Brockway charge their guests a 7-percent room tax. The hoteliers are allowed to keep one percent of the tax to help pay for the costs of collecting the tax.

The remaining portion of the tax is divided equally between the town of Brockway and the city of Black River Falls. Each municipality is allowed to keep 20 percent of the amount it receives. The remaining amount is placed in maintenance funds for the Jackson County Fair Park, the Milt Lunda Memorial Arena and the Lunda Community Park.

The Room Tax Commission administers the amount of the room tax designated for tourism promotion. The Room Tax Commission is responsible for contracting with an agency to serve as the tourism entity for the tourism zone.

Previously, a provision in the room tax ordinance allowed the tourism entity to use up to 20 percent to be used for administrative expenses.

News deadline for the Banner Journal is noon Monday.