Blossom St. vacation may have roadblock

Mayor’s term stays 2 years

Business

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Our Views

How to use stimulus unclear for city of Ripon

Sports

One word: Ouch

Olsen’s Mill will be sold at auction, but likely will stay open

Shocking

You might be surprised to find out how a little empathy can speak a cow—
and how the problem can be fixed.

Performing “Clarinet Boogie”

PERFORMING “CLARINET BOOGIE” during the Music in our Schools Concert Monday evening in the Ripon High School gymnasium, from left, Ripon Middle School music teacher Andrew Pangstaff, Theresa Kasper, Hannah Kipfer and Emily Devine. The song featured the 7th- and 8th-Grade Bands’ entire clarinet section, Band Director Le William McClain, Chorale group performing during the 45-minute concert were the 5th-, 6th- and 7th Grade Choruses, High School Choruses and High School Choir. More photos will be published in the Commonwealth next week.

Principal candidates chat with community

Two finalists for Ripon Middle School’s principal vacancy, Steve Gromala and Tom Holub — spoke at a meet and greet banquet Thursday in the school’s media center.

Gromala, principal at Manawa Middle School, and Holub, an assistant principal at Random Lake High School, were the final candidates out of a pool of 40 applicants for the middle school position.

A Ripon School Board committee of School Board members, among parents, middle school staff and district administration narrowed the pool to four.

Now, the Ripon School Board will make a final decision in closed session.

The two finalists for the vacant Ripon Middle School principal position, Steve Gromala, left, and Tom Holub attend a meet and greet session in the school’s media center Thursday.

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INSIDE

Home cookin’

by Ian Stopferken

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by Aaron Becker

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The bad news: City leaders don’t understand how, or even why, the money is supposed to be received or spent.

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A March 3 release from Gov. Jim Doyle announced Wisconsin had been awarded $34 million by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help deal with the long-term effects of the March 2008 ice storm.

The grants are aimed at making repairs to damaged public facilities and helping local governments with repairs to schools, libraries, courthouses, community centers, police and fire stations, water and sewer systems, libraries and other public facilities.

The city of Ripon is listed as eligible for $16,374. Fond du Lac County was put at $16,308.

Now, Ripon city leaders are looking for the information and saying, “What?!”

It seems Ripon’s allocation is a piece of the federal stimulus act’s $78 billion for local government’s public works programs.

But Police Chief Steve Lutschke said the information is so preliminary, the department is in the dark.

“It’s one of the most confusing documents I’ve read in a long time because it’s not something we’ve applied for,” Lutschke said.

We just received an e-mail stating we were going to get this.

Doyle’s news release states the money will help protect local police jobs and create others. In fact, the performance measures for receiving the money include creating and preserving jobs. But for $16,374, Lutschke is confused.

“I can’t hire somebody for that kind of money,” he said. “Do I put them on the job for three months?”

Applications for funding must be submitted by May 18.

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Olsen's/Brothers’ attempt to regain control of business blocked continued from page 1

Curves collecting food to help food banks

During the month of March, Curves of Ripon will participate in the 11th annual Curves Food Drive to benefit local food banks. Collectively, during the past five years, nearly 50 million pounds of food were donated to local communities all over the world through the Curves Food Drive. Curves of Ripon also is giving back to the community by hosting an annual food drive for any new members who brings in a bag of non-perishable groceries and joins between March 9 and 26. This promotion will help the women of Curves manage their weight and their wallets by joining Curves for free, while also helping food hungry people in the community.

“The Curves Food Drive is always exciting,” said Monica Worthing, owner of the Ripon club, located at 440 South St. “We have an excellent chance to help so many people when the food banks are at their lowest. Especially during these uncertain times, this food is needed more than ever. It’s a win-win situation for everyone, and we’re very proud to participate.”

Other wellness and nutrition services that will be available at Curves include individualized nutrition plans and fitness plans. For more information, call Curves of Ripon at 748-3334.

BLOSSOM/Cost to move cable is $620k continued from page 1

cable going up that street. In order to provide services in Ripon College and the rest of the community, we may need to relocate the cable.

As County Engineer, Mr. Koepke explained, it would be almost impossible to do the project without rights-of-way from homes. "There are six, 4-inch PVC conduits running underneath the sidewalk, about 30 inches below the grade," he said. "When you're looking at it, you'll only be able to go so far." He added the thick copper cables are expensive to replace. "That's a lot of the cost; copper wire, very costly." While Ripon does have an incineration/finance district (TFD) in place downtown to help defray infrastructure costs for projects, the $200,000 projected costs would exceed the TFD's limits, he said.

The council, however, voted unanimously to approve the resolution to start the necessary procedures. As City Administrator Steve Berg explained, the city and Bosc code now must determine whether the project can be resolved to enable the project to move forward.

The issue is," he said, "what area will look like—whether it is landscaping or parking or whatever. Depending on how the area of the area is not developed, the (cable) may not need to be relocated.

"TERM/City may look at it again next year.

But several people spoke up Tuesday at a listening session opposing the concept. Several council members, too, voiced concerns.

"I think a two-year term is probably fine," Ripon resident Gary Will said, noting a letter to the Common Council from past mayor Bob Bommer urging the city to stay with two-year terms to influence this decision.

Another resident, Jerry Davidson, pointed to those who are saddling the city with a problem way beyond the horizon.

"We don’t know what will happen in the future if we do make the change," he said. "I don’t think it’s a good idea for the council to have four-year terms, also.

Riponite Michele Pier was the third.

"At this point, I would recommend we keep this sit, and we look at it again in spring," Ald. Bob Miller said.

"Let’s try it go as is it is," Ald. Dan Luxmy said.

"At this point, I would recommend we keep this sit, and we look it again in spring," Ald. Bob Miller said.

Whether the issue will return in a year is unknown.

Alliant keeps rates flat

Despite a double-digit drop in savings last year due to low interest rates and customer, Wisconsin Power and Light Co. (WPLC) and Alliant Energy will hold its rate flat in 2009.

"We believe the facts support the filing of an emergency rate relief request, we recognize the challenges the current economic downturn has placed on many of our customers," said Barbara Sorensen, president of WPLC.

In December, WPLC’s projected retail sales were down 6 percent below the benchmark in retail customers. Given the forecasted outlook last year that Wisconsin regulatory and federal making projects, the utility declared it was realistic to adjust the company’s regulatory reserves by increasing its rates.

As part of a rate case settlement announced in December, WPLC has the ability to request new rates to go into effect in January 2010. The company expects the filing of an application after an in-depth review of the settlement.

WPLC, too, continues to review the rate structure for its new fixed rate for any prior rate volatility which warrant a rate adjustment.

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